13-18 year old school girls' account and their experience of gender violence in a township school in Umlazi.

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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SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

÷As the candidateøs supervisor, **I agree** to the submission of this dissertationø
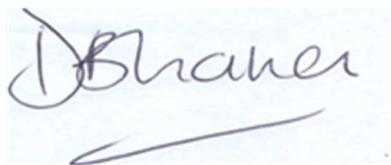
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Name: Professor Deevia Bhana

Date: 23 July 2016

DECLARATION

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Signed……………………...

Name...

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late grandparents, mom Thandazile Fortunate Ngcobo and dad Sifiso Selby Ngcobo.

Your emphasis on the importance of education in life has provided me with a foundation of accessing new knowledge that reflects new reality of our world on gender violence. Your teachings to treat women equally in contrast to traditional expectations of treating women as less than human beings has stood me in good stead as I go forward in my life..

However, I did not understand it then. In those days, I began my profession treating women unequally and I taught and interacted with people, including learners in the same approach. Today, your words matter, because I have a more complex understanding of what it means to be female and how they experience gender inequalities.

I thank you for your passion of instilling in me the love of learning. This has directly influenced my own thinking, attitude and experience as I interact with others, particularly in providing support to young girls.

My purpose through this dissertation is to show you how you inspired me. I will also reflect your teachings in the authenticity of your words:

Fuzeh, Mapholoba, Nyuswa!

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ABSTRACT

This study is a qualitative study that draws on an interpretive approach. The gender relational theory was used as the theoretical lens with which to view how young girlsø gendered identities are socially constructed. The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which young girls aged 13-18 from Hope (pseudonym) Township School in Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, perceive, comprehend and experience gender violence. The study examines the ways in which unequal gender power relations expose these girls to sexual violence, sexual abuse and HIV and AIDS. The study demonstrates that these girls who live in the informal settlements located near the school are vulnerable to patriarchal norms. The informal settlements from which these girls emerge are situated in lower socio-economic contexts and characterised by problematic social, economic and political issues, including high unemployment, a high crime rate, poverty, drug and substance abuse.

The study is premised on the notion that all violence within the school context is gendered. This study seeks to investigate how the young girls construct their sexual identities amidst the prevailing gender violence.

The findings show that some young girls are vulnerable to gender violence due to the school`s social and cultural belief systems that reinforce gender violence. The girls offer reasons for engaging in sexual practices that place them at risk, in spite of their knowledge of the dangers of sexually transmitted infections, HIV and AIDS and unplanned pregnancy. The findings also show that these young girls engage in unprotected sex with their partners due to peer pressure, and a fear of being discriminated against. The findings also demonstrate that some young girls make attempts to resist male domination by openly resisting particular stereotypical and sexist expectations of them. Moreover, the fear of contracting HIV and AIDS and teenage pregnancy acted as a deterrent with regard to some girls participating in risky sexual behaviours.

The results of this research also show that parents, teachers and the surrounding school community fail to implement interventions which aim to protect young girls from all forms of gender violence. Thus, the gendered nature of girlsø vulnerability to gender violence manifests through the abuse of power by boys in school.

This study found that girls are victimised both within and outside the school. It appears that boys are exempt from multiple forms of gender inequalities and sexual violence that girls are subjected to in school. This research recommends that collaboration between schools, parents and the private sector should be encouraged so that girlsø vulnerability to gender violence can be addressed. In addition, this research advocates for long term intervention plans to protect young girls against all forms of oppression in schools.

Key words: gender violence, unequal power relations, risky sexual behaviours, intervention, girls' vulnerability, social and cultural belief systems

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the study

In South Africa õtraditional isiZulu-speaking society is strongly patriarchal (Mvune, 2013). Many of its cultural practices are geared towards maintaining the status of men as the undisputed heads of households (umnumzane) and figures of authority. Mvune (2013) further suggests that there are strict rules controlling womenøs behaviour, starting from an early age. õAll these rules are set by umnumzane. Young women are expected to treat men in their household and community with the greatest possible degree of respect (ukuhlonipha); later in life when they get married, respect has to be given to the husband by femalesö Mvune (2013: p34).

Gender violence directed at women and girls persists in spite of programmes in the media, schools, hospitals and communities that create awareness about such a crime. Globally, young girls remain vulnerable to sexual abuse and discrimination on the basis of their gender. Studies show that approximately twenty-six percent of teenage girls worldwide commit suicide while six percent had made attempts to take their own lives due to their encounters of gender violence (Department of Social Development (DSD) et al., 2012). This violent behaviour against females, as well as young girls, is becoming widespread within South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal where between twenty-eight and forty two percent of males have admitted to committing sexual crimes against females including teenage girls (De Vries, 2014). In South Africa, a campaign known as the 16 days of Activism against Violence seeks to create an awareness of this criminal act (Cornell University Law School et al., 2014).

In this qualitative study I explore the ways in which a sample of teenage girls from a township school in Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal, perceive, understand and experience gender violence. School girls are still vulnerable to gender inequality and gender violence even though the Department of Education (DoE) provides schools with intervention programmes **(**Bhana, 2012; DoE, 2008). Gender power and gender inequalities remain important in understanding why girls, in particular, become vulnerable to violence. According to Action Aid (2013), the expressions of teenage girls against all forms of abuse should be recognised and valued instead of girls being blamed for failing to avoid it**.** For example, if young girls report incidents of gender violence with the aim of transforming socially based norms that

maintain gender inequalities they are either marginalised or ignored in schools (Cornell University Law School et al. (2014). This is espoused by Jewkes et al (2014), who contends that girlsø vulnerability to gender violence is regularly seen as a norm and every so often perpetrators are not made to take responsibility for their behaviours. The prevalence of gender violence in South African schools has received much attention because it interrupts the education of girls (Human Rights Watch, 2001). What is disconcerting is that õMore middle aged teachers ó married with families have been implicated in sexual offences, but efforts to prosecute them are scuppered by the offer of social relief to victims and their families by alleged male perpetratorsö (The Mercury, 2015). It has also been reported that Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, remains concerned about the manner in which the dignity and privacy of young girls is compromised through teachersø abuse of power in relation to gender sensitive issues at schools (The Mercury, 2015). Madonsela, through her intervention on gender inequalities, gave the impression that male teachers still have the capacity to expose many school girls to health risks such as teenage pregnancy and rape (The Mercury, 2015). Furthermore, Madonselasø framework indicated that South Africa is a Constitutional democracy that should protect the rights of young girls and to prohibit teachers from engaging in intimate relationship with learners (The Mercury, 2015). õIn response to this crisis, Department of Education spokesperson Elijah Mhanga said that parents, guardians and schools should intensify education on this matter. The Department of Education statistics also show that even at primary school level, learners are falling pregnantö (City Press, 2015: p1). Moreover, an integrated approach to eliminate sexual and physical abuse of young girls by teachers, implies that they are vulnerable to health risks such as unwanted pregnancies and this is an important underlying challenge faced by the Department of Education and other affected stakeholders such as parents, which requires intervention (City Press, 2015).

Evidently, young girls are affected by various forms of gender violence both in and out of school (Bhana, 2012). This study explores how the teenage girls from a township school in Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal talk about gender violence. School girls are vulnerable to gender inequalities (Bhana, 2012; DoE, 2008) where gender violence and inequalities have become the norm and which often remains an invisible problem (Bhana, 2012). According to Bhana (2009), there is no clear definition of gender violence, however, some studies define it as broad, multifaceted and continuing acts of abuse of power by individuals, structures in society and groups with an intention to cause harm to particularly teenage girls [but also

women and men/boys] as a result of low social status attached to them (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997).

This study uses qualitative research to show how cultural and social norms are produced and reproduced to promote gender inequality and subsequent violence and to demonstrate the behaviours which subject young girls to the problem of gender inequalities. Understanding how girls attach meanings to and deal with violence perpetrated against them at school could provide insight into and an understanding of the problem. Recent studies show that South African schools are becoming more unsafe in relation to increasing levels of gender violence (Bhana, 2012; 2013). This is largely due to teenage girls having to negotiate their relationships with boys and teachers through fear, sexual abuse and right to be heard in their lives, particularly in the townships (UNESCO, 2015; Department of Social Development (DSD) et al., 2012). Despite the huge challenges, research shows that it is possible to work out intervention strategies that promote social norms which are embedded in human rights and gender equality (Human Rights Watch, 2001). This research project is grounded in an understanding of gender violence, power, agency and resilience and uses these concepts as an analytical lens with which to interpret the data.

Many studies suggest that gender inequalities sanction the exploitation of women and teenage girls by dominant males either physically, emotionally or economically in their context (UNESCO, 2014; Bhana, 2015). In addition, gender violence embedded in the exploitation of teenage girls is explicit in school and operates through male power in the form of abuse (Bhana, 2015). The õpatriarchal dividendö of men that they are privileged, makes it difficult for women and girls to challenge male power (Connell, 1995). It is important to understand how the gender identities of both boys and girls are constructed while simultaneously seeking ways to eliminate its impact on who is doing and who is receiving in their context (UN, 2014). Furthermore, these insights could encourage an understanding of rights so that boys and girls adapt to new sexual behaviours in terms of improved care, commitment and prevention of violence (Gibbs, Sikweyiya, and Jewkes, 2014).

Research indicates that gender violence against women and girls will never be alienated from the broader environments of inequity, plus marginalisation to which these groups remain time and again and who are vulnerable socially, economically, culturally and politically (UN, 2013). Additionally, young girls still face a lot of encounters with dominant males including property disinheritance, conflicting cultures, fear and the disputed role of gaining access to quality education and the justice system (Dunne et al., 2013; UN, 2013). Despite all this,

women and teenage girls should not simply be seen as powerless and passive amid pervasive gender violence against them (UN, 2014; Shefer, 2015).

Gender inequity is embedded in the culture of patriarchy within which women and teenage girls are reduced to a considerably subordinate status than their male counterparts and boys in their everyday lives (UNESCO, 2014; UNICEF, 2012). These gender imbalances, in addition to being and receiving a lower quality education, expose females to multiple forms of abuse such as sexual assault, unwanted touching and acts of violence by males. This attitude towards women lower their self-esteem (UNESCO, 2014; South African Child Gauge, 2014). This problem of gender violence requires the most prompt attention given the challenges of addressing the interrelating issues of HIV and AIDS (UNESCO, 2014; Oxfam, 2014; Humphreys and Leach, 2007). A challenge facing society is to work towards the elimination of gender inequalities through any possibilities designed to sensitize and eliminate all forms of gender violence focused on girls (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Humphreys and Leach, 2007).

Moreover, the exploitation of women and girls illuminates how a social and cultural dimension which produces and reproduces gender violence is enacted to humiliate them sexually (Parkes et al., 2014; UNESCO, 2014). In addition, gender violence and power inequalities embedded in male domination are understood as a major contributing factor to the quick spread of health risks, for example: HIV and AIDS and social issues, for example: substance abuse, and teenage pregnancy within the developing countries in the African region, (UNESCO, 2014).

Investigations undertaken by the Human Rights Watch (2001) researchers on gender violence in South African schools revealed that every girl at some stage of their lives experienced gender violence within and out of school settings. These reports stated that through their belief system, these girls would possibly not engage in discussions relating to protective sexual practices (Parkes et al., 2014; UNESCO, 2014). Bhana (2011) and the Human Rights Watch (2001) researchers noted that girls' vulnerability to sexual violence has forced researchers to recognise the importance of addressing gender inequality in order to adequately understand and prevent it. Jewkes et al., (2010) asserted that gender violence has become a key conceptual instrument for understanding its impact on girlsø access to education. In world rankings, gender violence sits at number 27 as the main reason for girls /

women committing suicide and 456,268 deaths were reported internationally (Jewkes, 2014). These researchers highlight the extent to which young girls are exposed to gender violence on their way to adulthood (Bhana et al., 2010; UNESCO, 2014). Meanwhile, the lack or absence of intervention for girls against sexual violence translates into further vulnerability, such as less use of condoms furthering their high risk of contracting HIV and AIDS (Jewkes et al., 2010; Bhana, 2011).

As such, this outcome reflects a critical need to directly focus on the specific cultural attitudes and gender practices that expose women and girls to multiple forms of oppression including HIV and AIDS infections (Bhana, 2013). This emphasizes the urgency to intensify and effect necessary changes through focusing on research that can challenge gender violence within and beyond schools. This approach may be used to advance learning curriculums towards enhancing the well-being and health of young girls.

Despite the rapid increase of intervention and awareness strategies, communication and educational campaigns about the increasing level of gender violence against teenage girls, it still persists. Mail and Guardian Newspaper (2015) speculated that females exposed to gender violence seems to have greater chances of increasing their vulnerability to health risks, this translates to HIV and AIDS, despair and stay away from certain people, places and situations. According to media reports, intimate partner violence and the vulnerability of women and young girls to gender violence impacts on their freedoms and an infringement of their privacy; this indicates that they do not have a voice on the use of contraceptive in order to protect themselves against unwanted pregnancies (Jewkes and Morrell, 2010; UNESCO, 2014, Mail and Guardian, 2015). Gender power inequalities demonstrates how the sexual abuse of women and young girls is a reality at schools, informal settlements including rural-urban areas (Panday et al. 2009; Mail and Guardian, 2015).

For this reason, teenage girls have the right to be empowered about their sexuality, how they esteem their sexuality, and how they negotiate their relationships with other people in the context of gender equality. What is distinctive about these reports is that we can eliminate gender stereotypes that treat young girls as less than human beings in their context (Jewkes and Morrell, 2010; UNESCO, 2014).

This study, therefore investigates the experiences of teenage girls and how gender violence is embedded in their sexual identities. Additionally, this study illustrates how the complexities

of intertwining age, race and gender are entrenched in the traditional practices through which people construct their identity and power relations (UNESCO, 2014). As such, the findings from this research show how men need to be included in these campaigns and discussions so that the campaign to educate men against abusing young girls is put into practice.

1.2 Rationale for the study

I have been teaching at Hope High School (pseudonym) in Umlazi for the past 23 years, eight years of which I have been a Teacher Liaison Officer (TLO), a position that requires me to interact with learners and foster effective teaching and learning. This is the research site of my study. The register gleaned for this study on reported cases of gender violence shows that in this school, girls are most vulnerable to sexual harassment, particularly those who come from nearby informal and rural areas, which are characterised by patriarchy and high levels of domestic violence (Bhana, Nzimakwe, Nzimakwe, 2011). My position as TLO has enhanced my understanding of the vulnerability of girls to multiple forms of emotional, physical, verbal and sexual exploitation. Nevertheless, my teaching experience and exposure to gender education at postgraduate level suggests that violence against girls is gendered and embedded in gender inequalities.

Studies conducted in KwaZulu-Natal show that schools are prime sites for gender-related inequalities as compared to other provincial schools in South Africa (Bhana, 2013; Jewnarain, 2013). In my own experience as a teacher I have witnessed boys resisting teachersø requests when asked to assist with cleaning classrooms and picking up litter on the grounds. Drawing on Connell`s (1995) sexual division of labour understanding, it suggests it is a duty of women and girls to carry out tasks related to domestic chores. The sexual division of labour begins in the home where boys and girls learn the different expectations (Connell`s, 1995). These different expectations extend to the sexual space that sustain gender violence as well (Jewkes and Morrell, 2012; Reilly, 2014. I have witnessed on many occasions with regard to reported cases of gender violence, boys using their positions of power to coerce teenage girls into sexual relations and engaged them on the consequences of their risky behaviours. As a teacher I have gained a lot of experience in dealing with cases that involve gender violence, including sexual harassment and how boys disrespectfully treat girls. I have also noticed that young girls are silenced and their stories of sexual abuse and humiliation are ignored. Their experiences of gender violence are shrouded in secrecy as well as shame. Research has also found that the victimisation of girls is attributed to their age and low social

status while in transition to womanhood within and outside school (Human Rights Watch, 2001; UNESCO, 2014). According to a report by the Human Rights Watch (2001), male teachers, to silence girlsø reports on sexual violence, subject girls to corporal punishment. Research shows that young girls are also treated differently in so far as they are stigmatised, bullied, and marginalised, added to which they are voiceless and powerless to challenge gender inequalities in their environment (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Leishman, 2011).

Reilly (2014) notes that the sub-Saharan African states such as Malawiøs districts are failing to implement laws which uphold the rights of females and young girls across districts, as well as communities. According to Reilly (2014), this is partially because of incompetent organisations tasked by governments with bringing transformation with regard to eliminating gender violence in communities embedded in societal as well as culturally based oppression. Educators as well as educational institutions remain the product of these societal norms, and encourage such social practices (Reilly, 2014; UNESCO, 2014). In the same way, school settings are becoming places where supremacy is displayed, and various practises of gender violence underpin that which educators and learners were taught in their communities and families, and is seen as normal (Jewkes and Morrell, 2012; Reilly, 2014; UNESCO, 2014). These behaviours and expectations are reproduced in the school and accepted as normal. What is more disconcerting is that there is hardly any intervention programmes in place to help the learners who become vulnerable to different forms of abuse. This means that, õDoctors nurses, teachers, police and social service professionals all bear a responsibility to address violent behaviour when it occurs, and equally important to protect the public from violence and its disease consequences through co-ordinated implementations of evidence based interventions that eliminate or reduce risk factors and increase individual and public protection of young girls through the lens of legislative frameworkö (Mail and Guardian, 2015: p38). This implies that there is a critical need to create awareness and develop policies on gender violence which should be enforced to ensure that teenage girls are protected in school (Dworkin, 2012; Moletsane, 2014).

For these reasons stated above, this study seeks to explore how gender inequalities impact on girlsø access to education and how they understand their sexualities and sexual vulnerabilities and what is being done by the school, parents and the surrounding communities to assist them in their plight. Sexual vulnerability and violence perpetrated on girls in school can prevent girls from attending school, which without academic support may affect their academic

performance and could ultimately lead to them dropping out of school (Action Aid, 2013; Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013). The effect of lack of education can be devastating for these girls Bhana, 2013).

As a result, addressing gender sensitive issues inherent in patriarchy, power and culture, including HIV and AIDS related issues is urgently needed to eliminate girlsø vulnerability to such abuse (Bhana et al., 2010; UNESCO, 2014).

My study also has personal relevance. I was a victim of gender violence at home as I grew up in a traditional environment which sanctioned the oppression of women through silencing them, subjecting them to physical abuse and in so doing perpetuating gender inequalities. For example, in my family discipline, any wrong doing was administered by the elderly men. Belts and sticks (canes) were used by the men as discipline tools, while my mom and grandmother assumed the more protective roles and shielded the children or begged for leniency on our part. This protective behaviour by the women in our family improved our relationships, and bonding within the family through care and nurturing was enhanced. They were the only people with whom I or my siblings could talk to about personal issues. I was able to talk to them about my relationships and girlfriends as a young boy. Also, many female teachers in the schools I attended from primary through to tertiary tried to ensure boys and girls were protected, particularly with regard to issues of corporal punishment. It was predominantly male teachers who used to administer corporal punishment. Male teachers also openly engaged learners on issues of sexuality and intimate partner relationships. As such, it was the womenøs commitment of care when working with us that inspired and motivated me to study gender violence. Therefore, this study has personal relevance for me because as a boy growing up with preferential treatment over my sisters, I became aware that girls were being subordinated, even abused. Therefore, I am particularly interested in exploring girlsø experiences and responses to gender violence. The above research evidently reflects that there is a need for research around what girlsø experiences are with regards to gender inequalities and gender violence in South Africaøs school settings, as it remains an under-researched area (Parkes, 2008; Bhana, 2013; Parkes, 2013).

1.3 Problem Statement

This study has also been motivated by my profession as a teacher for almost 23 years in Umlazi and Umbumbulu in KwaZulu-Natal. I have observed that the prevalence of gender violence is also linked to socio-economic and geo-political factors such as context and

poverty. Young girls from the surrounding rural areas have become more vulnerable to emotional and physical abuse by boys who intentionally violate them sexually. The forms of violation include verbal insults, finger gestures, physical and sexual assault, boys showing their genital organs to girls, false accusations of cheating and threats to harm girls if they report any of these acts to teachers.

Throughout these years I have observed, witnessed and recognised how the prevalence of gender violence perpetuated by teachers and boys against young girls has exposed girls to multiple forms of abuse such as sexual harassment and sexual violence. Drawing from my work experience, I have come to realise that relationships of unity and empathy, trust and understanding between teachers, learners and parents is almost non-existent and needs to be encouraged. My view is based on what I have observed has having taken place at the school, - in the past and even presently, school girls have been victims of gender violence and the line functioning of the school provides little or no intervention to protect them ó which through my own learning, I realised that such abuse / lack of intervention is against the South African Bill of Rights (Cornell University Law School, 2014). There is always resistance and a power struggle when I try to promote the welfare of all learners, particularly girls who are evidently treated unfairly.

Such violence against girls and women is against what is stipulated in the Bill or Rights. The South African Bill of Rights further point out that when teenage girls experience incidents of sexual violence teachers have an obligation to protect them and their parents should be informed about these incidents of gender inequalities. In addition, when pro-feminist teachers (me included) challenge gender inequalities and boys` problematic behaviour, we are labelled as ÷softø and the School Management Team (SMT) becomes intolerant of us. It is clear to me that the SMT lacks the will and knowledge to develop a policy related to the prevention of gender violence and other forms of abuse. My intention is not to undermine the SMT, but to challenge the status quo and the ongoing failure to listen to the voices of young girls who are in need of protection. My position and experiences as a TLO showed me that to challenge decisions made by the SMT which are grounded on traditional approaches, would be no easy feat. For example, as my role as a TLO, it is my duty is to interact with teachers and learners on matters affecting teaching and learning. I have for many years tried to advise the SMT on the importance of developing a gender policy and even though I produced school records of gender violence as evidence to support my claims that young girls are constantly reporting

incidents of gender violence against them, the SMT has shown no interest in incorporating intervention strategies to protect the girls in their school.

I strongly believe that a policy on gender violence will help to protect and empower young girls in school to realise their hopes and dreams of learning in a safe environment so the possible disruption of their education by incidents of gender violence may be limited. Clearly, offering them protection could improve their relationships with their teachers and parents.

Incidents of gender violence became so serious in the school where I teach, that in March this year it propelled me to ask the Grade 12 boys and girls what, in their opinion, were the causes of sexual abuse against young girls. During our discussion, the young girls explicitly stated that among other things, violence manifests itself through cultures and patriarchy and also their families play a role in this. For example, some girls stated that their families sanction male domination and sometimes they are forced to attend ─uMkhosi womhlangaø (virginity testing) and the wearing of traditional costumes on certain days has a serious attraction for boys on the streets, which sometimes culminates in sexual harassment. Thus, girls become vulnerable to various forms of abuse such as provocative talk, unwanted touching, teasing and harassment. Boys also abuse their power in their relationships with teenage girls which manifests through domination and bullying.

In my teaching experience, I have also observed that between 2010 and 2015 quite a few young schoolgirls became pregnant at the age of 12 and they were expelled from school by the principal. These girls` parents were not consulted and they have since left school. These girls were excluded in spite of educational policies which prohibit the expulsion of pregnant learners from school (The South African Schools Act-SASA, 1996). The South African Schools Act-SASA (1996) challenges all forms of discrimination on the bases of gender, age and class. Many young girls, however, are denied their right to education as they are forced to leave school if they become pregnant. Moreover, the South African Schools Act of 1996 is clear that girls should not be discriminated against. According to Oosthuizen (2012), SASA aims to provide framework for the democratization schools it terms of maintaining good governance, and professional management that can absorb totalitarianism and traditionally based hierarchies. The South African Schools Act came into being to remedy past apartheid injustices, establish an identical education system and become answerable to childrensø societal and economic challenges in partnership with the government (Oosthuizen, 2012).

Nonetheless, I am an educator and embarking on gender studies has created an opportunity for me to better understand gender sensitive issues such as sexuality and the long term implications of gender violence and its impact on young girls. For example, today I am able to express my position and stance and I try to empower my colleagues, families and members of the community when we discuss gender and sexuality. I am not afraid to participate in debates on teenage pregnancy, sexuality and HIV and AIDS with anyone. I believe that I am a champion for gender rights and will do all in my power to reduce the gender violence in my school and community. As such, I would like to promote the protection of young girls and to encourage them to speak out against the daily occurrence of gender violence, oppressive sexual relationships, not only because such behaviour against these girls increase risk of ill-health, but to create an equal status in which boys and girls respect each other.

I am highlighting gender sensitive issues here because girls` experiences of gender inequality does not receive much attention. For example, girls` education is negatively affected when they become pregnant while in school. However, boys who impregnate girls are not excluded and their education continues undisrupted.

These incidents sparked my curiosity and because of such observations I became interested in conducting research to investigate the experiences of young girls in the school in which I teach. These incidents of girlsø exposure to unequal treatment and gender violence lies at the heart of this study and prompted me to do more to protect those vulnerable to gender violence.

There was an incident at my school where a female learner accused a male teacher of sexual harassment. Even though it was since discovered that the learner wanted to pursue a relationship with the teacher, the matter was dealt with in a sensitive manner whereby the matter was handled diplomatically and the learner was not humiliated by teachers. The purpose of this was to promote improved implementation of educational policies designed to protect the rights of learners and to encourage policy coherence when dealing with learners (Human Rights Watch, 2001; UNESCO, 2014; Ratele, 2015).

This study seeks to investigate how teenage girls aged 13-18 understand their vulnerability to gender violence, the ensuing health and sexual risks, and how gender inequalities perpetuate gender violence against them. Gaining insight into their views, understandings and experiences can facilitate ways in which support can be provided to them. The reason for selecting this school to conduct the study was based on convenience as it is my place of work.

This qualitative research was conducted at Hope High, a coeducational school in Umlazi, south of Durban, in a peri-urban fringe zone.

1.4 The objectives of this study

1. To understand the nature and forms of violence experienced by girls in a township school.

2. To explore how these girls respond to gender violence inside and outside the school.

3. To investigate how gender violence impacts on these girls' right to education.

1.4.1 Key research questions

1. What meanings do the teenage girls in this study give to gender violence?

2. What are these girls` experiences of gender violence and how do they respond to it?

3. What are the effects of gender violence on these girls` right to education?

1.5 Location of the study
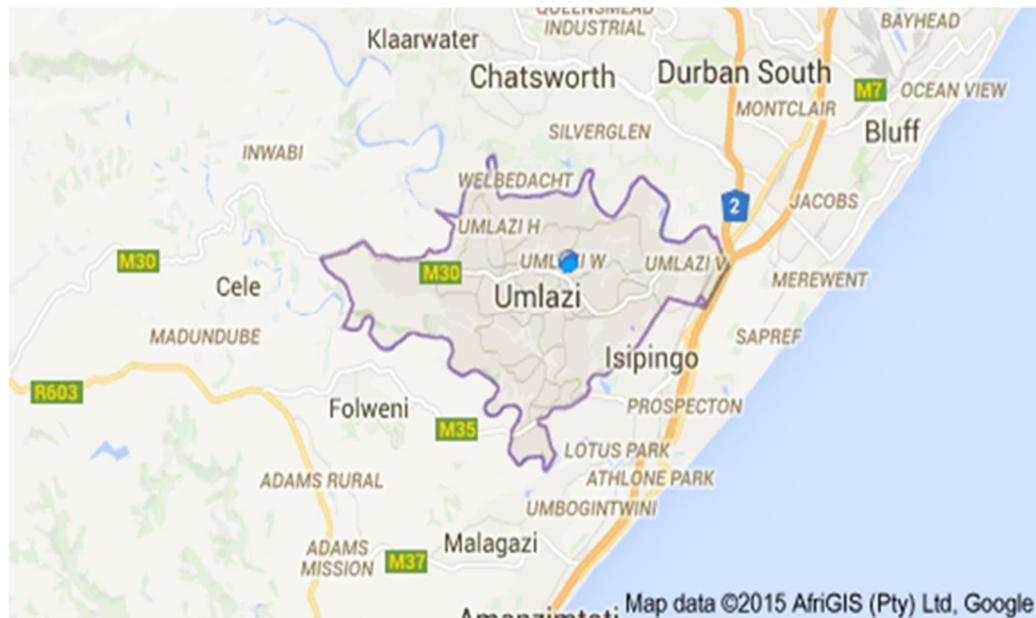
Figure 1.1: Map of Umlazi, Durban South and its surrounding rural areas.

SOURCE: **Map data ©2015AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd, Google**

The fieldwork was conducted at Hope High School (pseudonym) in the south Durban basin township of Umlazi, a peri-urban fringe zone. The school has a good infrastructure such as a

library, good sanitation and is surrounded by a close-knit working-class community. However, most learners who attend the school come from the nearby rural and informal settlements, characterised by socio-economic ills such as: sexism, gender discrimination, patriarchy, high unemployment, a high crime rate, poverty, drug and substance abuse, domestic violence and a high prevalence of HIV and AIDS. The school has learners from different religious and cultural backgrounds as some learners are Christians and others worship traditional Izayoni. This co-educational school has a total number of 709 registered black African students (male learner-350 and female learners-359). The enrolment decreased in 2003 after violent protests by learners against teachers who allegedly had been involved in sexual relationships with young girls in school as well as the misappropriation of funds by the incumbent principal at the school. Some parents withdrew their children from the school for safety reasons. Presently, many children are left in the care of their relatives, namely grandmothers and they are also left unattended when parents go to work. Some learners from my school arrive late at school because they have to accompany their younger siblings to the nearby primary school before they come to school. This is due to the criminal element in the community and the fear of these children being harassed by them. It is important to note that little is done by the School Management Team to allay parents` fears or to invite members of the community to intervene in trying to find ways of alleviating violence in this school and protecting children.

1.6 Research Design

This study employed qualitative research methods. Maree (2013) posits that qualitative research methods are concerned with understanding how social and cultural practices are entrenched in behavioural patterns. Therefore, the qualitative approach is relevant for this study, as Maree (2013) maintains that the knowledge constructed by the people among themselves is never static and is constructed through social processes such as values of human behaviour and ways of understanding. These approaches are concerned with exploring in-depth meaning, as given by the participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

This qualitative research is located within the interpretivist paradigm. Cohen et al., (2008) posits that the focal point of the interpretive paradigm is an attempt to familiarise ourselves with the social world of human knowledge in a context. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), people get knowledge through interacting with others within our social and cultural environment. Therefore, this study is embedded in an interpretive approach to

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generate data that explores the ways in which young girls aged 13-18 perceive, understand and experience gender violence in the context of gender inequalities. This was made possible through focus groups as well as semi-structured, open-ended individual interviews. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2007) and Maree (2013), qualitative research is suitable when the researcher is attempting to generate more hypotheses and beliefs, with regard to reaching a greater understanding with reference to a specific problem, and in so doing provide an in-depth explanation to illustrate a process.

1.6.1 Methodology
1.6.1.1 Data collection

This study is situated within semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions which were used to collect data (Creswell, 2002; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Focus group discussions and individual interviews are embedded in the qualitative technique whereby rich data was generated in this research. Focus group discussions were used to encourage full participation and interaction among members of the group and also to probe for clarity of aspects (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) as discussed in the methodology chapter.

The theoretical framework of using all interviews was used to elicit the multiplicity of rich data based on participantsø interpretations about gender violence in school (Creswell, 2002). The focus group discussions were embedded on the view that the participantsø communication in a risk free environment could help to produce and activate forgotten details of their experiences (Maree, 2013). Focus groups consisted of 30 girls between 13-18 years and accessed by me with the help of other teachers. I interacted with the participants through discussions in order to build rapport as an important step towards a good interview process which came with its own challenges that had to be negotiated (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) and discussed in Chapter Three.

Focus groups and interviews were conducted over a period of three months, after school, on weekends and during break times to avoid interfering with the school programmes. Interviews were recorded for use in the process of analysing data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Spending three days a week with each Focus Group yielded rich data (Maree, 2013). Individual interviews were also conducted using semi-structured and open-ended questions, while observing non-verbal gestures and behaviours which often ‑speak

louder than wordsø (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Maree (2013:87) describes question and answer session as a õa two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks participants questions, to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views and behaviour of the participantsø settingö. Data collected was recorded, transcribed and interpreted to obtain a thorough analysis of the problem (Creswell, 1997).

1.6.1.2 Sampling

I accessed the participants after gaining permission from the principal who controls access to the school and the learners (see the Appendix confirming permission). Purposive sampling was used as a strategy for selecting participants. Criteria for purposive sampling was targeting schoolgirls between the ages 13-18 because they were deemed to be characteristic of the people who may have experienced gender violence and gain insight with regard to this study. Informed consent was obtained from the participants and their parents before the fieldwork commenced.

1.7 Data analysis

Data analysis was embedded in an interpretative approach in order to make meaning of how girls perceive, understand and experience gender violence in school. The audio data was translated and transcribed into textual data before analysis. Thematic analysis was employed, with themes emerging from the data by clustering and observing and indicating frequencies. Gender power theory was used as a lens to analyse the data.

1.8 Conclusion

In South Africa, different traditions and cultures play an important role whereby male domination sets limits on how people in society treat women to ensure economic and financial dependency (Egbo, 2000; Leishman, 2011). These cultural traditions and practices could expose women and young girls to multiple risky health behaviours and unfair treatment, while the community and parents reinforce gender stereotypes. Within this framework, it seems likely that gender inequalities exert pressure on females to be tolerant of unequal distribution of power in a context. This indicates the way in which certain inexperienced and the most vulnerable groups in society depend on men for protection in their lives and they are expected to accept unequal gender relations as a norm. These

traditional norms impact on womensø constitutional rights of living safely, accessing equal education and living free from sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS.

This emphasises the significance of open discussion between youths, their parents, communities and the Department of Education, since families find it difficult to remain silent on sex dynamics. Therefore, the situation presented above illustrate a critical scenario that men and boys should play an active role in working towards eliminating women and girlsø vulnerability to gender violence and other forms of oppression such as sexual harassment (Perry, 2009; Parkes, 2008). Essentially, these groups should be treated as equals and to be free to negotiate and discuss any issues of their interest inherent in gender equality regardless of their religion, culture and class (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Oxfam, 2014). In this chapter, I have shared my reasons for conducting this study, and the importance of exploring the experiences of young girls in relation to gender violence.

1.9 Summary of Chapters

Chapter One presents the background and rationale to the study.

Chapter Two presents both the international and South African literature around gender based violence.

Chapter Three discusses the research design, investigation approach, moral considerations as well as its limitations.

Chapter Four puts forward the results of the data collected which is analysed and discussed.

Chapter Five discusses the summary of the main findings, draws conclusions and offers recommendations regarding the phenomenon of gender based violence in schools.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the relevant literature in the area of gender violence. The chapter draws on both local and international sources which are presented thematically. The theoretical framework is also discussed in this chapter. The literature is presented in a thematic format as follows:

- A definition of gender violence

- Understanding gender power inequalities and violence: Theorising gender violence

- A global understanding of the problem

- Sub-Saharan Africa and the continuous effects of gender violence against girls

- Gender violence in South Africa

- Race, class, gender and sexual violence

- Gender violence in schools with a particular focus on South Africa

- Corporal punishment and gender violence

- Social media, sexual harassment and cyber bullying

- Theoretical Framework: Gender Relational Theory

2.1.1 A definition of gender violence

Research unequivocally states that there is no perfect description of gender violence (Bhana, 2009; Shepherd, 2008; UNESCO, 2014). According to Parkes and Unterhalter (2015), the definition of gender violence is multi-dimensional, nevertheless they describe it as the practice of men which symbolises all actions of abuse such as inequalities and discrimination of women and young girls which is located within a socially constructed culture and affirmed through interaction between these groups. For instance, some authors describe it as an act of violence between men and women due to imbalanced power relationships (UNESCO, 2014; UN, 2006). As a direct result of this, women and girls become, among other things, victims of discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying due to their sexual distinctiveness (Epstein, Renold and Reilly, 2009; UNESCO, 2014; UN, 2006). Exceptional similarities provided in other studies demonstrate that prevailing gender prejudices target the most vulnerable groups, such as girls from disadvantaged families or those affected by disabilities (UN, 2006).

2.2 Understanding gender power inequalities and violence: Theorising gender violence in schools

Research suggests that gender violence is viewed as multifaceted and perceived as relational and expansive (UNESCO, 2014; Parkes et al., 2013). Leach and Humphreys (2007) and the UN (2006) suggest that gender violence is a serious issue that necessitates intervention and precise policies in order to successfully eradicate it. According to Human Rights Watch (2001) and UNESCO (2010), sexual violence targeting females and teenagers is interlinked with unequal relations inherent to male power. A UNESCO (2014) report shows that any effort by girls to challenge these unbalanced gender systems results in them becoming more vulnerable to several types of abuse, violence and victimisation. Leach and Humphreys (2007) further indicate that gender violence against girls is a common occurrence within schools and can take many contours such as intimidation, mocking and disrespect (UNESCO, 2014; Reilly, 2014). According to Gwiyari (2013) the central idea is that there is no social order that is exempt from the prevailing gender violence in schools, both locally and globally.

Young girls remain unprotected and also at risk of being sexually or physically abused because of existing unequal power relations (UNESCO, 2014). The construction of gender power imbalance reinforces male superiority, which is embedded in the idea that they are perpetrators of gendered violence (Bhana, 2009). According to Connell (2011), gender power theory may possibly shed some light on the intricate environment of gender inequalities - a by-product of gender violence underpinned by social dynamic forces of patriarchy, thus exposing more women and young girls than men and young boys to health risks such as HIV and AIDS.

Connell (2000) argues that power relations are central when engaging in gender sensitive issues, masculinities and young girls in terms of needs in place of authority. Given the prevalent gendered differences, most young girls in educational institutions such as schools are vulnerable to boysø violence even beyond its parameters, although its origins could be traced back to schools (Clark, 2012). A study conducted by UNESCO (2014) and another by Moletsane (2014) show that it is important to put emphasis on addressing unequal power relations reinforced through male domination, because this necessitates the implementation of laws which protect the rights of young girls globally. Lombard (2013) advocates that masculinity contributes to gender imbalances in addition to promoting violence, however, it

is exercised as a means towards maintaining oppression. Moreover, Ratele, Shefer and Botha (2011) demonstrate that power inequalities and gender violence are used as tools to discriminate against young girls and blame the continued spread of HIV and AIDS on them. Ratele (2015) suggests that young girls could resist unequal power relations and this is significant towards transforming their lives since they have shown an interest in seeking intervention through their own authority. Connell (2011) posits that gender imbalances are produced and come into existence through individual behaviour and sexual roles and transmitted by means of dominant organisations such as the places of worship, family units, educational institutions, social media and government. Researchers work with male and female teenagers in an attempt to eliminate subordination of young girls through gender violence including sexual and power abuse with respect to improved practises of masculinity, sometimes encounter girls who resist (Connell, 2000; Ratele, 2015). The outcomes of challenging gender power inequalities exist and are noticeable in the field of research when working together among young girls as well as young men (Ratele, 2015). Gender violence perpetrated against girls should be a cause for concern with regard to intervention strategies, in discussion as well as drafting guiding principles in relation to sexualities and gender equalities (Bhana et al., 2011; Moletsane, 2014; Ratele, 2015). Bhana (2013) argues that intervention strategies should also include additional focal points such as sexual harassment, physical abuse and unequal power relations within their homes, their families, educational institutions, employment spaces as well as the surrounding communities. Notably, the social and dominating gendered creation of boys through which the subordination of young girls and various ways of bullying and domination, influences males' societal relations with females and other males, thus signifying influence as well as control (Connell, 2000).

Connell (1987; 2000) argues that these socially structured and gendered norms, thus express control over women which is maintained through a variety of social groups. In addition, these gender inequalities are embedded on socially defined practice which operates through a complex correlation of powers such as malesø controlling behaviour over girls (Connell, 2000).

However, in the light of the aforementioned perceptions, schools have become places where unequal gender relations and sexual violence are standardized and strengthened by teachers (UNESCO, 2014; UN, 2006). This synopsis on gender violence and subordination of young girls by males complements the uncertainties conveyed by Yasemin (2013) that education is

centred on a struggle as well as hope for equality. This builds the foundation of this study towards addressing gender violence against girls in and around schools (UN, 2006; Yasemin, 2013).

2.3 A global understanding of the problem

Parry (2009) notes that the defencelessness and manipulation of womankind and teenagers through gender violence in several parts of the world is just the beginning, within which many women and girls undergo new forms of gender violence and inequalities worldwide. Gender violence is expansive and a world-wide social problem that has increased, particular against women and girls aged between six to eight years and the statistics show that their vulnerability has increased by nine percent-eighty seven percent (UNESCO, 2014; Jina et al., 2015). It is within this framework, that female adolescents are subjected to gender violence in whatever social background they find themselves in, disadvantaged and excluded (UNIFEM and Action Aid, 2009).

Annual reports demonstrate that the highest levels of gender violence against young girls and women stand at 2 070 / 100 000 females globally and most of these gender imbalances occur through different sexual roles such as bullying, intimidation including gender discrimination (De Vries et al., 2014). UNESCO (2014) suggests that the vulnerability of females has its attachments to social inequalities, by means of beliefs to oppress them. This suggests that gender violence imposes a major test for them when they venture into communal spaces such as schools (UNESCO, 2014). Studies indicate that gender violence against women is a global phenomenon and the victimization of girls is ascribed to their age, low social standing and maturity (Human Rights Watch, 2001; UNESCO, 2014). Furthermore, evidence from studies demonstrates that gender violence is an inevitable hazard to the wellbeing of girls in schools and could cause physical distress (UNESCO, 2014).

However, the aforementioned gender inequalities are vital to note in order to gain insight into how adolescents are entangled in oppressive practices which underpin acts of violence, discrimination, and victimization (UNESCO, 2014). Domangue and Solomon (2008) and UNESCO (2014) suggest that the frequency of unbalanced power relationships should be confronted, among other things, through intervention programmes for social transformation. Moreover, present literature on wide-reaching research based on gender violence shows that

in regions such as India, Afghanistan, Africa, and South Africa girls are more prone to rape, kidnapping, sexual abuse and snatching while travelling to/from school (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Parkes, 2007; UNESCO, 2014). At the same time, this in-depth study shows that girls are the target of gender violence in whatever social space they find themselves in, voiceless and excluded (UNIFEM and Action Aid, 2009). In addition, evidence from the above studies shows that gender violence is endemic and a threat to the health of girls in schools (UNESCO, 2014). As Domangue and Solomon (2008), Ghail and Arnot (2006) and UNESCO (2014) argue, virtually all young girls in most societal organizations and nations have developed the agency and eagerness to get more knowledge about gender equality, engage in safe relationships and eliminate gender violence. Similarly Action Aid (2013) and UNICEF (2006) also state that in spite of many disagreements with regard to politics and contexts, some nations in the sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Europe have developed collective strategies and acted against gender inequalities by ensuring that laws as well as policies precisely address the vulnerability of young girls to gender violence. According to Action Aid (2013), the implementation of strategies to protect young girls from gender norms and gendered violence include their families, peer groups, as well as educators across the states. Due to interventions between these states on gender violence against young girls their attendance in schools has increased to twenty two percent and the percentage of young girls leaving the school has dropped to twenty percent (Action Aid, 2013). Also, this indicates that there is a significant development with regard to the goal of achieving gendered equality within the educational environment (UNICEF, 2006; United Nations, 2012). Thus, it becomes evident that there is a commitment to eliminate the pervasive culture of gender violence against the oppressed groups around the world (UNICEF, 2006; Action Aid, 2013).

2.4 Gender violence against girls in sub-Saharan Africa

Gender violence is still a common problem in the sub-Saharan Africa, even though a number of the countries embrace transformation (Hearn, 1998). For instance, many sub-Saharan countries are participants to civil organisations like Children's Rights Treaties, with the objective of overcoming the practices of oppressive behaviours impacting on womanhood and girls (Hearn, 2008). According to Hearn (1998), this suggests that males should take the responsibility to participate in a wide range of intervention programmes within the human rights framework to improve their behavioural practices and adopt a pro-feminist stance. Additionally, Ghail and Arnot (2006) validates that intervention frameworks clearly mean

that gender violence against girls cannot continue unrecognised and –naturalisedø as instances of fear, but should be challenged by teachers in schools. The dawn of democracy in Southern Africa presented its people with hope and opportunities with regard to significant consideration of meeting the aims of equality in our society and to eliminate gender violence (Shefer, 2015). Within this framework, Shefer (2013) argues, that some governments speak about promoting transformation including the power of knowledge internationally with regard to addressing issues of power imbalances, however, according to Shefer (2013), little has changed.

Additionally, the complex web of unequal power relations could expose girls to physical violence by male teachers (UNESCO, 2014). For example, research has established that male teachers are in a place of control and authority and girls are expected to adapt or possibly risk further physical harm e.g. expressive abuse (UNESCO, 2014; UN, 2006). It is important to note that the limiting behaviour experienced by young girls is produced through societal pressures, nevertheless this has a direct impact on their capability to make informed choices about practicing safe sex, and moral judgments. In addition, given unequal gender relations, UNESCO (2014) and the UN (2006) argue that schools should be leading locations where human rights values are demonstrated and broadened due to the pervasiveness of the problem as it affects women and girls throughout the world.

Studies on girlsø vulnerability to acts of gender violence in sub-Saharan schools indicate that it is compounded by the fact that most African countries sustain patriarchy and its underlying powerful forces, which are the perpetrators of common incidents of gender violence (Reilly, 2014). Among other things, a major cause of girlsø vulnerability to unfair treatment is entrenched in societal norms which are extended to school settings (UN, 2006; 2014; Reilly, 2014). Additionally, these discrepancies in gender issues highlight an interconnection between the sexual role and health risks facing vulnerable women and girls (Jewkes et al., 2010). Gender violence in the African framework shows that violence against girls emerged as one of the most dominant storylines, as compared to other nations throughout the world (Parkes and Heslop, 2011; UNESCO, 2014).

Research shows that most females and adolescents within the context of gender violence reside in countries that are affected by poverty (UN, 2006; Action Aid; 2013; Oxfam 2014).

Despite the prevalence of gender violence, families do send girls to school because they value education (Oxfam 2014; Action Aid; 2013).

Research shows that the spread of gender violence provides a brief overview of the scope and framework underpinned by innumerable customs of sexual abuse, which evidently limits females and girlsø access to literacy and contribution to the economy within the sub-Saharan context (UN, 2006; Leach and Humphreys, 2007; Egbo, 2000). There is a lack of research on gender inequalities, because gender sensitive issues and the culture of violence against young girls are regarded as complex matters and considered a subfield to western researchers in sub-Saharan Africa (Humphreys and Leach, 2007). Of all the abstract difficulties of eliminating gender violence in schools, it seems that sub-Saharan Africa is symptomatic of having a growing resistance to gender equalities (Humphreys and Leach, 2007). Indeed, Dunne, Humphreys and Leachøs (2007) research asserts that international research is predominantly focused on programmes of eradicating poverty and the HIV and AIDS pandemic in favour of researching gender violence.

Literature that focuses on sub-Saharan Africa needs to prioritise gender issues, because many of the regionøs states are taking advantage of political instability such as wars to reinforce gender violence and sexual abuse against girls (Leach, 2006; UNESCO, 2004). For example, studies on war-torn countries such as Somalia, explain that girls are the most vulnerable group with regard to sexual and gender violence, such as anal intercourse (Human Rights Watch, 2014). According to the Human Rights Watch (2014), this type of sexual violence includes various forms of female penetration by males, for example, fingers and different instruments. Hence, it is important for sub-Saharan Africa to pay more attention to gender violence in schools (UN, 2006; Unterhaltrer, Heslop and Mamedu, 2013).

Many sub-Saharan countries are participants to civil organisations like Childrenøs Rights Treaties, with the objective of overcoming the practices of oppressive behaviours impacting on womanhood and girls (Hearn, 2008). According to Bhana (2014) and Hearn (2008), this suggests that males should take the responsibility to participate in a wide range of intervention programmes within the human rights framework to improve their behavioural practices and adopt a pro-feminist stance. Additionally, Ghail and Arnot (2006) validates that intervention frameworks clearly mean that gender violence against girls cannot continue

unrecognised and ‑naturalisedø as instances of fear, but should be challenged by teachers in schools.

However, a current assessment by the UN (2006) shows that attempts to advance female and teenagers` privileges in changing menøs approaches (in relation to their vulnerability to gender abuse) has been met with resistance in some sub-Saharan African countries. For instance, the role of the family in the African context remains unchartered and the international instruments of femalesø empowerment have been received with varied responses and even militarised by the hierarchical gender order (van der Westhuisen, 2005). Additionally, research indicates that the study of gender violence against female folk and teenagers in Africa is useful within a South Africaøs context (Moffett, 2006). This is because it enhances a first-hand political transformation approach that could commendably combat the degrading social structures of patriarchy, which are central to gender violence as mentioned above (Moffett, 2006; UNIFEM and Action Aid, 2009).

Emerging literature on gender violence demonstrates that there are positive signs of transforming the pervasive cultures and traditionally layered patriarchy of oppressing females and adolescents, which includes adopting a human rights approach (UNFPA-UNICEF, 2010). These key ethics remain central to the eradication of gender violence against women, through empowerment based on provision of access to their economic needs, particularly for those with disabilities (van der Westhuisen, 2005). Literature shows that hands-on processes underpinned by intervention programmes on girlsø vulnerability to gender violence could lead to the dissemination of knowledge and better quality optimisms of eradicating gender violence in schools (UNFPA-UNICEF, 2010).

2.5 Gender violence in South Africa

There has been lack of transformation in the past twenty years of democracy in South Africa when many of its citizens had hopes of living in a risk free environment with regard to girløs vulnerability to gender power inequalities as they are related with health risks such as HIV and AIDS, as well as gender-violence (Human Rights Watch, 2001). This change, to my knowledge was not aimed at changing attitudes towards abusing girls. Within this framework of gender power inequalities, Shefer (2013) argues that some governments speak about promoting transformation including the power of knowledge internationally with regard to addressing issues of power imbalances, however little has changed with girlsø abuse.

With the peak in statistics regarding the frequency of sexual violence, South Africa is becoming a high risk area for women and young girls (Jina et al., 2015). For example, sexual abuse against women and girls stand between seven percent and fifty eighty percent globally (Jina et al., 2015). However, some incidents of sexual abuse against females and young girls are underreported for fear of being stigmatised in their communities (UNESCO, 2014; Jina et al., 2015). Notably, this shows conflicting descriptions of gender violence from the South African context which illustrates rather unequal power relations such as silent females and also energetic patriarchal males (Renold, 2013). Additionally, Moffett (2006) notes that the above mentioned enforced gender violence against girls was inherited from the colonial and apartheid era that perpetuated and maintained unequal power relations in society and these have a profound impact on the new democratic South Africa. For example, it reinforced sexual roles in society interwoven with a culture of male violence and unequal power relations against women within the context of joblessness and racial segregation (Bhana, 2014).

Recent studies on women's sexual health promotion and gender violence shows that men who perpetuate sexual violence against girls are presumed to be infected with HIV or have been diagnosed with AIDS (Jewkes et al., 2010). Bhana (2011) asserts that that the vulnerability of girls is a glaring social problem compounded by the surrounding school community's inability to report observed incidents of gender violence to prevent it. This is confirmed by many researchers; as they point out that schools fail to provide efficient protective responses for traumatised girls (Bhana, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2001; UNESCO, 2011). Research conducted by Bhana (2011) and Human Rights Watch (2001) show that gender violence is a risk factor for girls and may cause sexual dysfunction or unwanted pregnancy.

Most importantly, failure to address sexual violence in society could lead to new HIV infections in girls and less HIV testing in schools (Jewkes et al., 2010). The Human Rights Watch (2001), within the South African framework, assert that gender violence against girls is prevalent, particularly in the township schools. According to Parkes et al. (2013), the lack of intervention will force girls to internalise the existing subordination, an important mechanism for male violence and hatred, which impose sexual abuse as the right practice (Bhana, 2009; Parkes et al., 2013).

Transformation of girls¢ exposure to sexual violence in the form of intervention programmes and protection of their human rights for social change is being advocated by different social groups (UNESCO, 2001; UN, 2006; Bhana, 2009). Additionally, this could be in the form conscientising boys and communities as partners through educational attainment, such as sports activities as the easiest way to convey the message of gender equalities to. The problem of gender violence requires the speediest attention, given the challenges faced by girls in schools, as demonstrated above (UNESCO, 2014; Oxfam, 2014; Humphreys and Leach, 2007). Young women¢s experiences illuminate pressures that they encounter in an attempt to negotiate their way amongst these societal arenas of expectation and struggle against gender violence (Dunne, 2013). They recognise that gender sensitive issues attract the interest of adult people and expect parents to do something to protect them against all forms of oppression (Stein, 1995).

2.6 Ethnicity, class, gender and sexual violence

From the above studies undertaken by UNESCO (2014) and the UN (2006), it suggests that gender violence is multifaceted and prevalent in schools, thus it affects the young girls¢ access to education regardless of their race, class and social status (UNESCO, 2014; UN, 2006). Whereas, socially and traditionally, this manifests itself in gender relations which in turn formulate the structures of oppression to the disadvantage of women and girls (Bhana, 2009; UNESCO, 2014). Young African girls are exposed and vulnerable to gender violence embedded in some cultural practices (African tradition) and patriarchy that intersect to disadvantage and expose girls to gender violence (UNESCO, 2014). Moreover, the issues of poverty and joblessness seem to be ethnically motivated because the most vulnerable to it are females and young South Africans girls who thus feel discriminated on the basis of low wages, since earnings enable them to provide support for their families (Bhana and Pattman, 2011; Boonzaier et al., 2015). This includes the possibility that there are young girls who are financially dependent on men in exchange for sexual favours, as this allows for unequal power relations as well as health risks such as contracting HIV and AIDS (Jewkes et al., 2010; Bhana and Anderson, 2012).

Other important parts of the literature indicate that the exploitation of girls is a result of religion, race, class and culture, which ultimately become undetectable in public spaces. For instance, studies corroborate that Asian girls (Muslims in particular) are predestined to embrace British values as immigrants (Jackson, Peacher and Renold, 2010). However, rules

for administration assimilate the principles of equality and democracy (Jackson, Peacher and Renold, 2010). This conveys a clear picture in which gender discrimination against girls cannot be preserved in separation from international social inequalities, attributed to seeing them as of less significance as compared to superior power discourses inherent to men (Reilly, 2014; UNESCO, 2014).

Studies of gender violence in the African context show that violence against African girls emerged as one of the most central narratives in interviews (Parkes and Heslop, 2011). For instance, Reilly's, (2014) findings suggest that in Sierra Leone, gender violence and abuse of girls in schools could take the form of sexual, psychological, and physical violence. An important gender issue that also emerges from sub-Saharan Africa regarding gender violence is that girls are forced into gender inequalities (Pinheiro, 2006). At the same time, their in-depth study shows that girls are the target of gender violence in whatever social space they find themselves in, voiceless and excluded (UNIFEM and Action Aid, 2009). In addition, evidence from the above studies shows that gender violence is endemic and a threat to the health of girls in schools and causes physical trauma (UNESCO, 2014).

Within the same framework, Bhana's (2013; 2014) studies show that gender violence makes it unbearable for girls to feel safe in schools due to the fear of becoming more vulnerable to sexual abuse such as rape. Additionally, a broader scope of literature extrapolates that the multiplexes of gender discrepancies interlinking girlsø vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, makes it impossible for them to negotiate power relations with boys and males in and out of schools (Bhana, 2014). According to Bhana (2014), this points to a need for schools to start addressing ethical issues in relation to gender violence towards education, which could provide the potential to protect girls against all forms of abuse.

Studies that have explored girlsø experiences on gender violence and inequalities illustrates that schools should challenge teachers and boys who use patriarchy as an authoritative mechanism for regulating girlsø behaviour with the objective of causing pain and harm to them (Hearn, 2008; UN, 2006; UNESCO, 2014). Moreover, UNESCO (2014) demonstrates that these ─wickedø behaviours by teachers and boys is inclined towards social complexes. However, such stereotypical behaviours do not change the fact that girls have a right to basic education in pursuit of gender integrity and lifetime chances, and to participate in the political and economic world on equal footing as men (Egbo, 2000; Parkes et al., 2011).

According to Parkes (2008) and Tas, Ramao, and Orlando (2013), young girlsø exposure to gender violence across the racial divide is steadily acknowledging that it is important to focus on their experiences of sexual abuse and unequal power relations because they have agency within themselves to transform this situation regardless of class and race. However, the biggest problem suggested from research conducted with adults highlights a different perspective ó this indicates that the adults may misrepresent young girlsø viewpoints in acquiring new creative ways of promoting participantsø cooperation to eliminate gender violence (Parkes, 2008). Parkes (2008) argues that researchers should continue their attempts to promote interactive methodologies that have started to influence other scholars with the aim of listening to the voice of participants regarding their experiences of gender inequalities (Parkes, 2008).

2.7 Gender violence in schools

I am an experienced teacher who has been a TLO for ten years and have witnessed, and dealt with many reported and unreported cases of gender violence against girls, but which are often ignored by teachers in school. Mncube and Harber (2013) define gender violence in schools as actions of students, teachers, managers and communities, making an attempt towards inflicting harm against someone. Research constantly illustrates high-levels of gender violence against teenage girls who describe themselves as victims of sexual harassment and sexual violence (De Vries et al., 2014). Further literature shows that as a result, teenagers participate in sexual relations with male teachers in exchange for grades and to cover their fears of sexual harassment (UN, 2006; Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Research suggests that other contributing factors to the spread of gender violence is that some educational institutions are located in poor communities and are under resourced and are failing to make available much needed basic needs to young girls, such as rest rooms (Berry et al., 2013). Moreover, in the South African context, young girls are faced with a problem of travelling long journeys to their schools (Berry et al., 2013). Studies conducted in South Africa show that approximately 110 000 000 learners attend school where one out of six girls (fifteen percent of them) live remotely and as far as primary schools are concerned, as compared to one out of five girls (twenty percent) in secondary schools (Berry et al., 2013). In spite of these hurdles, the government has effected considerable developments to address

the vulnerability of young girls, but according to a number of researchers this is definitely nowhere near enough (Berry et al., 2013; Bhana; 2014).

Bhana (2014) argues that South Africa has the greatest legal prescripts as compared to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa and this makes it difficult to understand why teachers fail to provide intervention through respecting the dignity of girls. Additionally, the lack of intervention will force girls to internalise the existing subordination, an important mechanism for male violence and hatred, which impose sexual abuse as the right practice (Bhana, 2009; Parkes et al., 2013). These unequal gender relations are at the heart of young girlsø vulnerability to gender violence and impacts on their future social and economic positions, which makes it difficult for them to live independently of men and to take responsibility for their bodies (Bhana and Pattman, 2011; Leishman, 2011; UNESCO, 2014). According to Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), high cases of gender violence taking place in schools have attracted the attention of the state authorities because of its impact on the education of young girls. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) also indicate that another contributing factor to girlsø vulnerability to gender stereotypes is that teachers are unwilling to protect them because they are anxious about their own protection, they are demoralised and encounter disrespect among learners themselves. Teachers report for work late along with early leaving to the detriment of young girls, as boys use this gap to target the most vulnerable and routinely intimidate, sexually stigmatise and harass them even beyond the school parameters (Dunne, 2013; Mvune, 2013; Moletsane, 2014).

Gender violence is a barrier to young girls and women towards achieving their economic freedom, decisions are restricted through dependence on men, and self-development is limited (UN, 2006). The UN (2006) argues that the state needs to prioritise promoting the development of the economy towards reducing masculine which is associated with gender disparities to the detriment of young girls. On this basis, Bhana (2009), UNESCO (2001) and the UN (2006) appeal for more supportive intervention programmes to protect the human rights of girls within a gender sensitive context. Additionally, this could be in the form conscientising boys and communities as partners through educational attainment, such as sports activities (UNESCO, 2001; UN, 2006).

Literature also indicates that neither families, nor communities speak of interventions to address the vulnerability of girls in and out of school settings (Bhana, 2009; Bhana, 2011).

According to (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Bhana, 2009), this points to a key issue, that is, the failure of schools to implement gender policies leading to disentanglement between the legal system, schools and parents. Meanwhile, this presents a useful step in emphasising that the above mentioned social institutions should play a leading role towards protecting girlsø interests, with the aim of promoting peace (UN, 2006).

As a result, most outcomes from research emerged with similar themes; that adolescents drop out of school because they feel insecure, distressed and reluctant to remain in an atmosphere that has failed to defend their freedom, particularly in townships (Bhana, 2011; UN, 2006; Human Rights Watch, 2001). In principle, this is in the communal and family sphere of influence, in which these social groups fail to interrogate the moral ethics of teachers as professionals in schools (Bhana, 2013; 2014; Human Right Watch, 2001; UNESCO, 2014). More importantly, Bhana (2011) reasons that the vulnerability of girls is an obvious social problem compounded by the surrounding school community's helplessness to report observed episodes of gender violence to prevent it. In spite of these gender inequalities, Jewkes et al., (2010) argue that there is inadequate research connecting gender violence and increased risk of contracting HIV in adolescents.

The nationwide strategy on gender violence remains ignored in terms of addressing multiple forms of girlsø vulnerability in order to enable them to defy the principles entrenched in passiveness within social contexts (Bhana, 2013). Bhana (2013) suggests that the lack of knowledge on gender inequalities by teachers is purely a deed based on neglect through ignored opportunities towards understanding girlsø vulnerability in and out of the school context. Bhana (2013) further contends that it is important to understand how gender issues are tangled with power relationships, which normalises the existence of inequalities in social settings, such as schools. On the other hand, Bhana (2013) and Reilly (2014) believe that we need to be more thoughtful of these multi-dimensional commanding powers in order to combat gender violence against girls in and around schools.

Bhanaøs (2009; 2013) studies focus on gender violence elimination and intervention strategies, with Dunne and Anaga (2013) proposing significant interventions which suggest that gender violence discussions and debates should also include men in order to promote peace. The study shows that institutions such as schools should be key sites for raising awareness against various forms of oppressive behaviours directed towards girls, as opposed to the production and reproduction of gender violence (Bhana, 2013). Bhana (2013) asserts

that teachers need to consider their professional accountabilities of challenging traditional practices that underlie gender violence and verbal abuse of women and teenage girls across the spectrum. Emerging literature shows that the complex and abstract context of women and teenage girls is intertwined with gender and sexual violence within the hierarchical understanding that should not inhibit interventions that reject all forms of abuse in social spaces (UNESCO, 2014).

A report by UNESCO (2014) and Bhana`s (2013) study advocates a strong tool for monitoring and evaluating girlsø vulnerability to sexual abuse due to the fact that gender violence is coated with taboos, multidimensional identities that is underpinned by religion, and suppression in education settings. Nevertheless, to a much lesser extent as compared to the western countries. Research insists that complexities in relation to women empowerment should not only be about attaining human rights and protection (Jewkes et al., 2012). However, emerging research maintains that it should be inspirational for participants to engage in research as an important mechanism for eradicating gender violence grounded on their lived experiences (Jewkes et al., 2012).

However, Dworkin et al., (2012) are of the opinion that the South African society has made improvements in addressing gender related inequalities within gender violence and HIV prevention attempts. Within this framework, Bhana (2012) states that our efforts to explore a deeper understanding of menøs reaction to the never fixed unequal gender relations, and in an attempt to inspire them to respect girls and womenøs rights, should expand.

Moreover, studies show that renewed attempts of stimulating gender relations based on democratic executions will benefit women and girls (Unterhalter et al., 2011; Reilly, 2014; Dworkin, 2012; Rao and Sweetman, 2014). For instance, at a practical level, access to education could enable girls and women to have a voice to participate in commercial freedom, eradicating poverty and their objectification by the male society (Hlavka 2012; Unterhalter et al., 2011; Reilly, 2014; Dworkin, 2012; Rao and Sweetman, 2014). Bhana (2013) draws on the South African context, and notes that the country has established that schools in KwaZulu-Natal are prime spots of young girlsø vulnerability to gender violence, perpetuated by boys. Therefore, most girls drop out of school for fear of being hurt by institutional regimes and this suggests the reason for their low attendance as they find it more difficult and uncomfortable to be in schools (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Dunne et al., (2012) asserts that most sub-Saharan states are characterised by the economic meltdown and

poor formal policy on gender violence (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Action Aid, 2013). An in-depth study for the safety of girls against gender violence contends that this erodes their rights to education (UN, 2006; Human Rights Watch, 2014; Action Aid, 2013).

What also emerges from research is that girls become more vulnerable to sexual abuse while they are in transition to their first encounter to sexual intercourse (De Vries et al., 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2014). According to De Vries et al., (2014), forced sex is an acceptable practice by boys to punish girls while unconsciously down playing its long-term health and legal consequences that might interfere with girlsø education. Additionally, this means that teachers end up engaging in problem solving linked to gender violence in school, instead of spending their time on effective teaching and learning (Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013). Furthermore, exploration of sexual inequalities confirms that teachersø responsiveness and proficiency to addressing gender sensitive issues is poor, together with the justice system and social organizations, such as the police and health care services (HRW, 2001; Parkes and Heslop, 2011; Action Aid, 2013).

This body of research makes one cognisant of other ways of conserving gender differences, such as myths in order to maintain boys` ranking in and out of schools (Connell, 2013). This includes the resonation of claims that girls are more suggestible, collective and have a lower self-esteem than boys who are privileged to ᴓhave reputable logical skillsø (Connell, 2013). Additionally, emerging research from around the world on gender violence has shown that these myths, levelled against girls, are becoming more widespread (UNESCO, 2014). This clearly demonstrates how deceptive processes such as power and authority are used in social institutions to oppress girls (Dempster, 2009; UNESCO, 2014).

2.8 Social media, sexual harassment and cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is labelled as violent actions by the perpetrator using communication tools such as a mobile phone including laptops through social networks with intent to cause damage or pain to other people and the most vulnerable are young girls (Corcoran, Guckin and Prentice, 2015). Cyber aggression against young girls is simply an additional element to expansive multiple forms of gender inequalities impacting on their education in schools (Burton and Leoschut, 2013; Conway et al., 2015). It has been noted that in developed countries, entrance to leading-edge technological skills is understood to be an instrumental

factor in high levels of gender violence (UNESCO, 2014). Leach (2015) found that young girls between eleven and sixteen years of age confessed to have fallen victims of sexual abuse through cyber bullying because of peer pressure from adolescent boys. For instance, boys ask sexual favours from girls through online communication (UNESCO, 2014).

Thus gender violence embedded in cyber bullying emerged as a contributing factor for the high pervasiveness of using pornographic material in South African schools (Hopkins et al., 2013). Jobi and Kritzinger (2014) further suggest that accessing the social media has become a norm for most teenagers as a way of sharing information. Moreover, young girls from different age groups at present have experienced greater inequalities with boys through social networks, and it is anticipated that this could encourage them to explore sexual intercourse through experimenting, while exposing themselves to risks of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Donoghue et al., 2014; Kheswa and Notole, 2014). Further, Leach (2015) notes that the widespread use of social media by young girls and boys interrupts shared symbols in the communities and fails to focus on challenging structures which maintain gender imbalances. The reluctance of teachers and parents to discuss issues relating to sexuality, gender violence and sexual abuse targeting girls through social media could compromise their safety, educational work and produce aggressive behaviours in communities (Singh and Steyn, 2014).

The UN (2006), Burton and Leoschut (2013) and UNECSO (2014) reports identify additional sources of gender power inequalities through social media that further compromise the position of girls in and around schools. For example, girls are labelled as ‑whores‑ and ‑bitches‑ by boys to manipulate their behaviour which is created by their indebtedness to the use of social media imbalances in order for them to conform to subservience, whilst lack of intervention in terms of imparting discipline against cyber bullying compromise their lives in schools (UN, 2006; UNECSO, 2014; Marzano, 2015). These studies show that in industrialised countries, such as the United Kingdom, the media plays an important role with regard to exposing gender violence against females and young girls who have been victims in schools as compared to most poor countries (Chancer and Watkins, 2006; Epstein and Johnson, 1998).

According to Burton and Leoschut (2013), another contributing factor to young girls‑ vulnerability to social media is because it remains to be seen as an effective and valuable tool for meeting people. This suggests that young girls frequently use online communication in

order to feel accepted in a patriarchal society, in spite of health risks involved such as suicide, anxiety and sexual violence (Burton and Leoschut, 2013). A focus on global cyber bullying regarding sexual violence and gender violence is needed to protect young girls from all forms of abuse and to enable them achieve educational opportunities in a risk free environment (Burton and Leoschut, 2013; Corcoran, Guckin and Prentice, 2015).

2.9 Corporal punishment and gender violence in schools

Many studies illustrate that boys and girls worldwide live through gendered violence as a form of discipline in schools (Leach et al., 2012; UNESCO, 2014). Some of the most commonly recognised type of violence used by teachers against girls is corporal punishment (Human Rights Watch, 2010; UNESCO, 2011). Young girls are victimized when they are continually exposed to aggressive behaviour from their peer group and teachers because that purposely has caused harm, fear exclusion and even death (UNESCO, 2014; Dunne et al., 2011; Hlavka, 2014). The manner in which gender violence is legitimized or suffered by girls is often gendered, reflecting unequal power relations (UNESCO, 2014). Additionally, young girls could well be targeted by male teachers due to failure to conform to the predictable gendered norms, as well as their gender stereotyping or internalised gendered identity (Hlavka, 2014).

According to Bhana and Nkani (2014), gender violence is inflicted on girls as a way to silence them from reporting pervasive sexual abuses in schools and this highlights a fact that some parents feel incapable of challenging gender sensitive issues. Physical abuse evidently infringes on girlsø right to learn in a risk free environment conducive to learning (HRW, 2001; UNESCO, 2015). The Bill of Rights underpinned by our Constitution, and other law prescripts such as the South African Schools Act of 1997 were made into law with the intention to protect the rights of children and outlaw the use of corporal punishment in schools (Berry et al., 2013). According to UNICEF et al., (2010), Bhana, Nzimakwe and Nzimakwe, (2011) and UNESCO (2015), there is a need to implement transformative gender equality programmes because schools have the capability to empower individuals and to advance parity as well as gender equality, nevertheless, this should begin with teaching leaders in the communities, and families. UNICEF et al., (2010); UNESCO (2014), Bhana (2013) posits that the prevalence of gender violence in the families, similarly impacts upon young teenagers who tend to reproduce violent activities to which they are exposed within or outside of school on a daily basis.

Similarly, Dunne, Humphreys and Leach (2006) found that teachers become targets of the government in terms of challenging and implementing educational policies that prohibit the use of corporal punishment in schools. For example, two heads of schools in Tanzania were dismissed by education authorities for executing the policy that banned the use of physical punishment to learners (Dunne, Humphreys and Leach, 2006). On the other hand, studies in Tanzania show that its use is extremely evident as a form of punitive measures and is applied unequally to boys and girls by educators in schools (Dunne, Humphreys and Leach, 2006). At the same time, this identifies how modern society and politics in schools outline that girlsø demand for gender equality is met with opposition by dominant male teachers in schools (Dunne, Humphreys and Leach, 2006).

Moreover, recent research in KwaZulu-Natal revealed that schools are the most important sites for reinforcing gender stereotypes in South Africa (Bhana, 2013; Jewnarain, 2013). For instance, male teachers inflicting corporal punishment on girls has risen in KZN schools in comparison to other provinces (JewnArain, 2013). According to Human Rights Watch (2001), the continued practise of using pipes and sticks as a form of punishment has been broadly researched in the South African context because it breeds fear into girls and can be harmful and in some cases cause psychological and physical damage (Nkani, 2012; Parkes, et al., 2013). This places emphasis on the important role which could be played by the partnership between the schools and diverse stakeholders such a parents towards eliminating gender violence against young girls, thus expanding their chances of completing their education from school to tertiary and become responsible career workers within society.
Young girls must be encouraged to play a part in awareness campaigns to promote their well-being and these activities need to be evaluated in order to eliminate the possibilities of threats that could see them repeating the cycle of gender violence (Reilly, 2014). Reilly (2014) argues that awareness plans against gender violence could encourage young girls to present their cases of exploitation to teachers, to ensure their protection, thus continuous help and monitoring instruments must correspondingly exist.

2.10 Theoretical Framework: Gender Relational Theory

This study employed gender relational theory as a theoretical lens through which data is interpreted and analysed. The study draws on Connell`s (2000) work that advocates gender relational theory to explain how social practices shape the interactions of girls, boys and teachers in the negotiation of gender dominance, social power and feminism in social

structures such as schools (Courtney, 2000). For instance, feminist theory within the context of gender violence (Anderson, 2008) demonstrates that gender violence has masculine origins where boys place themselves in relation to girls, as advantaged and having more power. In such a complex environment, Connell (2000) argues that all violence is grounded on gender and is inclined towards social constructions which emphasise male supremacy and power imbalances extracted from social histories. Gender violence is related to power and infested in leadership to retain acts of gender discrimination against women and teenagers (Connell, 2000; 2011). Connell (2005) offers categories of masculinity to explain the various positions men inhabit in the hierarchy of masculinities. These are according to Connell (2005; 2011), hegemonic, complicit, marginalised and protest/oppositional forms. This is not to suggest that these are the only forms, however; hegemonic is the culturally exalted form of masculinity, with the others persisting alongside it (Connell, 2005). Connell (2014) defines hegemonic masculinity as a gender practice which prepares men for the dominant position in society through patriarchy, while preparing women for subordination in society. Cultural patterns of gender inequalities embedded in hegemonic masculinities aims to cause tension and resistance within societies and social institutions, as a strategy to serve the best interest of male domination (Connell, 2011). In attempting to understand the explanations why so many young girls become victims of gender inequalities, Bhana and Moosa (2015) advocate attention to how the policing of masculinities and heterosexuality reinforces their effective subordination (Connell, 2014). The construction of masculinities is normally comprehended in the same way as a stereotype initiated by males in ways in which controlling power functions either to be exclusive or inclusive to the most vulnerable groups within society through practices which impose gender discriminations (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Connell, 2014).

Young girls and women who fail to adapt to the hegemonic identities of masculinities, usually are, for that reason, often marginalised in the society and that is it how it feeds into male violence (Connell, 2011; Bhana and Moosa, 2015). This affirms the views of Courtney (2000) that masculinities are shaped by social dynamics embedded in interaction between people. This is constructed and replicated through young boys and teenage girlsø activity (Coutney, 2000). Such an extended view of gender relational theory shows that men and boysørelationships with girls and women, in and out of social contexts, is driven by power to breed and yield gender inequalities, intertwined with gender violence and their patriarchal subordination (Connell, 2011). On the other hand, Connell and Messershmidt (2005) argue that heterosexual violence against women and girls is located within various social settings,

while at the same time promoting the values of accountability among people (Connell and Messershmidt, 2005). According to Alexander, Coleman, Deatrick and Jemmolt (2011), masculinity is linked to gender violence within the dominant male power and gender societal imbalances, so as to compromise females and teenagers' sexual wellbeing.

Moreover, Connell's (2000) writing illustrates that gender imbalances are relational, where youngsters and adolescents negotiate power depending on time and space. Inequitable gender based relations in schools are an obstacle to young girls' entrance to learning and disempowers them into being submissive to male-dominated gender violence (Connell, 2000). Courtney (2000) reminds us that the relationship which exists between teachers and girls is grounded on gender inequalities which facilitates the abuse of power and authority against girls. In addition, this relationship exists to yield and reinvent gender violence and to produce power prejudices against girls, in which the final product is sexual violence and unprotected sex in and outside the school setting (Connell, 2000).

It is important to note that gender relational theory in this study explains how male power though the relationship of domination and subordination exposes girls to gender violence, while taking into account their agency of contesting it. Further, gender relational theorists indicates that schools play a pivotal role in supporting gender stereotypes and for negotiating gender characteristics that victimise girls, for example, sexual violence committed by boys is attributed to girls through marginalisation (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). This is how societal prescriptions expect girls to fulfil feminine roles as ‑victims' of gender violence in schools (Courtney, 2000). All of these are connected to cultural complexes and controversies that make it near impossible for girls to challenge gender violence (Robinson, 2012).

According to Connell (1987) and Weiler (2001), this downward cycle of complex and unequal power relationships is aggressive and reinforces limitations on young women's social spaces and makes them even more vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases such HIV and AIDS (Connell, 2000). In this sense, feminist scholars argue for an intellectual feminist approach that will develop and produce a theory that promotes gender equalities and social justice (Weiler, 2001). Broadly, studies suggest that we should strive for meaningful lives for women and girls within transformative peer groups in order to free the potential of the oppressed social groups (Weiler, 2001; Connell, 2014).

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As these lasting examples show, the fundamental point is that women's vulnerability to gender violence, exploitation and discrimination that embeds itself in the history of colonialism, which continues to strive through unequal gender relations and social groups (Weiler, 2001; Connell, 2011). Evidence suggests that this aims to erode the respect for women and produce masculinised cultures of domination within power relations, which rewards males in social contexts such as schools (Connell, 2011). Moreover, within the gender relational framework, research shows that gender inequalities are underpinned by intentional social processes such as the controlling of men over women embedded in their sexual behaviours (Connell, 2011). Nevertheless, these gender biases embody global investment markets practices, in which power works through the exploitation of women and girls who fail to meet its commercial demands (Connell, 2011). Some of the themes highlighted by Connell (2011) assume that girls and women are exploited, because they are socially and monetarily dependent on men in all aspects of their lives.

The gender relational framework is a lens through which my study explores how young girls are socially constructed, thus shaping their behaviours to accept their vulnerability to gender violence. Using the lens of the gender relational framework, the interpretations of how young girls experience gender inequalities and sexuality as well as the construction of their identities will be achieved by means of talking to and interacting with the participants. As affirmed in Maree (2013) and Cohen et al., (2008), the interpretive paradigm has foundations which are based on developing knowledge in the world about people through their lived experiences. Therefore, using the gender relational framework combined with interpretive paradigm could give insights into young girls' vulnerability to gender violence, unsafe sexual activities and sexual violence from their viewpoints.

Simply put, the historical vulnerability of young girls to gender violence shows they cannot take control of their lives and make informed decisions in relation to issues of sexual behaviours as well as relationships within their society (Weiler, 2001). It is important to note that this defines gender control through power and authority from which these groups find it difficult to escape (Weiler, 2001). Feminist theorists argue that the exploitation of women and girls across cultures and geographical location through patriarchy should be challenged, rejected, and dismantled through a commitment to peace and access to education (Weiler, 2001). However, feminist theorists have taken into account the question of how to present women's and girls' voices against the hegemonic masculinity inherent to the dominant males

(Connell, 2005; Weiler, 2001) as indicated above. According to Connell (1987) and Weiler (2001), this downward cycle of complex and unequal power relationships is aggressive and reinforces limitations on young women's social spaces.

In this respect, Connell (2005) argues that girls' and women's experiences of gender violence is well-coordinated and regulated by youngsters and males' practical relationships with females, and adolescents. Gender inequalities are entrenched in social practices envisioned to subordinate the most vulnerable groups, through cultural templates to cause tension and resistance within societies and social institutions, as a strategy to position themselves (Connell, 2005; 2011). Such extended views of gender relational theory, displays that their relationship with girls and women in and out of the social context is driven by power to replicate and yield gender inequalities.

Although schools function at a dissimilar organisational structure from that of other social institutions, these examples serve as illustrations of how men and boys are superior to girls, based on their genetic differences, basic needs and masculinities (Connell, 2007). For example, Connell`s (2007) synopsis on gender violence insists that boys have the power to sexually harass and rape girls in schools with impunity as earlier indicated. The overwhelming characteristic of unequal gender relations, however, is that women and girls' socio-economic status is impaired (Albertyne, 2010) often to such an extent that they find it problematic to make informed decisions on their sexualities and take control of their bodies (Albertyne, 2010). Within this framework, gender relational theories is where we get an understanding that the everyday experiences of young girls on gender violence is socially constructed and that gender inequalities are closely associated with domination and individual actions within the greater society (Weiler, 2001; Connell, 2005, 2011; Leishman, 2011). According to Jewkes and Morrell (2012) and Connell (1987), studies on femininity assert that the socially constructed gender identities are linked to various gendered identities which affirm powerful structures of hierarchy that produce gender violence against women and young girls.

2.11 Conclusion
To conclude, the scholarship demonstrates that gender violence against girls is a complex and global issue interweaving with the search for gender equality. This literature review has focused on young girls' vulnerabilities to gender violence, its effect for girls` safety and

health. Various themes have been drawn on to explore how young girls become vulnerable to gender violence globally, within sub Saharan Africa, South Africa and more specifically in schools in South Africa. Girls are developing awareness that as they grow up, their journey to adulthood is full of challenges, with their lives being permeated with gender inequalities, violence and sexual violence. Culture and societal norms have been cited as instrumental in perpetuating and reproducing gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices that pose a threat to women and girls.

Within the context of South Africa and elsewhere, the practice of gender violence and sexually-oriented risk behaviours are not fixed. It occurs in contexts through various levels of power from the inside of the relationships as well as gendered norms of sexual activities (Bhana, 2013). Therefore, gender violence and sexual violence have links to the prevalence of HIV and AIDS globally. Nevertheless, most new cases of HIV and AIDS infections and teenage pregnancy affect young girls, with the most vulnerable being between 13 to 24 years of age. This suggests that the lives of these young girls are compromised due to lack of intervention which could negatively affect them.

Moreover, literature around the nature of girlsø experiences on gender violence confirms that it is an area that is under-researched. This chapter highlights that it is largely through schools in which intervention programmes can be implemented to address the interplay between masculinity, patriarchy and prescribed gender roles, which constitute asymmetrical power relations that are an obstruction to adolescentsø access to qualitative basic education (Dunne and Ananga, 2013). Gender injustices based on male power are experienced by girls on a daily basis with little or no intervention by teachers in schools. Communities too witness these oppressive behaviours, but fail to report it to the police. Additionally, these events are influenced by societies that are underpinned by cultural norms, through a ─hiddenø school curriculum.

The significance of focusing on the vulnerability of girls and women to gender violence has helped to identify that male dominated social institutions, such as schools and the legal system, have failed to protect them against all forms of abuse, for example, sexual harassment, rape and harmful cultural practices. This chapter has highlighted a need for a joint partnership to involve communities with the possibilities of social justice, in an attempt to decolonise these socially constructed inequalities (Parkes et al., 2013).

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology employed in this exploration. Qualitative study methods have been employed for this study. The reason for working within the qualitative paradigm is to obtain empirical research which draws on township schoolgirls` perceptions, understandings and lived experiences of gender violence as it affects them. It examines the ways in which young girls between the ages of 13 and 18 years in Hope High School in Umlazi give meaning to their sexual identities, their vulnerability to gender violence and exposure to HIV and AIDS. Similarly, this study works within the interpretivist paradigm and utilises the social constructionist approach of which both are associated with a sense of worth about the shared understandings of the participantsø experiences in real life situations (Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2011).

Moreover, I conducted my study with the aim of comprehending the explanations young girls offered for engaging in sexual behaviour which also posed risks for them. As shown by Cohen et al., (2008) and Maree et al., (2013), the most important attempt of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the individualøs realm of social practices. In view of this, the interpretivist paradigm enabled me to access information by drawing from the young girlsø experiences and to recognise their behaviours from within (Maree et al., 2013). Making use of the qualitative approach allowed me to collect data that is rich data as part of continuous process which aimed to understand the participantsø social setting along with their experiences within this context.

The social constructionist approach has been drawn on to analyse data that is embedded in the common knowledge and encounters of human beings which impact on larger groups in a context (Maree, 2013). Its methodological aim is to assist in the understanding that everything is explored through the lens of the participantsø shared experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). Moreover, the participantsø viewpoints shows and influences the qualitative researcher how they perceive their sphere of life. It also reflects on the process of its findings to develop real transcripts based on gathered and interpreted data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; 2013). This chapter also provides a detailed description of what my participants said in the interviews.

Included in this chapter is a discussion on the data collection methods, taking into account the study on people, research context, sample strategy, collection of data (interviews and focus groups) as well as the method of analysis, and limitations of the study. Key ethical principles for the study are discussed including the credibility and reliability of the data.

3.2 Study approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach because of its diverse methods of analysing participantsø individual experiences within a specific context (Maree, 2013). The principal objective of qualitative research is to explore how individuals or groups interpret their lived experiences and make sense of their lives based on relations within a particular context (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Maree, 2013). A qualitative approach is appropriate for this study and provides an appropriate outline to deeply investigate the inquiry of this study (Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006). In addition, this approach could enable a researcher to explore the complexity and depth of how the participants become vulnerable to gender imbalances with regard to its manifestation within their cultural and historical contexts (Stern, 2014).

Individual interpretation and meanings of the participantsø accounts is the only way through which I could explore their experiences and this method is the prime objective of this study (Stern, 2014). Maree (2013) posits that young girlsø experiences are meant for a wide range of qualitative research strands concerned with understanding how social and cultural practices are embedded in behavioural patterns in which the participants experience gender violence in their natural settings. Moreover, advocates of social constructionism assert that this approach could be utilised to investigate how social factors like cultures, beliefs and norms feed into the school discourse to sustain gender violence (Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006). Furthermore, it enquired about the ways in which these young girls understand the socially constructed unequal power relationships with regard to sexual abuse and sexual violence. This research explores the ways in which gender inequalities and culture is understood by these young girls.

In addition, these girlsø experiences were used in this study to understand the all-inclusive nature and rich perspectives of their vulnerability to multiple forms of gender inequalities and gender violence (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). As affirmed by Cohen et al. (2007), researchers should constantly explore how society experiences and feeds into the large discourse, because gender violence is about what is happening in society. The research design

adopted assisted the researcher with inherent understanding of the young girlsø engagements in unsafe sexual behaviours and construction of sexualities within the context of gender inequalities embedded in HIV and AIDS. A qualitative research allows the researcher to go off into the arena of the individuals, to collect data based on their real life narratives, while convincingly writing literature reports which embeds itself in their experiences (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Stern, 2014). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) suggests that the qualitative research method is the best to use in this study, as compared to quantitative research methods, where the researcher focuses on results from questionnaires, and although the same questions are asked to many people, rich personal data is not obtained and as such results can only be generalised across the context.

3.3 Location of study

This qualitative research was conducted at Hope High School (pseudonym) situated in Umlazi, south of Durban, in a peri-urban fringe zone. The school is surrounded by a close-knit working-class community. Most learners who attend this school come from the nearby rural and informal settlements. These settlements are characterised by socio-economic factors such as sexism that privileges men and boys, a high unemployment and high crime rate, poverty, drug and substance abuse. The site was appropriate for understanding how factors such as gender discrimination, sexist attitudes, and patriarchy sanction gender violence. According to the Department of Social Development et al. (2012), social patterns in the surrounding community are contributing factors to girlsø exploitation and serve as a major threat to their well-being. For example, research accounts show that high crime rates could expose marginalised girls to boys through forced sexual practices, given that these conditions come with human costs such as rape and murder (HRW, 2001). Figure 3.1 shows the studyøs location.

Figure 3.1: Map of Umlazi, Durban South and its surrounding rural areas
SOURCE: Map data ©2015AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd, Google

A number of the Grade 10-12 learners from the surrounding informal settlements and rural community walk to school, sometimes in the dark and thick vegetation, to attend a one hour morning study session at six. Moreover, these learners have made claims to some teachers that these are crime infested spots which compromise their rights and access to education, safety and security as they negotiate their long journey to and from school (See Figure 3.2).
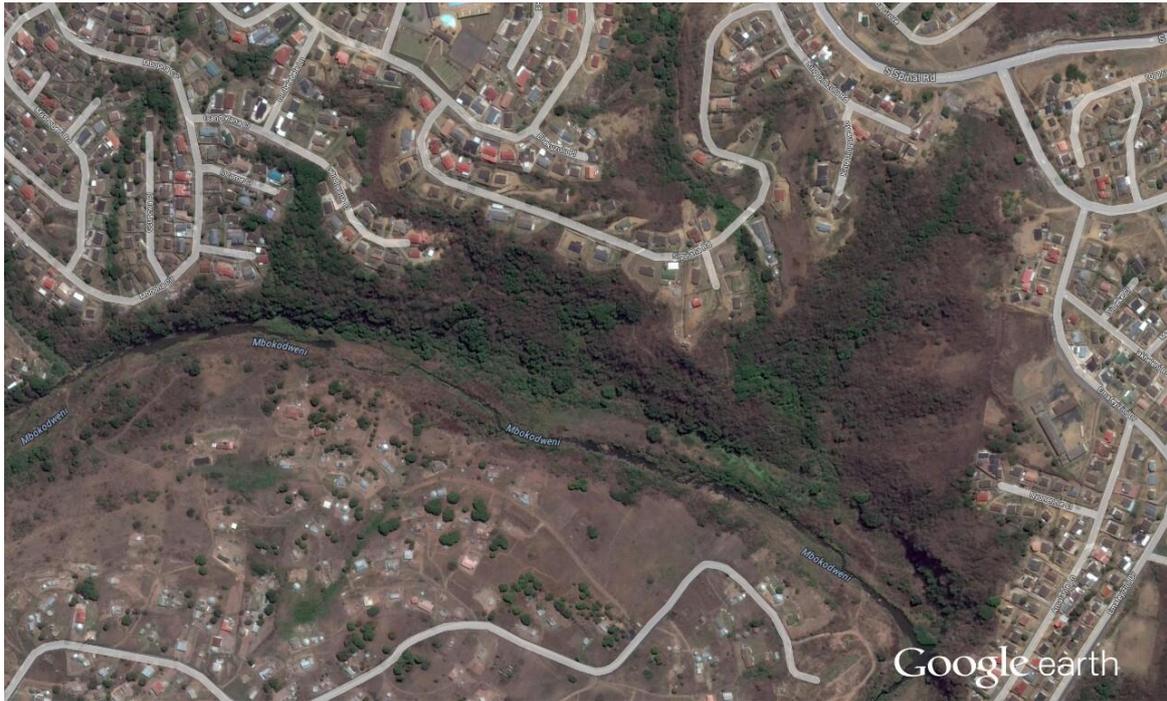
Figure 3.2: Aerial view of Umlazi Township and its surrounding Ezimbokodweni rural communities.

SOURCE: Map data ©2015AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd, Google

Most households in this area have a plot each, with trench gardens to cater for the needs of the family. In some areas there is lack of running water; the community collects water from communal taps, which are sometimes left open, dripping or leaking for days and ultimately dries up. Mostly, the area is dominated by isiZulu-speaking communities embedded in Zulu cultural norms and exceptionally conservative of their traditional practices.

These surrounding areas have few or no recreation facilities, except two poorly maintained municipal soccer fields that are available for use by these communities. There are two community halls but no events take place in any of these because it is vandalized, hence young boys and girls use it for dating, and to take drugs and alcohol. The other hall - the school hall ó is commonly booked by the community for different functions such as funerals and weddings which occurs mostly on weekends.

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Table 3.1: Estimated crime statistics impacting on the township community, by category and
year, 2015.

Crime Category	2013-2014	2014-2015	Difference
Child Abuse	3	4	1
Domestic Violence	35	61	36
Rape	133	286	153
Sexual Assault	-	27	27
TOTAL	**171**	**378**	**207**
Drugs and substance abuse	198 +244	198 +244	+21
Rape	90	63	- 27
House Robbery	29	27	-2
Attempted Murder	24	28	+4
Domestic Violence	-	23	-
Child abuse	-	1	-
Burglary (residential)	422	258	-164
TOTAL	**565**	**860**	**216**

SOURCE: South African Police Services 2015.

Table 3.2: Estimated crime statistics impacting on the rural community, by category and year,
2015.

Crime Category	2013-2014	2014-2015	Difference
Murder	24	43	+19
Rape	68	49	-19
Domestic Violence	3	9	+6
Attempted Murder	24	28	+4
TOTAL	**119**	**129**	**148**

SOURCE: Adapted from Umlazi Police Services 2015.

Graphs 3.1 and 3.2 below and Tables 3.1 and 3.2 above show some of the crime incidents
that were reported to the police between 2013 and 2015. Most of the learners in my school
come from these areas which are affected by these crimes and most have either witnessed or
have been victims of such crimes on their way to and from school. These include the
surrounding rural areas and the surrounding working class community from the township of

Umlazi. The following graphs, Graph 3.1 and 3.2 indicates estimated human rights abuses impacting on the township and rural community around Hope High School by year 2015.

Umlazi Police Station
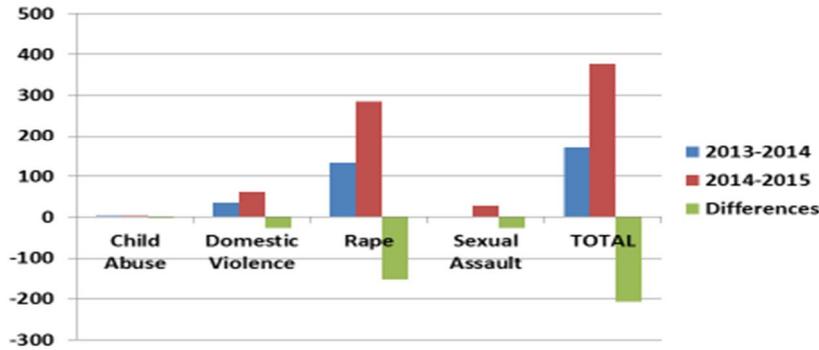
Graph 3.1: Proportion of some human rights abuses reported to Umlazisø Police Station (2015). Includes the reported differences in some gender related crimes.
Source: Bhekithemba Police Station (2015).

Bhekithemba Police Station
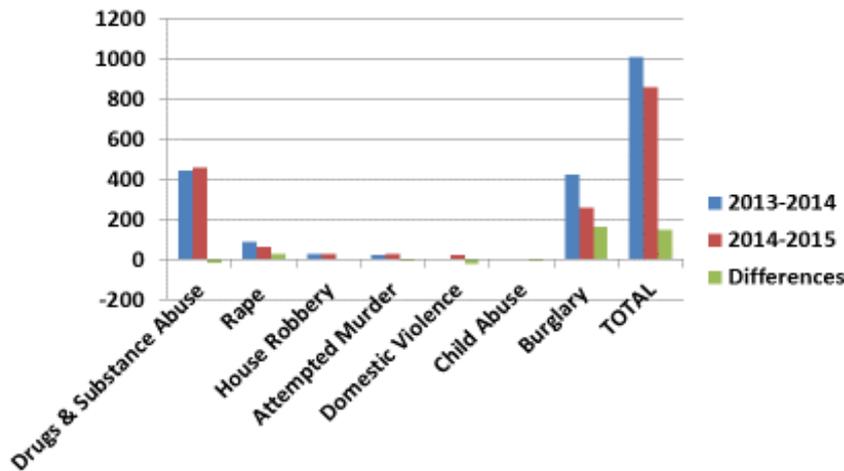
Graph 3.2: Proportion of some human rights abuses reported to Umlazisø Bhekithemba Police Station (2015). Includes the reported differences in some gender related crimes.
Source: Bhekithemba Police Station (2015).

The purpose of these statistics is to show various types of gender-related crimes such as rape and domestic violence that have been reported to the police by community members from the surrounding rural and neighbouring communities. Some of these violent crimes are transmitted into the school arena as will be demonstrated in Chapter Four.

3.4. Participant Recruitment using a Sampling Strategy

Access to participants was obtained after gaining consent from the Department of Education (DoE) and the principal of the school (see Appendix C). Teachers, parents and participants were also approached for informed consent as will be further discussed in the ethical considerations section. Purposive sampling was utilised for the selection of participants based on the assumption that I wanted to explore and understand young girlsø ownership of the activities and events with regard to gender sensitive issues (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Specific criteria were determined prior to selecting the participants and this was done in line with data collection. The sample of this study consisted of a group of 30 girls between the ages of 13-18 years, from Grades eight to twelve. Once informed consent was obtained from the DoE and the principal, letters were handed to each participant, who were requested to ask their parents and/or guardians for their approval to be included in this study.

The researcher did the following: A letter of informed consent was disseminated to parents/guardians for permission that their daughters be included in this study. The intercommunication was clarified briefly, in order to make participants aware of the prerequisites of recruitment needed for the research. Participants and parents signed the information sheet to confirm that their daughters are allowed to participate. The contact details of participants were then contacted by the researcher to ascertain their commitment in terms of participation within my field of enquiry towards reaching an agreement to an appropriate time and venue to schedule the interviews. Three of the participants, that is, two 13 year old girls in grade nine, and a 16 year old girl in grade 11, who had previously shown willingness to participate, withdrew their decision to participate. This may demonstrate the reluctance of girls to speak out openly about gender violence and how it affects them.

3.5. Data Collection: Focus groups and individual interviews

All the interviews were conducted in isiZulu which all the participants were fluent in and which is spoken by majority of people in Umlazi District. The interviews were transcribed and the translated into English by the researcher (Scollen and 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 interervieweesø words accurately, their actual meaning may be unclear. This is because the receiver makes sense of the meaning through their understanding and interpretation of words and non-verbal communication such as gestures, eye-contact, and/ or facial expression (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. The data collection methods involved the probing of the participants through focus group discussions. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and Gibbs (1997) define focus groups as an approach frequently utilised in the same way as organising the exchange of ideas through a selection of a group of persons for the purpose of gaining shared opinions in relation to a study topic. Focus groups and individual interviews were used to collect data from participants, thus allowing for corroboration of data. For example, the focus group discussions used the same questions for each focus group and the responses were similar (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Data was gathered through semi-structured, open ended individual interviews and focus groups after receiving ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (see Appendix G). Through this process, I also obtained permission from the head of my school to conduct a research (see Appendix G). I was able to extract rich data from my participants about how they experience and understand gender violence, in relation to sexual risk, with the intention of exploring how gender inequality impacts on their daily lives. I am not a positivist. I went in there with no levels of objectivity, but in search for meaning embedded in an assumption that the young girls were aware that I knew something about gender inequalities. Hence, I did not impose my meaning on the data these young girls said. What I wanted was a discussion merged with family background, the school, community, genuine interest about themselves as these are interconnected. My role was to ensure that I interpret what they were saying, their views, opinions and share my experiences. This highlights the fact that I was not searching for the truth in my undertaking to create a significance balanced rapport and impartiality in this study.

3.5.1 Focus groups

Focus groups were used at the explanatory stage of the study to elicit the multiplicity of rich data based on participantsø interpretations of the phenomena in their natural setting (Creswell, 2003). However, assembling my participants for the interviews was never easy, with some

withdrawing from the study. Some girls indicated that they were afraid to ask for permission from their parents to participate in the study because talking about sexual behaviours and gender violence is discouraged and considered taboo.

Data was collected from five focus groups with each group comprising of six participants. I chose to use focus groups because I had to bring together a sizeable number of participants for a collective understanding with regard to the topic (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Arthur et al., (2012) asserts that this is a suitable method for getting diverse views regarding the issue through an emotional as well as a collaborative manner. Moreover, focus groups are the cheapest if not the fastest technique to use because participants are easier to access as a group as compared to conducting individual interviews for a lot of people on the same topic (Arthur et al., 2012). For each focus group an equal number of participants were randomly selected from the willing participants. I set up an interview guide ahead of the focus groups and informed the participants that their views, understandings and experiences of gender violence against young girls reflected the focus of this study. Moreover, for the sake of inclusivity in the data collection process, I began by requesting that each of the young girls allocate herself a pseudonym that I would use to keep her identity anonymous. Some of the young girls made interesting remarks in relation to the adoption of their new names and drew laughter, while others showed a more casual approach and were happy with the idea. During the focus groups, there were girls who dominated the discussions as they were more talkative. Then there were other matters taking place within the discussions, such as friendly gossiping among the girls and alleged concerns that I was going to use that information against them. Some girls were shy and it was obvious that they were not comfortable discussing sex, sexuality and gender violence especially at the school. Most of the girls in this study appeared relatively self-confident and as such were able to co-operate with me about their lived experiences in relation to gender violence, sexual violence, sexuality and narratives about other girlsø vulnerability to different forms of abuse. As such, the participants narrated their understandings and experiences with regard to the abuse of power by boys against them and how the school dealt with this.

While some participants responded in isiZulu, there were those who spoke fluently in English. This prompted the isiZulu-speaking girls to attempt to do the same, thus putting themselves under a certain amount of pressure. Understandably, this led to a competition within the focus groups. However, through creating a calmer atmosphere I managed the group in a way that encouraged those who were comfortable to speak in either English or isiZulu and also encouraged those who wanted to speak in English to do so. Focus groups

were centred on the view that group interaction would be fruitful in triggering forgotten details of participant experiences (Maree, 2013). Equally significant to note is that at the start of interviews, the researcher used ‑ice breakersø to calm them down such as, getting them to stand in a circle and introduce themselves. I got my participants to sit in groups and got them to chat among themselves. I tried to make them feel comfortable and to encourage them to share their experiences in a risk-free environment. My respondents opened up and were relatively comfortable to speak to me in front of their school colleagues and friends, thus asking them not to divulge what is confidential in relation to data collected through interviews.

When some of the girls shared their experiences of being involved in relationships with boys, it drew laughter from the other members. The participants were encouraged to provide in-depth responses and this was done using various general probing tactics, for example, ‑tell me more happened at Hope High School, on the specific point in time of my studyǿ ‑and what happenedö which was prompted by pictures from newspaper cuttings affixed on the wall chart. In qualitative research no specific method is favoured as the best when interacting with participants in the process of focusing on their understandings and experiences when investigating when probing sensitive issues such as gender violence, within their natural environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). These graphic pictures showed young girls and women as victims of gender violence. The pictures evoked curiosity and also silence and initiated discussion on women and girls` safety. The researcher allowed the girls to pose questions, to stimulate dialogue among themselves as well as to reflect on various insights about the topic. This is called õphoto voiceö communication (Arthur, 2012). According to Gibbs (1997), engaging young girls in this manner empowers them to make informed decisions about their sexual lives, feel respected and to be specialists about their subject matter as well as creating chances for them to feel important as they were working alongside a researcher ó and a male researcher as men would not normally ask for their opinion. I hardly controlled the focus group discussions throughout their communication, but frequently kept them concentrated on the proceedings by appealing to their maximum participation (Gibbs, 1997).

The participants were presented with numerous topics and questions on the topic of gender violence and this provided them with a variety of opportunities to present their lived experiences of gender violence in their context (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Some

participants dominated some of the discussions in the focus groups and the researcher politely intervened by trying to include others who were quiet or shy to talk about their perceptions and experiences of gender violence. It was important to promote participantsø confidence while reducing chances of providing individual views in order to avoid being judgemental and to avoid the display of excessive approval that would have favoured certain respondents (Gibbs, 1997).

Without being asked to do so, some of the participants took photographs of areas in and around the school. The photos included a bridge, an unused workshop and stairways ó all areas in and around the school. These photographs depicted isolated areas where the girls said were prime areas of multiple forms of criminal activities, such as robbery and abuse while on their way to and from school. These photographs formed part of our focus group discussion. These images are not shown in this chapter for reasons that the site may be identifiable and the issues of confidentiality and anonymity would be violated as the school may be identified through these pictures. I had to bear in mind that these photographs could very well trigger anxiety and could cause the participants a certain amount of trauma. However, this did not cause any harm to participants.

A school counsellor was on standby to deal with any participants who may have been traumatised when they spoke about violent incidents they may have witnessed or experienced. I used the pictures because they were brought in by the participants and I did not want to refuse their attempts to assist me. On a positive note, as the research progressed, the participants who were quiet initially began to open up and were more forthcoming. Most participants began to speak about their present and past experiences as well as the meanings and understandings of gender violence. Key to this was my commitment to provide participants an atmosphere that did not make them feel exposed or vulnerable to any teasing, negativity or criticism (Maree, 2013), so I listened attentively to what the participants said, answering their questions and nodding to affirm their narratives (Maree, 2013).

Brief notes were taken in addition to recording interviews (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Participants who drifted away from the topic under discussion were guided back on track. As the focus groups were drawing to a close, participants were asked to volunteer to participate in the individual interviews. I also identified those girls whom I found inhibited during the focus groups but might feel more comfortable to talk one on one. All focus groups

and individual interviews were recorded, with permission from the participants, so that I could focus on what the participants were saying and also so that I could pay attention to the non-verbal cues (Cohen, Minion and Morrison, 2008).

3.5.2 Individual interviews

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) define interviews as the interdisciplinary action between the researcher and the participants through a dialogue as co-producers of understandings, beliefs and meanings. Individual, in-depth interviews are essential for researching confidential and sensitive data which is inappropriate for use in a group environment. Twenty hour-long individual interviews were conducted. In depth individual interviews were conducted with participants who volunteered as well as some selected by the researcher after the focus groups were conducted. The reason for choosing to conduct individual interviews was that some participants were shy and reluctant to discuss the research topic in a group. Also, the individual interviews would yield rich data that could strengthen the argument and discussion of this study. Interviews were conducted at different times and settings such as in the staffroom and in the school library. Since we have an after school study session with Grade 10-12 learners I put up notices on the notice board which read as follows: In-depth interviews in progress. Please keep noise level low. Thus, informing learners and teachers that the interviews were in progress in an attempt to reduce any noise. I also noted that the participants were curious and this drew a lot of attention from other learners as well as members of the teaching staff. When they naturally asked questions about these notices, I answered them politely by saying that I was doing research on gender violence against young girls. This gave me an opportunity to freely emancipate them on gender sensitive issues and they seemed happy with my study (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2008).

During the individual interviews, some participants who seemed reluctant to participate or remained silent in the focus groups were more forthcoming. Some responses included non-verbal cues and gestures such as taking a deep breath, some asked for questions to be repeated, while others showed signs of nervousness to conform to a particular gender sensitive issue. The individual interviews worked well because some of the participants were eager to share their experiences in a non-threatening situation by engaging them in a relaxed discussion; this helped to build trust and confidence in me, which enabled them to open up and discuss such sensitive issues. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007; 2011) building rapport between the researcher and the participants is central to the interview

processes. I tried as far as possible not to impose on the participants contact time in class so some of the interviews were conducted over the weekend and some after school. I did not conduct any interviews or focus groups during the breaks, even though I had initially intended to, because the learners needed time to relax and have their sandwiches. Interviews were conducted in English and IsiZulu for ease of communication for the participants, and I also translated questions and responses where necessary (Scollen and Scollen, 1995). The participantsø statements were never rebuked or called into question by the researcher (Baynham, 1995).

Moreover, current research indicates that it is critical during the process of collecting data that the respondentsø feelings are taken into consideration by the researcher (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Research shows that the aforementioned issues were important in negotiating effective interaction with the participants irrespective of their social status, in order to increase their participation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

To achieve the trust of the participants I spoke to them about some of the challenges that I had encountered at the school when addressing the issues of gender discrimination. I told them about an incident which took place in March 2015. This started when some young girls approached me and were hysterically crying and complaining that the girls` school toilets had been locked by the head of school for more than an hour and no reasons were given to them by the SMT. So, as a TLO and a concerned teacher, I approached the principal to enquire about the problem. She replied that this was their punishment for breaking the toilet taps and seats. Soon after our intense negotiations ended, the toilets were reopened, the situation returned to normal and most learners were seen celebrating, singing and dancing for that small victory.

After I told this story to the participants they were a little more comfortable and were more forthcoming with their stories. All the interviews were recorded using a dictaphone. This technique allowed me to focus on what the participants were saying instead of writing down all their responses. The process of analysing data began immediately after data was first translated and collected.

I also expressed my gratitude to all the participants who participated in my study. One of the participants asked me in IsiZulu õUngakhohlwa i confidentialityö during the process of your study. By way of simplification, this means õdonøt forget about confidentialityö as the study progressed. This would mean that participants were concerned about their confidentiality. However, I affirmed to my participants that their privacy is protected.

3.6 Data Analysis

The process of analysing data occurred as soon as the first focus group was completed. Both the focus groups and interviews were recorded. Five focus groups and twenty individual interviews were conducted. Data collected was recorded, transcribed and translated to acquire rich data analysis (Creswell, 1997). Data analysis procedures included the translation and transcribing of interviews before the quality of data was analysed and interpreted. This was one of the strategies that assisted me to understand how the learners' responses addressed the research questions. Data was transcribed and then translated by the researcher, read through a few times to become familiar with the data, then responses were clustered according to similar themes and patterns (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Maree, 2013). The transcribing process moved from verbal to textual. Then the textual data was translated from isiZulu to English. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) argue that the transcription of data is a fundamental step within focus group discussions, in order to prevent the prospective loss of rich data and its reduction.

The mere transcription of the vocalised text form was inadequate; this necessitated the researcher to recognise emerging data such as non-verbal cues (Maree, 2013). I found that this was an extremely time consuming and a demanding task because I had to read through the transcripts repeatedly in order to transcribe every word of the participants and make notes of non-verbal cues such as laughter, hesitation and body language. These interview transcripts were then taken back to the participants so they could read and verify their utterances during the interviews. This also provided the respondents with the opportunity to insert any additional information if they chose to do so or correct misrepresentations, if any, in the transcripts. Respondent validation examines the process where the researcher shares copies of transcripts with participants to check for truthfulness of their interpretations (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Some participants in the focus groups and individual interviews responded to some question with smiles, nodding, by raising of hands and shyness. These non-verbal responses, silences and hesitations were noted.

New and existing data were continuously compared and classified into groups to see how participants provided responses to questions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). I organised the data in order to scrutinise the participants` responses and then coded my data. I read through it several times to see commonalities and shared understandings between the

participants. This had implications for describing information and to generate data categories developed from participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Data was written up thematically with gender relational theory being the analytical tool to interpret data. Literature was integrated into the discussion to support or refute the findings of this study.

3.7 Ethical considerations

To commence the study, ethical approval from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the School of Education was attained (REC REF HSS/0712 /014m), and linked to the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Ref SS/1197/013). Written consent was attained from the Department of Basic Education, the school principal, educators, parents and participants prior to the interview process, in line with the ethical guiding principles as articulated by the Ethics Committee. That also means they are vulnerable, perhaps where you have information on the councillor being part of your groups. A detailed explanation with regards to the objectives of the investigation, including its expectations were specified with respect to my participants age differences, so would their understanding be different to that of an older teen (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006). Additionally, this provided me with an opportunity to access every participant prior to data collection (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006). Ethical issues regarding focus groupsø discussions such as informing the participants about the aims of this study, what was expected of them, including the issue of confidentiality was stated. (Gibbs, 1997; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) were adhered to by me. Additionally, issues of potential threats as well as benefits of taking part in the study were discussed with each participant (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Participants remained aware that their involvement was based on their free will, thus they were advised they could withdraw from the study without prejudice (Sundaram, 2013).

Furthermore, participants were also informed that under no circumstances would they be forced to answer a question if they opted not to answer some of the questions asked of them (Maree, 2013). Interviewees were duly informed that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential. Further, pseudonyms were used to protect the participantsø identity and they were guaranteed that their names or identities would not be revealed (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The girls were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms that would be included in the final research report. The ultimate aim of such an approach was to enable participants to feel that their voice is eventually being heard could (Donaghue, 2007).

Each of these participants were allowed to pose questions and to address any confusion or inconsistencies about the study (Stern, 2014). As a researcher, I also had a moral obligation to protect the dignity and the rights of the participants. I disclosed all procedures, research methods and processes which made for transparency and allows for public inspection with regard to appropriately documented procedures employed. Being an African, adult male educator, I have experienced other challenges that might have been implicated by this during the process of data collection. I was also aware that this could be a sensitive topic for the young female girls to discuss. Therefore, I strictly adopted the ethical guiding principle obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (refer to accompanying Ethical Clearance Certificate, Appendix G). According to Maree (2013), a scholar cannot conduct research that generates data without creating a strategy to develop a positive atmosphere that recognises the participantsøcontribution and environment.

3.8 Validity and reliability of data

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) describe validity as a practice of making sure that data collected from the participants when interpreted by experts can be understood as verifiable, trustworthy and may possibly be generalised. According to Maree (2013) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), to produce unique qualitative research, validity should meet several aspects such as interpreting data.

Data and knowledge should follow correct procedures to address the issue of the credibility of data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). I addressed this by effectively going back to the participants and verifying that the textual transcripts regarding their responses during the interviews was accurately reflected in this study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). In view of the fact that the research was conducted in English and IsiZulu, it posed some challenges in terms of translating the data. This is because its translation was not word for word. In spite of this, I did make every single effort to carefully transcribe data in order to avoid losing the essence of what the participants said in translation by not deleting, omitting and making any changes to what the participants had said in the interviews (Scollen and Scollen, 1995). Thus, participants were afforded a chance either to add, remove or rectify mistakes for verification of data collected (Maree, 2013). Therefore, the depth in qualitative data presentation is reached through adding issues of trustworthiness, honesty, richness of data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) note validity means that the voice and dignity of the participants should be respected in order to eliminate various forms of biases by a researcher. To enhance the validity and reliability of my study I used an audio-recording tool for recording the interviews verbatim in order to achieve accuracy when transcribing data and to raise awareness on what I could have taken for granted (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Also, within the data collection frame work of triangulation I used both individual and focus groups discussion in this study, so that the findings reveal the experiences and existing understandings of the participants (Arthur et al., 2012; Maree, 2013). Cohen et al., (2007) states that to triangulate means that a researcher apply different ways of collecting information from various sources, within which data collected is contrasted and assessed. I managed triangulation by merging data through member checking in order to avoid the problematic issues of bounded findings, inform the understanding of the participants and this increased trustworthiness with regard to the assessment of their practices. These methods enabled me to see if data collected from different sources reflected contradicted and confirmed the participantsøopinions, with the aim of increasing the richness of the research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). For example, I constantly and carefully asked myself questions about my data, such as examining the correctness of data given to me by participants.

3.9 Limitations of the Research

Some of the participants decided to withdraw before the focus groups commenced due to the deeply personal and sensitive nature of the topic. They became reluctant to engage with the researcher on issues in focus groups. This means that the study was somewhat compromised, as the number of participants was reduced from 33 to 30 in the focus groups. I thanked them and respected their decisions because it was their right not to allow their children to participate (Graham et al., 2013).

Also, the lack of co-operation from teachers and participants became a limiting factor. It is generally recognised that as a Grade 10-12 teacher, curriculum demands require me to spend time in the classroom, which limited my time and focus on my research. This shows that I had to compete with demands of meeting the requirements of my study, such as submission dates and deadlines. Time limits posed a major problem because I had to find a balance between completing my study and ensuring my participants adhered to their class schedules.

This study also intimidated the authority figures in the school. I received letters to discourage me from continuing with my study and I was looked at as a threat to the cultural norms. As a consequence, I was initially denied access to some areas, namely the library that was designated for me to conduct my focus groups and interviews.

Moreover, the focus groups and individual interviews coincided with the final exams and it became difficult to access the participants. This affected the completion of some tasks of this research project on time. On the days learners were writing exams I set up interview times with them so that they were aware of when to come in on the days they were not writing. However, some parents indicated to me that I should come and conduct interviews in their presence at their homes after hours. I did inform parents that they could not sit in on the interviews and that they were not allowed to be present. However, the problem I encountered with this idea was that it was too risky for me to visit these areas and conduct interviews in the evening as some participants and local communities identified their areas as crime hot spots. This forced me to suspend my research project and continue with it when schools re-opened in January 2015. This was a difficult decision to take because I had to delay the interviews. Additionally, within the context of such instability, logistical time limits such as long morning assemblies were additional unforeseen challenges. To overcome this, I had to request an extension from my supervisor who inspired me not lose focus of my study.

Furthermore, the existing power relationships between me and the young girls - as an adult and a teacher could affect their ability to be open and honest (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The power embedded in those identities affected what girls wanted to disclose, their ability to be open and honest, and not wanting to be judged. To work around this I ensured the participants of utmost confidentiality and ensured that I adopted a non-judgemental attitude when they disclosed very personal and sensitive information.

An additional limitation was when the security personnel employed in the school denied me access to conduct interviews in some areas such as the school hall which were deemed suitable for this purpose. The security personnel often accused me of teaching learners human rights and that he was never informed by anyone regarding my intention to conduct interviews. He was not in favour of my interviews because he explicitly stated to me that he has traditional beliefs and dislike research conducted by teachers who challenge the use of corporal punishment in school. Moreover, I am saying this because he lamented to me and some members of the staff that human rights issues in education are the root cause of teenage

pregnancy, lack of respect and this prevented teachers from using corporal punishment to instil discipline in schools. After consultation with the principal and the security personnel, I was then able to continue with my interviews as scheduled. At one point while I was still busy with the interview with a focus group in the after school study he shouted out õIøm locking the doors and I`m leaving for home nowí .the timing of your study is interfering my timeö. I remained calm and ignored him for the remainder of that interview. The next day I approached him and explained to him the purpose of my study. Since then the interviews went on smoothly without any interference by the security personnel.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I examined the research design and methodology of my study that included qualitative methods and an interpretivism approach. The research process provided an outline on core features in relation to the data collection process (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Further, an argument on the choice of study methods which included focus groups and a semi-structured open ended individual interview was provided. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants for the study. The ethical considerations were presented which included matters of anonymity and confidentiality. The thematic data analysis procedure was discussed which included the theoretical framework and literature integration in the discussion of the findings. Emphasis on reflexivity was found to be a crucial part of qualitative research and provided guidelines in this study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The chapter also discussed the authenticity, in addition to the consistency embedded in data. Moreover, I defined the limitations of this research as well as ethical considerations of this investigation.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

I analysed data generated from focus group discussions and individual interviews. Gender relational theory is used as a theoretical lens to analyse the data. This chapter will show how certain ways of understanding gender produces relations of inequalities. Gender relational theory is critical in theorising and analysing gender violence against young girls in every day interaction within their context (Courtney, 2000; Sundaram, 2013). Connell (2014), Ivinson and Renold (2013) suggest that gender, sexuality and cultural dimensions are interconnected to our discourses and used in different ways to define gender relationships. This assists our understanding of how the girls in this study are vulnerable to various forms of gender violence and how the issues of power and the social processes intertwine with gender inequalities which rotates through its construction, replication and regulation and are extended to school settings (UN, 2006; Reilly, 2014; UN, 2014). It also investigates the role of the media and cyber bullying as factors that exacerbate girlsø vulnerability to gender violence and teenage pregnancy even though there are awareness campaigns, as well as school outreach and community programmes that attempt to reduce and / or eradicate this problem.

The data analysed in this study shows that gender violence and gender inequalities against young girls are embedded in cultural and social practices (UNESCO, 2014). The analysis serves to demonstrate how cultural practices promote girlsø vulnerability to boys (Anderson, 2008; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). How this occurs in school is a particular focus of this study because research shows that schools are not alert to gender and sexuality concerns because teachers see girls as passive products of socialization (Sundaram, 2013). Moreover, research conducted by the United Nations (2014) shows that learners should be encouraged to talk and to speak against the sexual drive discourse through which gender violence is manifested.

The data analysis is embedded in an interpretative approach in order to understand how these girls perceive, understand and experience gender violence in school. The analysis of the focus groups and individual interviews reflects that these teenage girlsø susceptibility to gender violence is embedded in different issues such as the intricate interaction between power,

personal dilemmas, love, partnership and violence in constructing their sexualities (Bhana and Moosa, 2015). This study illustrates the ways in which these young girls negotiate their sexual identities with particular reference to their vulnerabilities to multiple forms of gender abuse and how their context is implicated in it. The following themes emerged from the data collected: (1) gender, culture and girls` vulnerability; (2) gender inequality, power and analysing media pictures (3) gender violence, power and intervention; (4) gender, power, gender inequality and health risks (5) intimate partner violence in and out of school. These themes are central to the analysis of this study.

4.1.1 Exploring gender, culture and vulnerability of young girls to gender violence

In the focus group discussions with these young girls involving gender sensitive issues, intimate partner relationships, sex, gender violence and gender imbalances was a common theme.

Cathalia from the focus group said the following in connection with gender violence.

Cathalia

An old man use to greet me on my way back from school every day. One guy asked for my cell number and grabbed me by my arm. Since I reported this to my brother it has stopped….teachers are not aware of what is happening to us after school……..boys outside the school demand our numbers and if you refuse they call you names and say 'do you want me to beg you'? (ufuna ukukotshwa).

Lucy

I've seen boys beating girls here at school just for being in a relationship with another boy while showing off their power to other boys. Girls do not hit back. Last year (Valentine's Day) I was wearing a cropped top written kiss me and at random a guy came and kissed me ……..that was quick. I was shocked and just laughed.

Some girls in this study pointed out that they often feel manipulated and coerced into relationships with boys against their will because of the power boys have over them. The apparent powerless positions that girls find themselves in is alluded to in the extract. For example, Lucy and Cathalia pointed out that they are vulnerable to sexual abuse and verbal abuse. Also, they cite gender power inequalities that appeared as a solid reason for not reporting these risky sexual behaviours, as most of them occur after school. Patriarchy is at

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the centre of their interactions and relationships with boys. However, while Lucy speaks of the forced kiss, she laughs and this is indicative of her accommodation and resistance of the boys` behaviour. There appears to be a feeling of helplessness in terms of reporting leading to the involvement their male relatives to protect themselves.

Lucy's response indicates that she did not report any harm inflicted on her by boys because teachers are aware of what occurs. These girls have internalised gender imbalances and unconsciously tolerate sexual abuse due to lack of intervention by teachers. It is evident that men and boys are afforded a higher status whereas their female counterparts are accorded inferior status (United Nations, 2014). For example, men and boys assume power domination, and control over women and girls. This means that females are perceived as inferior in addition to being subordinates who ought to be submerged in men's total domination (Fineran and Bennet, 1999). Jennet from the focus group narrated the following in relation to their vulnerability to gender violence.

Jennet

It's just that boys always force themselves to having an upper hand because they have more physical strength than girls, and they like to be the centre of attention…

Physical strength has been cited as one of the reasons for male dominance. Having physical strength gives boys the upper hand over girls, which overpowers girls. Jennet makes reference to boys acquiring some type of social status or attention when they are able to control or dominate girls.

Even though some traditional practices are viewed as promoting male domination and serving the interests of men, such as virginity testing and bride abduction. Nonetheless, young girls still see the need celebrate these activities. Virginity testing is the cultural, historical practice and process whereby young girls' genitalia is examined by older women, in a space ingrained in a belief that it could prevent further spread of HIV and AIDS, including reclaiming, as well as promoting disappeared traditional core values (Nkani, 2012; Mvune, 2013). Young women have to lie in a row on grass mats while the virginity tester (umhloli) part their legs and examine their genitalia, frequently using her hands to part the young women's labia or pull their buttocks to see the ihlo (the ÷eye÷ believed hymen) (Mvune, 2013: p.26). Most young women, who participate in virginity testing, attend the Reed Dance Festival, known as Umkhosi Womhlanga in IsiZulu, is an annual cultural festival which celebrates the coming-of-age of women (Mvune, 2013: p.27). Ukuthwala is the practice whereby a female is

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abducted by a male and forced to stay at his home against her will, until she gives in to his expectations such as the promise of marriage (Nkosi, 2014; Mayer and Barnard, 2015). Gender activists have drawn attention to these practices which have become widely publicised. However, responses from the participants revealed that gender power inequalities and patriarchy continue to play an enormous role in their experiences within these practices. The unequal power relations between males and females may result in some teenage girls being more vulnerable to multiple forms of abuse (Hlavka, 2014). During focus group discussions, it emerged that there is connection between culture and gender violence.

Researcher

Tell me more about cultural activities in your area that you think contribute to gender violence.

Mbali (Focus Group Discussions)

Zulus still practice the culture of abduction (ukuthwala). They just say they will pay the girls family a dowry 'Ilobolo' even if it's against her will. Anyway a girl will be forced to marry that male. This is equivalent to violence.

Chimez (Individual Interviews)

Yes, the ones especially in the rural area where they allow a child to get married forcibly through ukuthwala tradition, it is really traumatizing to a child, really, because even those cows are not helping you as a child directly.

Chimez

They kidnap you and beat you up if you refuse to go with them, they feed you love portion (umuthi) so that you may like them or like that family, then you stay thee traumatised because you are kidnapped by someone you don't know and not dating, is rare that you find that tradition being practiced by people who are in a relationship

The violent nature of bride abduction is clearly evident. Kidnapping and violence are in violation of the South African Bill of Rights (HRW, 2001). In the focus group discussions Casey, Wandile, Maya, Ntombi and Ciara spoke about the Zulu culture of virginity testing and its links to gender violence.

Casey

I can say the Zulu culture more especially…an event called the reed dance, where virgins gather carrying reed as a sign of their purity and being virgins, a king will choose a young girl who is a virgin to marry or to add to his wives…

Wandile

Ukuhlola…….virginity testing leads to rape after girls have been given a clean audit on the status of virginity……attracts boys.

Maya

Zulu reed dancing….girls come home late and are sexually harassed …boys get a chance to rape girls.

Ntombi

I've been attending virginity testing and now I don't….people will gossip and speak badly about me.

Ciara

I think it's a traditional Zulu culture. I will use isiZulu because I don't want to miss some points. Imvunulo yethu iveza imizimba yethu namabele uma sihamba emgaqweni siya emicimbini (our traditional attire that we wear when attending functions is revealing such as the shape of our bodies and breasts). As we walk on the streets boys are attracted to us and sometimes only attend these functions solely to see and appreciate our body shapes.

Even though these are girls aware that the issue of gender power and culture makes them vulnerable to men, some girls still attend these traditional rituals. However, some girls are hesitant to attend, because of the lack of safety and potential for them to be sexually violated is greater. The irony of their situation is that the very cultural practice that compels them to be sexually pure places them in a vulnerable position with regard to gender inequalities.

Lucy (Focus Group Discussions)

Ha Sir! In India poor families force young girls as young as 16 years to lose virginity to marry older man in their 50 s because these males have financial power…..polygamy make women become prisoners in their own homes….new spouse abuse the older ones.

Ciara (Focus Group Discussions)

In Nigeria girls are sold or forced by parents to marry older men despite having intimate relationships with their partners.

These girls are even aware of oppressive cultural practices that lead to gender violence such as child brides and polygamy in other parts of the world, and how financial power is implicated in it. They make reference to oppressive cultural practices such as child brides that take place in India and Nigeria.

Alwande

In the Shembe religion an old man (ikhehla) choses his wife among young girls and if she refuse she is cursed…this promote a culture of silence among young girls.

During focus group discussions, one of the participants, Alwande makes reference to cultural oppression that has a religious influence. In the name of religious beliefs and practices, young women are coerced into becoming child brides. This highlights the powerlessness of girls to determine and choose their marital partners.

Almost all of these young girls were explicit about their feelings and views about culture. These cultural practices expose young girls to health risks such as rape, trauma, and sexual harassment and they are forced to depend on their male partners financially. According to Nkosi (2014), girls` schooling is disrupted and their safety is compromised. It is apparent that families prepare them to accept the subordinate roles and their powerless situations and force them to get married at an early age. Abusive behaviours perpetrated against them are not taken seriously when reported. Within this framework, traditional and cultural norms are central to undermining the freedoms and privileges of young girls, thus treating them as possession of men and exposing them to more abuse (Department of Social Development (DSD) et al., 2012). Cultural practices are embedded in norms, beliefs, and values of teenage girls and demonstrated by symbols and rituals rather than formal structures in society (Jakobsen, 2014). Additionally, culture is central to reinforcing power imbalances underpinned by attitudes and behaviours of males to the detriment of teenage girls within or outside the school (Jewkes and Morrell, 2012). Research shows that the dominant males use

culture to oppress young girls, in anticipation that the most vulnerable group may be influenced to maintain gender stereotypes (Moletsane, 2014).

The researcher enquired from the girls what cultural practices mean when it comes to relationships as well as their thoughts on the influence they have on relationships?

…silence… (Focus Group) no response

Researcher

(Repeats in IsiZulu).

Angela (Individual Interview)

Sir everyone deserves equal rights… so that we can treat each other equally…

Developing intervention programmes that address the role of culture in the exploitation of young girls through its restricting gender patterns, could prevent or make them struggle to talk about gender violence (Lundgren, 2013; Parkes et al., 2013). This is where the participants in the focus group did not respond and were hesitant to respond to the question related to culture and unequal power relations. This indicates that there is a relationship between culture, silencing of young girls and gender violence when challenging the social norms (Lundgren, 2013; Parkes et al., 2013).

These teenage girls expressed their desire for gender roles and stereotypes that perpetuate gender inequalities against them to be challenged and for them to have the same rights as boys. They demonstrated their awareness of the pervasiveness of gender violence and interestingly refer to gender violence as a scourge that affects boys too. Boys are also cited as victims of violence. Some suggestions that include gender awareness programmes have been recommended by participants as a way of reducing and preventing gender violence. Promoting respect amongst boys and girls is also mentioned as important to combat gender violence. This demonstrates that schools need to identify innovative approaches through which to challenge gender power inequalities and to disrupt the exclusionary societal norms that results in female oppression (Parkes et al., 2013; Hlavka, 2014). In the focus discussion group, Melokuhle, Maya and Philasande spoke about changes that need to take place in order to eliminate risky sexual behaviours and promote positive knowledge on sexuality to young individuals.

Melokuhle

Make boys do girls' work…..so they see that we are all equal and…. no one is more powerful than the other.

Maya

Promote the spirit of respect among learners…..run programmes on gender violence.

Philasande

Invite people every Friday to come…….address all learners….even boys abused by girls….should report……. silence leads to more vulnerability…..in and outside the school.

Some of these participants felt discriminated against and marginalised in the way they are treated by boys. They interpreted male privilege as being driven by the social values of exploitation, particularly in their isiZulu culture. The teenage girls expressed that they should not be treated differently from other groups, just because they are girls.

Mbali

I see gender violence as an act where one person is violated by another opposite gender. It can be physical or emotional and has many types. It can happen to anyone either male or female…..something you can take lightly. However, the emotional effects of abuse are more dangerous than physical abuse. I have experienced it, I know it and I grew up with it….as something that formed part of our family. When I challenged it at my young age I was never taken seriously at home and it was normalised and told that it would soon be over. It affected me but could do little about it. Its females, because they were taught that if a male has spoken no one could go against his word. It looks as if their minds are channelled and taught like that and persevere. When females report incidents of abuse by male partners to their parents they are told to persevere and that's how marriage (kunjalo emshadweni). If you are a child who grew up in such an environment you think that it's normal for a male to abuse a female…..it looks like this thing is passed from generation to generation…this gives males more power to continue with it, because no one does anything about it.

In the focus group discussions, Mbalis' response is interesting to note ó when she reported that her husband abused her to her parents she was told to persevere and also told that is what life is like in a marriage. Male domination and male violence is internalised and normalised. She refers to both physical and emotional abuse but suggests that emotional abuse is more harmful and damaging than physical abuse. She alludes to the silences around male domination and male violence which allows these oppressive behaviours to continue - the lack of intervention is what gives males more power to continue with abuse, because no one does anything about it. Mbalis' statement reflects that as a child who grew up witnessing domestic and familial violence, there is a great likelihood that you would internalise and normalise male abuse where violence could be passed from generation to generation.

4.1.2 Understanding gender inequality, power and media pictures of women's abuse

During one of the focus groups, in an attempt to stimulate discussion and thought, pictures that illustrate gender violence were presented to the participants. They were asked to comment on the pictures. The posters were made by the participants and evoked mixed feelings amongst them and stimulated a discussion on gender violence. The purpose of this activity was to get the participants talking within the focus groups and to promote interaction with each other, while producing data which is linked to the topic of this study. This activity allowed for the emergence of new and diverse opinions, perceptions and themes with regard to the topic.

Mbali

The way I see it there are so many things surrounds our lives that could prevent you from realising your dreams……I might never think that such things can happen to me…..these pictures have made me realise that there could be barriers to realising my dreams. Then it all depends on the mentality that you have (positive or negative) about life and the way you see it in general and this help to avoid it……less educated people find it difficult to avoid it.

The data implies that ordinary media may empower young girls in terms of promoting values of equality and beliefs such as change of attitudes in modern-day society (Leishman, 2011). For example, Mbali expresses her opinion on her expectations of life as a young girl that is filled with hopes, but soon realizes that the pictures showing women who are victims of sexual violence teaches her about the harmful effects of gender violence and also reflects to her about illiterate women who find it difficult to challenge gender imbalances and are very vulnerable to gender violence. According to Mbali, a lack of access to education due to gender violence could prevent women from reaching their goals in life and this enlightenment on gender sensitive issues came through as a result of the published media stories and pictures.

Mbali

It's females. May be it's the way we were brought up….some women interprets abuse as a sign of love. I just don't know females are failing to be independed…put a stop on it….revenge by pouring a pot of boiling water over him….females are fearful of men and just persevere.

Girls contemplate revenge by being equally violent…

Angela

Like if a person is married and you see a woman or man being abused in that marriage and it makes me wonder if and when I get married how my husband treat me...this way. You end up hesitating to get married, because of the things we witness from other people's experiences…

From the stories of abuse these girls hear and witness it, they have doubts about getting married. They have a negative perception about marriage.…

In most of the focus group discussions, it merged that gender violence and power imbalances compromise and deny young girlsø learning opportunities and their sexuality.

Researcher

Learning to be a girl. What does it means to you?

Lwandile

You should be a person who is always scared that you should ……..wear long things so that no man would be attracted. Because you always fear that if you wear something shorter people will say things about you. Things like being called a whore and you can also be involved in rape….people will not be respecting you. Yahhh.

Alwande

I think that the issue of power starts from home. As we grow up parents use to tell us that a boy (my brother) at home lays down the rules for his sister (me) and look after her. That means that he had a right to abuse me for any of my wrong doings. But nothing of this nature was said to me (laughter) about him.

Janet

In relation to gender violence what I see is that too many people life is still embedded in the traditional approach that men have power over women. For example, at home there is a belief that a father is the head of the family, is in control and lays down the rules. This means that even if the family head (male) does something wrong no one dares to challenge his word. Mom used to say "once a father as the head of the house has made his decision on any issues and that decision is final" (useshilo ubaba, isishilo indoda yekhaya).

The participantsø statements indicate that boys have power over girls. Further, boys use this power inherent from their families to perpetuate gender power disparities. Some of the participants such as Mbali talked strongly about how some women have internalised the controlling behaviour of males and fail to challenge it because they are dependent on them as providers. This shows that young girls are shaped by the environmental and the societal context in which they are living (Wong, 2014). Cultural, religious and traditional norms and practices are important for their construction of gender biases. Moreover, this in turn involves privileged men and subordinate women and girls who normalise patriarchy, harassment and

all forms gender abuse as part of their lives, within relational dynamics (Hlavka, 2014; UNESCO, 2014).

The responses above suggest that patriarchy provides some men with a space to oppress women and teenage girls through domination (Parkes, 2008; UNICEF, 2010). This leads to greater educational and employment prospects for boys while placing girls at a disadvantage. Human Rights Watch (2001) and Wong (2014) acknowledge that young girls should not be subjected to unequal treatment and forced to adapt to sexual discrimination because this reinforces the internalisation of gender stereotyping and could have adverse effects on their life styles.

In such a complex environment, Connell (2000) argues that all violence is grounded on gender and is inclined towards social constructions which emphasise male supremacy and power imbalances extracted from social histories. Thus, schools in this context could play a critical role in assisting young girls to realise their social aspirations embedded on gender equality and justice (Human Rights Watch, 2001), in which the outcomes could inevitably maintain power relations through which their identity is constructed (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Ivinson and Renold, 2013).

According to Alexander et al., (2011), masculinity is linked to gender violence within the dominant male power and gender societal imbalances, so as to compromise females and teenagersø sexual wellbeing. During the focus group discussions, these girls acknowledge that social norms and the media in their communities contribute enormously to how teenage girls are trapped in the cycle of violence commencing from birth through all the stages of their lives.

Joance

In my L- section neighbourhood a mother forced her 12 year old girl to fall in love with a rich man….provided food for her poor family.

Zama

Eldery women was raped……killed on the basis of age.

Cathalia

Boys are the ones who are violating us as girls. As girls we are trapped in a relationship that is abusive.

Ayanda

It's women who are the victims.

Ciara

Girls are the ones whose rights are being violated.

Lwandle

Boys have more power and abusing it.

Some girls express their feelings of vulnerability whereby their human rights and dignity are compromised by males through the abuse of power. Very young girls and old women are not exempt from being sexually violated. Sexual violence against very young girls by older men and rape of older women is also referred to here. As Joance points out, girls are forced into relationships because they come from low socio-economic contexts. A poverty stricken context contributes to girls engaging in transactional sex where they are coerced into relationships with older men in exchange for food.

From my experience of socialisation in the Zulu culture, boys justify their violent behaviours because it is internalised and entrenched in traditional society. However, violence could also be used by boys a means to protect girls from rival boys if they feel that their relationship is under threat. The data from Mbali however, illustrates that on the whole the young girls go along with prevailing notions of gender inequalities.

Researcher

Tell me more about gender violence in the media such as TV and radio.

Angela

Grade 2 learner……sexually abused by a truck driver

Zama

Eldery women raped……killed on the basis of age

In the focus group discussions, it emerged that Zama and Angela somehow seem to be conscious that the media highlight gender violence as having links to health risks such as rape regardless of age and the most vulnerable are women and young girls (Ayanda). In addition, Joance appears unhappy about mothers who force their children into intimate relationships with rich males in order to provide food for the family due to low socio economic factors.

In addition to this, the participantsø different meanings with regard to gender inequalities and that young girlsø intellectual capacities have improved towards resisting gender violence. For example, Ciara and Velocity (focus group discussions) pointed out that their responses to the pictures raised their awareness on gender violence against women and girls. This suggests that the young girls could have found it difficult to engage with me, however, making use of pictures as an additional resource in my study and to develop a new understanding of the large scale occurrence of gender violence regardless of race, class and gender. In the focus group interviews, the news of gender violence was not positively entertained by Velocity, Abigail, Cathalia, Rose and Ciara as per their narrative below:

Researcher

How do you view the sexual harassment of girls by boys?

Velocity

It's painful. I don't like it. Even if I'm not closely related to those victim girls. I will take that girl as my sister.

Abigail

This is bad. We don't trust males anymore.

Cathalia

No one is safe from sexual harassment……..I should not be forced to have sex.

Ciara

It can happen to anyone in a relationship and could destroy your dreams.

Rose

No sir, it should be stopped because sometimes boys are dangerous....one day we will seat [sit] alone to discuss our problems and ultimately it does happen for a girl in that situation to end up being raped. And the people will simply say we cannot do much about it since they are close friends.

This mode of understanding as suggested above shows that girls viewed boys as having more power underpinned by domination and violence. On the other hand, they viewed gender violence through cultural beliefs as something that makes them the property of males (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012). For example, many girls reported that unequal gender relations deprives them of their right to education and exposes them to gender imbalances. According to Reilly (2014) and Action Aid (2013), this suggests that schools have a responsibility to promote hope, coherence and safe learning settings for effective teaching and learning, particularly for girls.

Responses by the participants showed that engaging with pictures enhanced their understanding of risks associated with gender violence. As a result, more girls came forward with stories of what they had witnessed and their experiences. Extracts below confirm that girls in the interviews were exposed to the realities of sexual abuse through the use of pictures which show women as victims. Moreover, their understandings of gender violence were enhanced and this exercise also provided them with an important opportunity to participate in a risk free environment and without criticism. The participantsø comments show evidence that the culture of violence undermines their human rights, is pervasive and poses some health risks (Human Rights Watch, 2001). These girls are familiar with multiple forms of abuse ranging from murder to rape and suicide as indicated below (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012; Oxfam, 2014). There is also a certain level of awareness regarding the pervasiveness of gender violence in the community, South Africa and elsewhere. This is illustrated below (in focus group discussions):

Dineo

In 2011 I read in the newspaper that girls returning from Umkhosi womhlanga were sexually harassed and raped by boys from the surrounding community.....and a girl (13years) ....was raped by her mother's boyfriend who complained that when they first met she was not a virgin...then he raped the teenage girl....she reported the incident to teachers at school.

Maya

An orphaned virgin girl of 13 years staying with her brother who felt that she was a burden forced her to marry ikhehla (grand pa).....the girl committed suicide....

Gugulethu

A man tried to kill his family......and accused wife cheating. Another Indian male in Chatsworth stabbed his female partner seven times (while she was drinking alcohol) he accused her of carrying an abortion.

Melokuhle

My uncle shot my aunt eight times...after an argument......both were in the police force.

Researcher

In all this......who are the victims and why?

Melokuhle

It's females....firstly are physically abused....remain silent and become fearful of men.....this continues the cycle of violence.

Drawing on the participant's different perspectives it is clear that the physical abuse of women and young girls is embedded in male superiority, substance abuse, lack of trust and sometimes results in health risks and even suicide. The stigma attached to women and girls who report sexual abuse and sexual violence has the potential to cause more trauma. Often women and girls remain silent. They are discouraged from seeking help or speaking out and therefore are unable to access proper advice from their close relatives and parents. Thus, they find themselves going through the cycle of gender violence as expressed by Melokuhle. The possibilities of being killed by an intimate partner is higher than normal as suggested by Maya and Gugulethu in the focus groups discussion. According to the World Health

Organisation (2014) the prevalence of females murdered each day by an intimate partner in 2013 peaked in women aged between 15- 44 at 38% as compared to 6% of males world-wide.

4.1.3 Challenging gender violence, power and promotion of intervention to protect young girls

An additional theme that emerges from this study is gender violence, power and intervention. In the excerpts below it is evident that these girls view gender violence as a conventional and common fragment of their daily lives. Thus, through dialogue, I investigated the participantsø stories that are embedded in the transformative approach to eliminate gender violence against them (Boonzaier et al., 2015). Leach and Humphreys (2007) and United Nations (2006), contend that gender violence is a serious issue that necessitates intervention and effecting of precise policies in order to successfully eradicate it. Human Rights Watch (2001), Lindley (2014) and UNESCO (2014) illustrate that it is important to safeguard and enhance the rights of the most vulnerable to gender inequalities in order to protect our differences embedded in social norms. Within this framework, the data transcripts assisted me with discussing multiple forms of gender stereotypes experienced by young girls in our discussion.

The girls in this study reveal that they were involved in relationships and dated boys. A significant and expansive problem encountered by the young girls in school was violence and sexual stereotypes against them (Human Rights Watch, 2001). Analysing the teenage girlsø experiences with gender violence included examining how various identities are constructed in our discussion and the way they viewed themselves in their interaction with boys.

Maya (Focus Group Discussions)
Is the violation of human rights……..and Melokuhle boys have more power than girls….during break time.

Dorothy (Focus Group Discussions)
Here at school I can say I've seen boys beating girl and girls being beaten. According to hearsays boys beat girls for no apparent reason

Velocity (Focus Group Discussions)

I think it could be a female abusing a female or male abusing a female depending on the power of the perpetrator than a victim. Males abuse females by beating or sexually abuse them.

The statement by Velocity shows that gender violence can also include female on male violence.

What is also evident is that what happens in the community impacts on the school. During an individual interview Lwandile indicated that girls witness a lot of violence outside the school and this is transferred to school where fights break out between boys and girls during breaks. In the focus group discussions, Minenhle maintained that: *Some boys are hit by their girlfriends at home and vent their anger to girls at school.*

These girls allude to male loss of power and their attempts at reclaiming this power by becoming violent towards others. Those boys who are hit by their girlfriends find ways of getting back by hitting other girls. In addition, boy violence manifests in ways that suggest sexual violence especially if they cannot have their way with girls. Policing and regulating girls` associations using violence appears to be commonplace. Boys use brutal force to get girls to comply with their orders which include having sex and not being in the company of other boys. Because there is no real support for these girls or any reporting structures, they feel alone with no one to turn to. Even their grandparents refuse to pay attention to the sexual and violent abuse they endure.

Jennet (Individual Interviews)

Boys want to have sex with girls by force if they are in a relationship, if a girl is not interested in engaging, the boys use their strength by hitting the girl, and all that…

Ariana (Focus Group Discussions)

Yes sir, there is a girl that I know and she had a boyfriend who dropped out of school. As soon as she walked out of the school gates he always interrogated and accused her being in the company of her classmates and beat her and asked her "why are you walking with boys? Unfortunately a girl was kicked out of the house by her parents and accused of showing no respect for them because she continued to walk with boy despite being told that the boy was criminal. In my personal experience there was once a boy who wanted to force me into a

relationship with me, but then I refused. He started to beat me then I reported the case to my grandmother who didn't take this seriously because she thought I love boys.

Madia (Focus Group Discussions)

Oh! I observed the existing gap between them, because when they were closed to each other they spent time together. But soon after a fight they went in separate ways and boys started bragging and revealed all the things they have done together from their shared past experiences.

Ciara (Focus Group Discussions)

What I have experienced before, in grade 11 is that I had a boy classmate who proposed love to me for two months. I turned him down and he started to spread the news that we are dating. Then I approached him about these rumours and asked about the person who told me about it, of which I honestly did. After that a serious fight broke out in class between these two boys....rumours spread that they were fighting over me. Then I was called into the office to provide an explanation....it hurt me and took away my dignity....felt emotionally abused.

These girls report that boys defame and gossip about girls with whom they have had sex. This view correlates with that of Connell (2000), who states that gender violence is relational, about power and hegemonic to maintain acts of gender inequalities against women and girls. Like with Ciara's experience, she strongly felt that girls` reputations are tarnished and they experience a loss of dignity.

Nicole (Focus Group Discussions)

Sometimes sir, it's small things like, when a boy steals a pen from a girls, but then a girl cannot confront a boy because of his excessive violence than a girl, and sometimes it's not easy to reach a common ground with a boy because they are aggressive they exaggerate simple things that that can be resolved peacefully without resorting to violence/ aggression.

Researcher
Aggressive. How?

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Zinhle (Focus Group Discussions)

Like maybe if I bump to him by mistake, it becomes a huge issue even if it's just a simple mistake.

Researcher

So how do they respond if that happens?

Zinhle (Focus Group Discussions)

They are aggressive and start shouting and making it a big issue even if a person has apologised they still continue with the rants and cursing.

Ariana (Focus Group Discussions)

Sometimes when we talk to boys some they just want us to talk to them in a cool way and we do that. But then it happens sometimes that you say something playing or just joking and then they just beat you. And some of the girls leave it like that and let them continue with it, because they can't just fight back. Some boys force girls to do some things and when girls avoid a war of words which could erupt and boys end up beating girls.

Evidently, violence and aggression seem to be the only means for some of these boys to resolve conflict or respond to any infringement as they view it. This compels girls who unintentionally bump into boys to avoid any conflict and boys however, respond with violence. Gender power operates both implicitly and explicitly, during which girls remain silent to avoid more harm.

Researcher

Can you tell me more about your experiences of power and abuse you have experienced that include some kind of relations between boys and girls? Where and when?

Rose (Focus Group Discussions)

Hmm…. Eish! Boys have power over girls. Because they have more jealousy over girls. If a boy sees a girl speaking to another guy he interrogates the girl and question their relationships with each other. And if a girl denies any intimate relations between them, then the boy starts to show off to others like beating her and dragging her in full view of other learners. And there are girls who use their power over guys.

Indeed the above statements show that there is persistently a high frequency of violence against girls. It is also apparent that boys understand girls to be their personal effects in addition to disrespecting them as well as resolving them of their constitutional rights (Bhana, 2011). In the process, boys gain supremacy and the balance of power is weighted against the girls. Moreover, this suggests young girls are living in constant fear of being exposed to sexual violence and this has made them feel disrespected and for them to avoid victimisation, they have to retreat or remain silent. What Ariana says supports the view of the other girls of not being valued. This is highlighted in the responses and interpretations of the participants below (focus group discussions):

Maya

It's the violation of human rights.

Melokuhle

Boys have more power than girls….during break time.

Ariana

It's all about males having power to control. No one sees women as something important to them. We are just tools that they can use and just throw them away.

Zinhle

Men use to say they have power and could do as they wish.

The participants held multiple perspectives of their vulnerability to power imbalances. A reference to the objectification of women and girls is made where girls are equated with tools that can be discarded after use. According to Human Rights Watch (2001) and Fineran and Bennet (2014) this points to a key issue, that is, the failure of schools to implement gender awareness programmes.

Researcher

What does the school policy say about gender violence? (focus group discussions).

Palming

The school policy doesn't say anything ……...only bullying is mentioned in the policy.

Abigail

Nothing….the rules are not tight……boys continue to abuse girls….lift their skirts.

Ciara

Every day in the morning assembly teachers always address us on how girls should behave themselves……..I can say that's a policy because we don't have any.

Nothando

As a result, girls blame themselves for every incident of abuse against them….teachers don't help them.

Girls see themselves as having caused the abuse or violence against them. The normalisation of violence against girls is perpetuated by non-intervention of educators, thus they have gained a greater misunderstanding of school rules which are meant to protect them against gender violence. To make matters worse, the teenage girls made claims that teachers also play a pivotal role in supporting gender stereotypes for negotiating gender characteristics that victimise girls, for example, sexual violence committed by boys is attributed to girls (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

In the focus groups discussion, the young girls discussed the ways in which violence is normalised and perpetuated through lack of intervention by educators. Girls fear that lack of support from teachers makes it more difficult for them to report these violations to their parents. In the absence of good communication between the school and parents on gender sensitive issues, these girls believe that if they speak about sexual abuse by teachers they will be presumed to be sexually active. According to Cassie, the situation is so bad that teachers use corporal punishment on girls in their attempts to silence them from reporting matters of abuse. This brings to light stigma attached to girls and if they talk about sexual abuse, they are either not believed or ignored. During the focus group discussions, Cassie and Nicole spoke about the role played by teachers to maintain gender inequalities.

Cassie

What I can say is that teachers have an impact on reinforcing gender violence in school. They administer corporal punishment girls for not wearing socks…they don't understand that we come from diverse background. From my side it's wrong. The situation here is bad.

Nicole

I've been a learner at Marburg (Portshepston) school ….an Indian teacher used to call me and innocently I went to him because I was active in class….he

appreciated my beauty…promised to take me to a hotel. I did not report him for
fear of not being believed as an African girl and to avoid my word against his.

The violation of these girls` rights to be free from sexual violence is pervasive. Their experiences of sexual violence are not restricted to their male peers. In fact, it extends to their teachers who use their power as educators to gain sexual favours from girls. Again, these girls concerns about not being taken seriously and poses a huge threat over their lives as young women. In the above extracts, it is clear that neither Nicole nor Cassie had the capacity to report their experiences gender violence to protect their reputations. The excerpts above indicate that schools render limited, gender discriminatory and marginal intervention less than beneficial to promote changes in balance of power (Burton and Leoshut, 2012; Fineran and Bennet, 2014). The above utterances by Nicole and Cassie are also symptomatic of intergenerational diversities which have a negative impact on interaction surrounding matters of gender violence and sexuality (Bhana and Pattman, 2011).

Studies show that gendered power relations put teenage girls at risk of being coerced into having sex, not being able to engage in an active dialogue on the use of condoms and to prevent HIV and AIDS infection (Mvune, 2013). According to the Department of Social Development et al. (2012), teenage girls who are marginalised and oppressed by the society are most vulnerable to health risks, because the living and learning conditions in their context compel them to adapt to its socio-economic and cultural dynamics.

The data illustrates that the exposure of females and adolescent girls to gender inequalities may result in them becoming subservient to male power in relation to sexual issues, because of their age, prejudice and the threat of violence (UNESCO, 2014). Most of those interviewed, indicated that they had experienced or witnessed sexual violence and encountered emotional abuse by boys who dictate terms of sexual favours as well as unprotected sex within and outside the school context. Moreover, I explored how the use of gender violence is related to girlsø vulnerability as the victims of male domination, male power and health risks.

Researcher

Have you witnessed violence in or outside the classroom during breaks or outside the school? Can you give a brief explanation-where and when did this happen?

Janet (Focus Group Discussions)

I can say it's the ground floor classes. I last visited these classed since last year. But then each time when I set my foot in those classes I had always found a grade 9 girl (......she is still here in school) beaten up by a boy. On certain days if the victim had managed to evade this boy his next target was a friend of that victim girl......reached a stage where she stopped crying and always blamed herself for the whole incidents of abuse.

Laila (Focus Group Discussions)

Yes, I've seen it when two females were fighting for a boy during break time here at school. Last week I think, Yah. A grade 10 learner kept on asking for a grade 11 boys', number and her grade 12 girlfriend find out about that. She then began to question the grade 10 girl and told her to stay away from this boy, because if she carried on there was going to be a fight, girl kept on doing this. They started fighting...this happened down near grade 11 A in the corner.

Ciara (Focus Group Discussions)

Yah I did. In my classroom (I nearly mentioned them by their names, I'm sorry). A boy and a girl are dating, when she goes outside the classroom and seen talking to other boys he beat her. The language used by boys against girls is so bad and I feel sorry for the grade 8 learners...use strong language "voetsek"....too much dating and cheating....boys are the most violators...after school and when teachers are not in class or attending workshops.....you better not tell them because they move from class to class causing trouble.

The above extracts show that gender power inequalities are demonstrated through acts of intimidation and risky sexual behaviours leading to unpremeditated gender violence among boys and girls from Hope High School. Those girls who are considered promiscuous and lack ability to discuss safe sex are sexually vulnerable because boys view them in a way that suggests they are open to sexual liaisons. Young girls are offered subordinate status by boys,

thus limiting their capacity to protect themselves from sexual abuse and gender violence (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Bhana, 2011; Sundaram, 2013).

Lwandile

Sometimes males get jealous, they have got a lot of anger in them, they don't trust themselves that they can do things, they have that power which they abuse females, they can see that females are better than them and they can do better than them (boys are threatened by girls), so they misuse their power by hitting them, forcing them into sexual intercourse….

Chimez (Individual Interviews)

Aids and STD's and other things that destroy your body like having sex destroys your body and generally in life you become alright when dating a girl if you are a girl.

Cassie (Focus Group Discussions)

What I can say is that teachers have an impact on reinforcing gender violence in school. Administering corporal punishment to girls for not wearing socks…they don't understand that we come from diverse background. From my side it's wrong. The situation here is bad.

Bhana (2011) and Human Rights Watch (2001) endorse that girls' vulnerability to sexual violence is entrenched in fear of contracting HIV and AIDS. Apart from the possibility of been infected with HIV, the participants pointed out that the dangers of unprotected sex could lead to unwanted pregnancy, labelling and isolation from teachers and other learners. The worst case scenario as they put it, could lead to feelings of desperation and ultimately suicide.

Wandile (Focus Group Discussions)

You can get sexually transmitted diseases….HIV and AIDS…commit suicide.

Khanyi (Individual Interviews)

Well it's not a good thing…

Researcher

Can you tell me more why it's not a good thing.

Khanyi (Individual Interviews)

Oh! Anything bad could happen. Teenage pregnancy, HIV and AIDS ...even falling pregnant at a wrong time and can't even take care of the child because of the costs involved...forced by the situation to carry an abortion, a sin on its own. Your life will be miserable.

The girls acknowledge the numerous ramifications of sex such as fear of STDs, HIV and AIDS pregnancy or even being forced to terminate a pregnancy. As defined in Chapter Two, the above explanations illustrate that girls had something in common; that power imbalances constructed in the context of gender violence should be eliminated regardless of race, class, gender and age. Gender violence against girls shows that they are vulnerable and exposed to indecent assault and physical abuse. This highlights the way in which gender stereotypes exert influence on young girls in terms of domination by teachers and boys in school. These extracts suggest that teenage girls continue to be shaped by their school and the social environment in which they live. The participant makes reference to religious or Christian morals where abortion cannot even be considered if a girl becomes pregnant. Irrespective of the impoverished financial situation, their Christian beliefs do not permit the termination of pregnancy.

Researcher
Tell me how it feels like to be marginalised or discriminated against on the basis of gender.

Ariana (Focus Group Discussions)
It feels very bad sir, because sometimes you feel like you could be someone else, which you aren't. Sometimes you regret as to why our parents brought us into this world.

Zinhle (Focus Group Discussions)
It's painful (kub'hlungu), because you become stressed at school and you don't feel as an acceptable member of the community and the world.

Nicole (Focus Group Discussions)
It's bad and sad at the same time. If you make suggestions in a community or council meeting you are ignored.....

This suggests that the participants are going through the difficulties of having to adapt to the demands of being discriminated against, despite being young. A further disturbing findings in the individual interviews were statements from Lwandile Janet and Chimez who claimed that they continue to experience gender imbalances and problematic power relationships with peers which intersects with unlimited exposure to health risks.

Janet (Focus Group Discussions)

So like us as a girl you sleep with a boy and the most important thing for you to do is try and not get pregnant, unfortunately others get pregnant and others fortunately don't, and it's very wrong when those that don't get pregnant use injections and to me sir is not right it's bad and others do abortions and all of that, then conflicts occur when one is caught to have aborted and it's really bad….

The statements by Ariana and Zinhle indicate that young girls have developed a sense of doubting their identity as girls regarding gender violence. They feel that they are discriminated against and ignored by males when they try to contribute to community developments. As Janet indicates, this results in young girls being forced to engage in unprotected sex as way of showing love for their intimate partners. Moreover, in respect of moral judgements, some girls judge girls who use contraceptives or have abortions and they are discriminated against by other girls who view it as a sin. Being tolerant of gender violence and gender discrimination aimed to justify submissiveness and passivity that young girls produce regarding heterosexual relationships.

Lwandile (Focus Group Discussions)

There is this (female) neighbour of mine, her baby's father is always bringing other women when she is around, but when she complains, he would hit her and she even told me once that he even forces her to have sex with him, even though he has other girlfriend, she is afraid that one day he will infect her with HIV because he forces her to have sex, there are things that happen which women don't like but are forced to stay (in relationships) because of the situation they face or because they love that person.

This could possibly make participants more vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases such as STDøs and HIV and AIDS due to lack of protection when making the decision to participate in sexual activities. During the individual interviews, it emerged from one participant (Chimez) who consciously stated that sexual practices are harmful to their bodies while condoning homosexuality as a safety net for girls and a possible solution to gender violence. This suggests new signs of agency to address gender violence by young girls. Lwandile added that the most challenging issue for women and girls is that men and boys have multiple partners, a sexual practice that increases health risks for the girls which in turn increases their anxiety and chances of contracting HIV and AIDS.

Chimez

AIDS and STD's and other things that destroy your body like having sex destroys your body and generally in life you become alright when dating a girl if you are a girl.?

Given the claims made by the teenage girls in interviews, research shows that they are under pressure to affirm their agency to foster tolerance and respect in relation to collective differences and similarities with boys (Dunne and Ananga, 2012; Parkes et al., 2013). It is likely that these girls are still struggling with establishing their sense of identity in school and in their social contexts. What Chimez says suggests that it is her responsibility as a girl to adopt a different lifestyle associated with homosexuality or lesbianism. She suggests that dating a girl is less problematic and that õyou become alright when dating a girlö, because they feel that they become less vulnerable to gender inequalities as compared to being in an intimate relationships with a boy.

While these girls acknowledge the violent behaviours of boys, some girls did not support the idea that all boys are violent. In the extract below, these girls highlight the more peaceable behaviours of boys whom they befriend, even to the extent of confiding in them.

Ciara

I don't have any relationship to be honest, but I have a friend who is a boy. He was a friend of my brother while he was a student here at Hope school. That boy is very kind…the one I can speak to….any something bothering me I speak to him….a good guy….

Zinhle (Focus Group Discussions)

Ye sir, I do have friendship with boys and girls, sir I am a very open person I speak to anyone

The ability to confide in some boys is alluded to in this extract.

4.1.4 Reflecting on intimate partner violence in and out of the school

As pointed out gender violence has a particular relevance in girlsø relationships as they interact with peers, teachers and their social context. In addition, to produce and reproduce power inequities against girls is the end result of sexual violence in schools (Sundaram, 2013). All the participants in this study have been affected by gender violence in one way or other; however, through the responses they gave, it was apparent that gender power inequalities had some bearing on their relationships with boys with regard to intimate partner violence. During focus group discussions, the young girls narrated how they experience and witness intimate partner violence in and out of school.

Dolly

Here at school I can say I've seen boys beating girl and girls being beaten by other girls. According to hearsays boys beat girls for no apparent reason, other than wearing miniskirts. While others are assaulted on suspicions of cheating amid accusations that they are after boys. Outside the school girls are also accused of wearing a lipstick and leggings because they show buttocks.

Maya

Most girls normalise most forms of gender violence….committed by boys….feel happy…see it as a sign of love …….if you have never been slapped on the face other girls say "you don't know nothing.

Lucy

I've seen boys beating girl here at school just for being in a relationship with a boy while showing off their power to other boys. Girls do not hit back.

Abigail

After a girl has split up with a boy they brag to others and say 'I have slept with you' (ngilalile nawe).

Nothando

Boys propose love to girls and when they refuse they cut their hairs and tell us that they will take it to the witchdoctor to get a love potion.

Zama

If we have days like Valentines boys hold you bums and kiss you without your permission. They want to enjoy at our expense, that's bad.

Lucy

Some girls think they are better than others……fight over boys.

Researcher

What do you think of such relationships? Explain.

Ariana

Sir! I just think we as girls should avoid being in a relationship. Because sometimes there are boys who make strict rules for girls as if they are married. They don't want to see you walking with other boys. For example, here at school let's say I'm dating a boy he lays the ground rules that "I don't want to see you in the company of another boy or standing next to your classmates even after school". Why sir is this happening? Because we are not married to each other, if he wants to control me he should first marry me. Nevertheless this does not means that I will agree to that proposal.

Some of my participants report that they are frequently exposed to the controlling behaviour of boys. Interestingly, girls believe that boys are entitled to control them if they marry them. The evidence shows that boys do not trust their girlfriends and regulate their behaviour by controlling them and their associations. The reference to witchdoctors in the previous extract suggests that when boys cannot control girls, they resort to other means of ‑powerø to help them to get the girl they want. This shows that they believe in supernatural ways of achieving

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power and what they want. These girls do attempt to resist the controlling behaviour of boys. This is evident in Ariana's situation when she declares that she will not comply with gender stereotypes and the controlling efforts of boys.

These girls articulated that their relationships with boys in school are embedded in gender inequalities. In practice this view correlates with that of Connell (2000), who states that gender violence is relational, it is about power and masculinity infested leadership to retain acts of gender discriminations against women and girls. For example, in the focus group discussions most girls explicitly stated that the disused classrooms, the workshop and the steps on the corridors are the hot spots where they are most vulnerable to gender violence, threats and intimidation by boys.

Researcher
In which areas is this exactly happening and why don't you report these incidents?

Wandile
At the back……behind these classes……on the ground floor …….sometimes fights between boys and girls breakout in these disused classrooms. Girls are forced into these classrooms…….particularly those with intimate relationships and have kids with these boys from within the school.

Dorothy
I was hit on the bums (ukupansa) by a boy, then I went upstairs approached a teacher to report the incident. After telling him what had happened he beat me with a plastic pipe. But before that he asked me where I choose to be beaten….front or back.

Naledi
Bas'thinta amabele (they touch our breasts)….we are afraid to report.

Madi
On the ground floor, on the corridors, in the corners and inside the work shop, on the stairs. These areas have become joling and smoking places for students.

The above narratives by participants indicate that they are vulnerable to a variety of gender imbalances, sexual harassment and sexual violence in which power is used to engage with them sexually. During the focus groups, some girls indicated that their boyfriends planned where and how they would sexually abuse them. According to the participants gender power inequalities are demonstrated in the sphere of coercive sex and gendered violence with a correct interpretation that teachers do not see themselves as change agents but rather they perpetuate and further victimise girls (Bhana, 2014). Girls are either ignored or punished by teachers for reporting the problematic behaviour of boys.

I reported the matter to the principal without compromising the identity of the participants. Since then, the above mentioned workshop and disused classrooms has been burglar proofed. According to the members in the focus groups, there are now not so many incidents of gender violence in these hotspots.

In the individual interview with Janet she imagined that:

Uhm… to be a girl…(stuttering)……if you are a girl you need to have self-confidence, and believe in yourself and avoid bad things make sure that your reputation is always good, and if you are a girl or let's say a woman, if you are a woman you need to have your own power to support yourself (independent) you need to know who you are and what you want, "in order to not get disturbed by other people like men" (as a woman you need to be very focused) and not get violated (abused) by other people, you need to focus on yourself in order to avoid abuse and other things to be a woman you need to be powerful and have faith in yourself, believe in who you are and what you want, that's all I can say.

This suggests that there are many options for women and a wide scope to overcome gender inequalities such as preserving their dignity, developing their capacities of interest and becoming well-informed on gender sensitive issues in a manner that strengthens their sense of self-worth (Leishman, 2011). Thus, becoming sensitive to their sexual behaviours and being responsive to their own opportunities (Parkes et al., 2013). Knowing this much about the girlsø experiences on gender inequalities provides an opportunity to reflect that violence against girls is not only limited to the school context. As indicated above, boys take violence against girls beyond the school parameters and into the community in order to avoid school authorities. Additionally, from the girlsø perspectives their understanding is that boys

continue with impunity, because they know that there will be little or no intervention from the community as the participants pointed out during the focus groups.

However, the issues of unequal power relations between teenage girls, boys and teachers cannot be understood differently from the family, school, community and societal context (Leishman, 2011).

Maya
Leads to bullying……boys bring it to school inherent from their families.

Minenhle
Some boys are hit by their girlfriends from home and vent their anger to girls at school.

Researcher
Tell me more about the vulnerability of girls to gender violence in the school.

Zama
Abafana baya spansa (unwanted touching on the buttocks) ……lift our skirts on the veranda…. negative comments by some male teachers include dehumanising statements……abafana sebekuqedile …..outside the school….teachers ask for our phone numbers…how come?

Ntombie
Boys touch our hips…..this upsets me…..even teachers talk about sex in the classroom…..how can they do this?...teacher we can't say anything……..some learners like it.

Naledi
Bas'thinta amabele (they touch our breasts)….we are afraid to report.

Nevertheless, the above suggests that gender imbalances play a role in which social structures strengthen, control and impede girlsø progress and promotes the stereotypical understanding that they are inferior. This view advocates that teenage girls have a feeling of not being protected and understood in school. Additionally, these girlsø vulnerability to gender violence

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extracted from their statements illustrates that the issues of gender power is more fluid, linear, dynamic, predictable and legitimises all forms of oppression against them. The study also reveals that power is not stable, because some girls retaliate when boys victimize them. Moreover, teachers seem to be uncaring and do not offer much protection to girls in school. This evidence shows that girls are victims of male power and work as a triple bind against these young, black, working class girls.

Even though these teenage girls show the agency to prevent gender violence that disrupts their education, they are limited in realising it. One of the girls stated that there is a male who continuously asks her (*ngimnika nini*) which means õwhen she would have sex with him in exchange for money (interviewee pointing towards her private parts). The girl alludes to their indebtedness to materialistic items such as money to buy cell phones which forms part of a high popular culture. According to some participants, adolescent girls engage in these risky behaviours through a range of interlinking factors which include peer pressure and a sense of belonging to a group. As in the case of Shimez, who stated that every day on her way to school an old man in his 60s offers her money to spend (shaking). At the end of the focus group interview she explained that normally she takes the money to avoid being seen by her classmate that she comes from a poor family background, fear of being labelled as a by-product of rape and that her mother is unemployed and an alcoholic. Additionally, a broader scope of literature extrapolates that the multiplexes of gender imbalances interlinking with girlsø vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, makes it impossible for them to negotiate power relations with boys and males in and out of schools (Bhana, 2014). From the participantsø accounts, it is evident that poverty contributes to the girlsø vulnerability to multiple forms of gender inequalities including the risk of spreading and of being infected with HIV and AIDS. All of these are connected to cultural complexes and controversies that make it near impossible for girls to challenge gender violence (Robinson, 2012).

In such a complex environment, Connell (2011) argues that all violence is grounded on gender and is inclined towards social constructions which emphasise male supremacy and power imbalances extracted from social histories. Since then, I referred their cases to the social services for intervention purposes such as counselling. In addition to that, it is significant to illustrate that during my interaction with the participants all of them openly criticised the various forms abuse against teenage girls and women regardless of age, religion and class. This became evident through the use of their body language, gestures, non-verbal communication, captured silences and eye movement. Moreover, the above factors tell us that

the meaning of gender disparities are not based on individuals but rather on how the individual relate to wider society (Leach and Humphreys, 2007). Leach and Humphreys (2007) further indicate that the marginalisation of teenage girlsø status entrenched through gender violence is a common social practice.

4.1.5 The abuse of power, gender inequality and threatening health risks

Most teenage girls in this study revealed that they were involved in a relationship and are dating young boys between the ages of 14 and 20. Thus, from their answers they provided, it became apparent that gender power inequalities shaped their ability to discuss sex. Ironically, much research displays schools as arenas of possibility and struggle for equality and therefore has the obligation to protect teenage girls, within which emerging issues of gender inequality should be present, challenged and debated (HRW, 2001). Moreover, a significant and expansive problem encountered by the young girls in school was violence and sexual stereotypes against them (HRW, 2001). Analysing the teenage girlsø experiences with sexual violence include examining how various identities are constructed in our discussion and the way they view themselves when interacting with boys.

Researcher
Tell me more about gender violence here at school or outside of it.

Maya.
Is the violation of human rights……..and Melokuhle boys have more power than girls….during break time.

Dorothy
Here at school I can say I've seen boys beating girls and girls being beaten. According to hearsays boys beat girls for no apparent reason.

Velocity
I think it could be a female abusing a female or male abusing a female depending on the power of the perpetrator than a victim. Males abuse females by beating or sexually abuse them.

Studies show that gendered power relations put teenage girls at risk of being coerced into unwanted sex, and girls could not engage in an active dialogue on condom use and to prevent HIV and AIDS infection (Mvune, 2013). Research demonstrates that it would be sufficient at this stage to implement an educational framework embedded on empowering young men as well as girls on the subject of sexually violent behaviours because it poses threats of contracting HIV- related diseases.

The research data illustrates that the exposure of females and adolescent girls to gender inequalities may result in them becoming subservient to male power in relation to sexual issues, because of their age, prejudice and the threat of violence (UNESCO, 2014). Most of the interviewed participants like Ariana, indicated that they had experienced or witnessed sexual violence and encountered emotional abuse by boys who dictate terms of sexual favours as well as unprotected sex within and outside the school context. Moreover, I explored how the use of gender violence is related to girlsø vulnerability as the victims of male domination in relation to power, health risks and passivity.

Researcher
Have you witnessed violence in or outside the classroom during breaks or outside the school? Can you give a brief explanation-where and when did this happen?

Ariana
Yes I do sir! I'm new in the school some of the boys think that I'm a loose girl and took advantage of that. There is this guy in my classroom and I feared him. One morning I found him sitting on my chair, then I approached him and he told me that I can't say much because I'm a new comer in the school. But one day he told me that he loves me and I asked him "How can you say you love me if you do things like this to me and abuse me emotionally"? (Laughing). He then told me that he doesn't want to see me standing with other boys. He really scares me, but I didn't want to allow him to lower my self-esteem. All this took place in my classroom and after school.

Lwandile
Sometimes the males get jealous they have got a lot of anger in them, they don't trust themselves that they can do things, they have that power which they abuse females, they can

see that females are better than them and they can do better than them (boys are threatened by girls), so they misuse their power by hitting them, forcing them into sexual intercourse….

Chimez

Aids and STD's and other things that destroy your body like having sex destroys your body and generally in life you become alright when dating a girl if you are a girl.

Cassie

What I can say is that teachers have an impact on reinforcing gender violence in school. Administer corporal punishment girls for not wearing socks…they don't understand that we come from diverse background. From my side it's wrong. The situation here is bad.

Nicole

I've been a learner at Marburg (Portshepston) school ….an Indian teacher used to call me and innocently I went to him because I was active in class….he appreciated my beauty…promised to take me to a hotel. I did not report him for fear of not being believed as an African girl and to avoid my word against his.

Furthermore, the consequences of gender inequalities provide adolescent girls with clear solutions as to what is suitable in terms of their questions and choices towards addressing their vulnerabilities. By examining the participantsø responses, it demonstrates various descriptive interpretations of negotiating unequal power relation between young boys and girls in their context. Apart from the possibility of acquiring HIV, the participants pointed out that the dangers of unprotected sex could lead to unwanted pregnancy, labelling and isolation from teachers and other learners.

Researcher

How do you view the sexual harassment of girls by boys?

Wandile

You can get sexually transmitted diseases….HIV and AIDS...commit suicide.

Khanyi

Well it's not a good thing…

Researcher

Can you tell me more why it's not a good thing.

Participants indicated that girls had something in common, that power imbalances constructed in the context of gender violence should be eliminated regardless of race, class, gender and age. However, underreporting and loss of confidence by girls undermines any intervention that would be implemented in relation to their vulnerability to sexual exploitation. This highlights the way in which gender stereotypes exerts an influence on young girls in terms of domination by teachers and boys in school. These extracts suggest that teenage girls continue to be shaped by their school and the social environment in which they live.

Researcher

Tell me how it feels like to be marginalised or discriminated against on the basis of gender.

Ariana

It feels very bad sir, because sometimes you feel like you could be someone else, which you aren't. Sometimes you regret as to why our parents brought us into this world.

Zinhle

It's painful (kub'hlungu), because you become stressed at school and you don't feel as an acceptable member of the community and the world.

Nicole

It's bad and sad at the same time. If you make suggestions in a community or council meeting you are ignored by other people.

This suggests that the participants are going through the difficulties of having to adapt to the demands of the above mentioned contexts, despite their lack of experiences in life. A further disturbing finding in the interviews is where Rose and Janet claimed that they continue to experience gender imbalances and inconsistent power relationships with their peers which

intersects with unlimited exposure to health risks. Given the claims made by the teenage girls in interviews, research shows that they are under pressure to affirm their agency to foster tolerance and respect in relation to collective differences and similarities with boys (Dunne and Ananga, 2012; Parkes et al, 2013). This illustrates how teachers also marginalise and discriminate against teenage girls, particularly those who come from families who are affected by socio-economic factors such as poverty and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

4.2. Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the data gathered during focus group discussions with thirty participants and semi-structured individual interviews by twenty young girls from Hope High School in Umlazi. The data was analysed in line with themes that emerged in this study. This analysis draws attention to the multiple ways in which the young girls are vulnerable to gender violence and their accommodation and resistance of boysø violent behaviours towards them. Their sexual identities are evidently embedded in dominant cultures, and sexual abuse which predisposes them to unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS in their context. These girls` vulnerabilities are exacerbated due to the lack of action or attention of teachers, parents and communities towards providing support and protection for these girls. The chapter also shows that family members are often complicit in perpetuating cultural practices while also drawing attention to a sense of agency amongst some girls who express awareness of the injustices perpetrated against them. There is an increasing agency to resist gender inequalities, and address the cultural transmission around which gender violence is constructed and reinforced (Jewkes and Morrell, 2012; UNESCO, 2014).

The data demonstrated that the interplay between gender power inequalities and gender violence regulates these young girlsø sexual behaviours through intimidation within heterosexual relationships; it silences them and lowers their self-esteem, thus providing fertile ground for sexual abuse. It emerged from the participants during the interviews that schools should work around eliminating myths, challenging gender stereotypes and more importantly adopting a strong human rights approach-one that celebrates gender differences and similarities as irrefutable aspects of gender equality.

The next chapter will present the main findings of this chapter, draw conclusions and also making recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This study explored the ways in which teenage girls aged 13-18 experience and give meaning to gender inequalities and gender violence. This concluding chapter outlines the summary of the whole investigation of my study. Additionally, conclusions inferred from the findings will be presented. These conclusions provide explanations to the key research questions in this study. In conclusion this chapter will provide recommendations for more research as well as how schools and communities can work together to limit gender violence. This study will also contribute to the existing body knowledge of young girlsø vulnerability to gender violence.

5.2 Summary of the Research

Five chapters provided details through which this study report unfolded.

In Chapter One, I presented the problem statement, the rationale for the study, a description of the participants as well as the context of the research site from which my participants were drawn. It also presented a brief introduction to the research design, presented the critical enquiry including objectives of my investigation.

In Chapter Two, I provided an in-depth review of the relevant literature with regard to young peoples` sexualities. It presented related research around girls on the issues of gender, power, sexual violence, inequalities and HIV and AIDS. This chapter also focused on the role of traditional and cultural dimensions such as patriarchy and how these negatively impact on the lives of girls. It also explored how these social practices are embedded in behavioural patterns and how it is understood in a particular context. Gender relational theories is used and explained as it offers an analytical lens through which the generated data is interpreted.

In Chapter Three, I presented an explanation of the study design as well as the rationale for the methodology employed. The qualitative research paradigm employed for this study was discussed and the rationale for this choice was presented. Also discussed were the focus groups and individual interviews conducted with the participants. Sampling was discussed in terms of how participants were selected for the study. Ways in which validity and reliability

were enhanced were discussed in this chapter as well as the measures that were taken to promote such measures. Ethical considerations in terms of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were explained.

Chapter Four presented the analysis, interpretation and discussion of data collected and used gender relational theory as an analytical tool to interpret the data. The findings from this study were presented thematically with evidence pointing to these teenage girls` sexual vulnerability. Clearly, the findings revealed that teenage girls viewed gender inequalities as a barrier to their learning and expressed that these inequalities should be challenged. Literature sources were integrated into the discussion to support or refute findings of previous research.

5.3 Discussion on the summary of findings

The five key topics that developed after the analysis were found to be interrelated, also presented and summarised in a manner that addresses the research questions. What emerged from the themes is that gender inequalities perpetuate girlsø vulnerability to multiple forms of gender violence. Data analysis was embedded in an interpretative approach in order to make meaning of how girls perceive, understand and experience gender violence in school. The audio data was translated and transcribed into textual data before analysis. Thematic analysis was employed, with themes emerging from the data by clustering and observing and indicating frequencies. Gender power theory was used as a lens to analyse the data.

This analysis draws attention to the importance of a school curriculum that instils discipline and protects the rights of all learners through problem solving skills which should include all people involved in education (UN, 2014). The complex power relations between boys and girls produce gender discrimination and exclusion that makes it difficult for them to realise how power is deployed in their context (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Ivinson and Renold, 2013).

The literature shows that schools have a responsibility to promote quality education and should become the fields of hope, coherence and safe learning settings for effective teaching and learning, particularly for girls (Reilly, 2014; Action Aid, 2013). However, the data shows that the participants found it very difficult to have effective teaching and learning in an abusive environment, due to living in constant fear of being exposed to gender inequalities and gender violence. What emerged from the data is that the most vulnerable group to gender and power inequalities are girls. This became evident when participants voiced that boys have

more power and see a lot of fights between girls and boys during break time. Girls are sexually harassed by boys, marginalised and blamed for the high incidence of violence by parents and teachers instead of providing them with support they need. Evidence from the extracts illuminates that emasculated boys fear the loss of power. Some participants indicated that their knowledge of human rights is a sign of showing resilience and girl power to report gender violence to teachers, including their call for the media, counsellors, schools and communities to play a bigger role towards protecting the victims of sexual abuse and gender violence.

As determined as they were, the girlsø empowerment could not transform the attitudes and behaviour of teachers and boys to reject violence and the abuse of power against girls. The above statement illustrates that the teenage girls find it difficult to negotiate their power of gender identity and to achieve better in school while being a target of gender inequalities. Action Aid (2013) and Jewkes et al. (2010) speculate that the absence of these two factors; gender identity and empowerment of girls could make it possible for schools to become the source of transmitting HIV and AIDS.

This association comes into play when males make use of their controlling power to coerce girls or females into sex in exchange for protection (Action Aid, 2013; Jewkes et al., 2010). On the other hand, it also emerged that intervention provided by teachers was limited to humiliating, labelling and marginalising girls. This made it difficult for them to challenge boysø domination and cultural beliefs that women are inferior (Dunne and Ananga, 2013; UNESCO, 2014). The data from the participants suggests that gender inequalities are prevalent and every girl in South Africa has experienced it (Human Rights Watch, 2001). Some participants felt that the best way to escape violence in school is to become a lesbian, because they have never witnessed any kind of violence on homophobia. However, some participants were homophobic on the grounds of religious and cultural beliefs and indicated that as vulnerable as they maybe, they are in favour of heterosexual relationships with boys.

The data suggests that girls exercise their power through collective tolerance to gender violence and is becoming more adaptable and reduce their hopes for a better future in their lives. This is where the young girls resist teachers and break their silence on gender violence by reporting incidents of sexual abuse to their families occurring outside the school setting including weekends. The data suggests that the school, media, police and the community are

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doing very little to protect girls from sexual violence and gender violence, in a sense that some girls are calling for more co-operation between all stakeholders to work towards the elimination of gender violence. In some instances, participants explicitly stated that they do not allow boys to sexually abuse them and they pointed out that they resist and fight back. Emerging data shows that most girls were very determined that one day they will win the war against all forms of abuse and called on the school to do more to support and protect them.

The perception of teenage girls is that men are privileged and they understand culture as something oppressive. Some participants indicated that their vulnerability to multi forms of violence means that everything in society is structured and they understand it as an order that people in certain positions have power which favour men. For example, the data shows that when girls do report their vulnerabilities to their families, they are ignored. They also stated that culture has an important bearing in every stage of their lives and view gender inequalities as its by-product through which families and communities view it as normal, despite resilience shown by teenage girls (Cornell University Law School et al., 2014). Both physical and emotional violence has been referred to and these girls understand its emotional and physical effects.

In addition, when girls attempt to challenge gender violence they are not taken seriously by their families, teachers and policemen. It is apparent that families still believe that girls are inferior to boys; it also demonstrates that girls have power to express themselves despite the inequitable gender relations which privileges boys. The data suggests that the transmission of cultural and religious practices to school is construed by the participants as something that has led to certain social problems such as the spread of HIV and AIDS, because boys have power to rape with immunity (Jewkes et al., 2010; Gibbs, Sikweyiya, and Jewkes, 2014). This study also illustrates how girlsø vulnerability to gender inequalities manifests itself in cultural practices that coerce them to do things against their will. On the other hand, some participants held different views regarding certain cultural practices. For example, some participants viewed cultural practices such as reed dancing (*umkhosi womhlanga*) which is stated by their parents as something that adds value to their daughtersø lives in order to preserve their virginity and protect them against unwanted pregnancy and HIV and AIDS.

Nevertheless, there have been conflicting opinions on culture. From the above standpoint it emanated from the participants that culture, according to most adolescent girls was

repressive, while some girls seemed to embrace aspects of their culture by stating that it supports them in maintaining their virginity. In this case, they are favoured by the fact that they speak isiZulu and taking into account the participantsø social context as mentioned in Chapter Three. These incidents of gender violence illuminate how social and cultural backgrounds yield and breed gender discrimination that dehumanize the lives of girls with little or no protection for their well-being in schools (Parkes et al., 2014; UNESCO, 2014).

The data shows that all the participants have knowledge that all violence is gendered, produced and reproduced and embedded in power and inequalities. Additionally, from the girlsø perspectives they understand that they are more vulnerable to multiple forms of violence such as physical, verbal, emotional and sexual violence more than any other social group. Moreover, the girls explicitly stated that in the absence of any gender equality policy it would be impossible for them to realise their goals and dreams as earlier mentioned.

All the participants subscribe to a particular way of challenging violence, such as respect for the rights of others, involving boys and parents because they want to breakdown these walls. Additional data emerging from the findings also show that girls see themselves as agents of societal transformation. This means that parents must also play their role in education and assume their moral obligation of providing care and support for their children. From my teaching experience and seeing the results from this study, it is evident that girls receive very little help from teachers in relation to intimate partner violence and those who seek justice against all forms of abuse. Cases involving incidents of gender inequalities when reported by girls to female teachers are normally referred to male teachers for correctional measures such as corporal punishment against the perpetrator. It is important to note that in most cases parents are never contacted by the school and neither the victim nor the perpetrator receive any form of intervention such as counselling for the well-being of all. Evidence from the participants indicated that they made statements calling for the involvement of parents and social workers to provide support for both boys and girls to achieve gender justice in school.

As in several other examples on reported cases of sexual exploitation of girls, instead of supporting them, some female teachers label them as whores (*tiki line or imhomomo*). However, participants during the interviews thanked those teachers who supported them when they reported incidents of gender violence and also for empowering them on gender sensitive issues.

5.4 Main findings

Findings of this study show that there is slight shift on the part of girls and the issues of gender violence by breaking silences and speaking out against all forms of oppression. It emerged that there is clear evidence that there is a small number of participants who advocate for change against the expected gendered position norms. Furthermore, it was also noted that most young girls are now expressing their views as opposed to remaining silence and pose resistance without fear in relation to sex, gender imbalances and sexual issues and in so doing choose to ignore their parents. In spite of this, most young girls indicated that they are still confined to cultural and societal norms that limit their lifestyles due to pressure from parents and fear of being marginalised. This is an indication that young girls are voicing their opinions which call on parents, teachers and community to play the positive role in relation to negotiating safe sex, and preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This study has showed that participants who want support could come up with preventive strategies for eliminating gender violence, sexual abuse and protection of their sexual identity. It also emerged that parents should play an important role to support their daughters through open discussions as well as to listen to them.

Findings from the study show that parents who invest and show profound love and attention in their daughters with regard to issues such as dating, and sexuality could enable them to make informed choices in their lived experiences. The findings of this study show that the lack of parental support is substituted by boysø dominance, in order to maintain young girlsø submissiveness, as a result of gender power inequalities. Participants indicated that they have to show respect to their intimate partners regardless of boysø stage of maturity. This plays a role in limiting girlsø power to negotiate sex. It emerged that powerlessness to challenge male dominance is worsened by fear of contracting HIV, including unplanned pregnancy through engaging in unprotected sex.

Some participants indicated that their vulnerability to sexual abuse and gender violence is attributed to cultural practices such as ukuthwala which is used by boys to promote gender inequalities. As a result, boys use gender violence against them to fulfil their sexual drive. However, some participants stated that sometimes they had to engage in homosexual relationships in order to avoid sexual violence. It also emerged that most parents are unwilling to engage young girls in cultural norms and sexual relationships in order to ensure protection and regulate and monitor their safety in relation to gender sensitive issues. In spite of this, most young girls indicated that they are still confined to cultural and societal norms

that limit their lifestyles. This study also found that community members, the police and social welfare services should be conscious about gender sensitive issues and to critically acknowledge their partnership towards transforming discriminatory behaviours of boys in an attempt to eliminate gender violence against girls. Participants indicated that gender power inequalities, sexual abuse and exposure to gender violence does have a bearing on their education.

Additional data emerging from the findings also show that girls see themselves as agents of societal transformation. This suggests that teachers and parents must also play their role in education and assume their moral obligation of providing care and support for their children. Findings from this study showed that most reported cases of gender violence and sexual abuse against young girls do not have repercussions, in so far as the girls` parents are never contacted by the school and neither does the victim nor the perpetrator receive any form of intervention such as counselling. Evidence from the participants indicate that they made statements calling for the involvement of parents and social workers to provide support for both boys and girls to achieve gender justice in school. The findings of this study show how much the participants highlight the importance of being cared for, respected and continually merge it with trust, to make every attempt to protect their sexual identity.

This study has demonstrated that various cultural beliefs and societal forces that were imposed upon females and young girls in the past still persist even though transformation is occurring in society. There is clear evidence that there are a small number of participants who advocate for change against the expected gendered norms. However, some participants pointed out that they are challenging gendered norms by making suggestions and one of suggestions is the installation of surveillance cameras in the school. Furthermore, it was also noted that there are young girls who are now expressing their views as opposed to remaining silent.

5.5 Recommendations

In spite of gender education which forms part of the new CAPS gaps continue to exist regarding the impact of gender violence on young girls in schools. For instance, cultural issues such as virginity testing could be connected to the new CAPS curriculum to promote sexuality lessons in the classroom. Girls and boys should be conscientised about their sexuality, particularly in schools. This suggests that it is essential for the government to

develop other approaches in support of its elimination, to protect the young girls through the involvement of families, schools and communities in order to narrow gender imbalances caused by technology (Marzano, 2015).

Moreover, there is a need for law enforcement agencies, schools, parents and communities to work cooperatively to advocate for the elimination of gender violence against young girls, while supporting their fight against their vulnerability to unplanned teenage pregnancy, including HIV and AIDS. Additionally, Dworkin's et al., (2012) stance is that gender imbalances promote violence and is associated with HIV epidemic in which women and adolescents are the most vulnerable. Therefore, according to Dworkin et al., (2012) to engage men in anti-violence and HIV prevention programmes is essential for implementing policy changes that upholds women and girls' rights.

These subsequent recommendations are presented with the hope that gender sensitive issues that emanate from this research can be addressed for social transformation and to foster sensitivity in young girls and boys. Furthermore, their participation is important with regard to addressing and eliminating gender inequalities and could provide the possibilities of empowerment for girls to resist all forms oppression in their specific contexts. As noted earlier in this study, research indicates that schools should oblige to advance gender structures that empower girls with tactical skills to resist gender violence (Parkes and Heslop, 2011).

Moreover, parents should support their young girls more, through open discussions and emphatically listen to them while interacting with teachers in schools; maybe this could result in societies which are free from gender violence, HIV and AIDS (Jewkes and Morrell, 2012; Pattman, 2013). Thus their involvement could promote the envisioned support of children's learning, improve their attitudes, academic performance and sexual behaviours.

Schools need to implement awareness programmes where parents and youngsters can learn ways of communication and openly engage with each other on gender sensitive issues in their context. This perhaps could also help young girls and boys to engage in intimate relationships which are guided and informed by non-violent sexual practices, HIV and AIDS, the use of contraceptives because among other things, teenage pregnancy poses a serious problem in young people's lives. Young girls need caring teachers who they will value and where they will get support because violence impacts on their lives e.g. there is violence in the

community, on male to female, to and from school. Additionally, interventions, including programmes should address broader social issues within the context of these young groups of people. This is important because this study exposed significant gaps in the knowledge that young people have about the effects of cultures, and gender inequalities embedded in gender violence in relation to their own academic achievements, wellbeing and sexuality (Bhana, 2013).

Community discussions could be exercised as means of conveying constructive, non-judgemental lessons which could interrupt intergenerational culture of silence on gender sensitive issues. Through community dialogues, young people, their peers and young mothers need to be provided with an opportunity to make their opinions heard, supported and encouraged to share their experiences with regard to sexual abuse and gender violence. This should be effected through youth-welcoming approaches such as sporting, poetic and musical activities in order to influence their behavioural practices supportively, while at the same time address gender violence and gender stereotypes within context-based interests (Harber and Mncube, 2011). In some studies by Hargreaves and Anderson (2014) and Dunkle et al (2007)., through play such as music and sports children construct and categorise themselves where boys perform masculinity, create hierarchy and project vulnerability to young girls, as passive product of socialisation. In the field more intrusive pressure is at play, cross gender friendship is very serious, labelling (e.g. Tomboys and gays) and sexuality is developed through mediators, hence all this comes through hidden curriculum (Dunkle et al , 2007; Harber and Mncube, 2011). This is where the young girls will be assisted in developing answers to the problems they experience in relation to gender sensitive issues, in order to ensure that gender violence is not naturalised (Parkes and Heslop, 2011, Pattman, 2013).

The data in this study reflect that girls are desperate for intervention that could see them enjoy their freedom in a risk free environment underpinned by gender equality as articulated in the Constitution of South Africa. As a teacher who is committed to gender equality, I am aware that I need to play a critical role with regard to the implementation of strategies in relation to gender sensitive issues. Moreover, compelling data of increasing risky sexual behaviour and gender violence in schools shows that transformation within culture and social background of young girlsø homes is still a necessity. The high levels of boysø domination in comparison to young girlsø vulnerabilities still remains a responsibility for young girls and this situation needs to be transformed. Teachers should strive to coordinate programmes and guide parents to discuss and assist with matters of sexual violence, including the use of

technology to download valuable information. Data collected has uncovered that the issue of eliminating gender violence against young girls requires policy implementations that draws interdisciplinary work from educators, communities, the private sector, health, social development and criminal justice services for collaborative achievement and further research (Dunne and Ananga, 2012; Berry et al., 2013). South Africa needs to rally against risky behaviours that reinforce girlsø vulnerability to gender violence, in and around schools (Leach, 2002). Intervention strategies should include a thorough examination of social structures that reinforce unequal power relations against powerless women and girls (Higgins, Hoffman, and Dworkin, 2010). Gender well-being assessments aimed at addressing socially structured problems as well as manhood remain equally missing in the discipline of study (Courtenay, 2000).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Letter to Learners

Date:

Dear _____

My name is Siyanda Charles Ngcobo. I am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). I am part of a study conducted by my supervisor Professor Deevia Bhana.

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 analyse how school learners, such as yourself, 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 your 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

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compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek your/their consent in addressing the matter.

DECLARATION

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

I 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's/wards' participation with him/her, and if you both agree and you give his/her permission, fill the form below and return to me.

A letter has been written to your parents/guardians to ask for their permission for you to participate in the study. Kindly take this letter and discuss your participation with them as well, and if they give their permission, fill the form below and return to me.

Thank you for your willingness to participate.

I can be contacted through:

Email: syand.fuzeh@gmail.com

Cell: 0618239367

My project supervisor is:

Professor Deevia Bhana, PhD

School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

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Cnr Mariannhill & Richmond Roads

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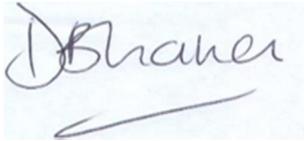
Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARENTS/GUARDIAN

Dear Parent/Guardian

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____

My name is Siyanda Ngcobo. I am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). I am part of a study conducted by my supervisor Professor Deevia Bhana.

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/wards' 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'/sons'/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

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

I 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's/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: syanda.fuzeh@gmail.com

Cell: 0618239367

My project supervisor is:

Professor Deevia Bhana, PhD

School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

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You can also contact the Research Office through:

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Fax: + 27 31 260 3093

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

Ií (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 í ..

í í í í í í í í .

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN   DATE

 INFORMED CONSENT TO PARENTS/GUARDIAN

Incwadi yokwazisa eya kubazali/ kubabheki

Usuku:

Mzali/Mbheki ka...

Ngibhala lencwadi ukucela imvume yakho ukuthi umntwana wakho abambe iqhaza ocwaningweni olubheka izindlela kanye nesimo sodlame oluqondene nobulili (gender-based violence) ezikoleni kanye naseduze kwezikole.Isihloko socwaningo sithi: Nqanda udlame: abafana namantombazane ezikoleni kanye nezindawo eziseduze nezikole.

Lolucwaningo luhlose ukubheka ukuthi abafundi babhekana, baphinde babone udlame oluqondene nobulili ezikoleni. Usuku nosuku amaphephandaba aveza ukuthi udlame ukuqondene nobulili nokuthi lunemiphumela emibi kwabanye abafundi.Ucwaningo luzofaka ingxoxo ekhethekile nendodana/ndodakazi yakho kanye nokumbheka esekilasini noma edlala. Ngemvume yomntwana wakho ingxoxo ekhethekile iyoqoshwa ngesiqopha-mazwi (audio-tape) bese kubhalwa phansi.Konke lokhu kuzogcinwa endaweni ephephile ekhiyelwayo, yilabo abayingxenye yocwaningo kuphela abayofinyelela kukhona ngesikhathi kuqhubeka ucwaningo. Uma sekuphele ucwaningo kuyolahlwa.

Umntwana wakho ngeke aziwe igama lakhe lempela kulona lonke ucwaningo nakuzona zonke izishincilelo eziyoqhawuka kulolu cwaningo.Akaphoqiwe ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo ngeke ajeziswe uma engavumanga ukuba yingxenye.

Ngicela uxoxe nomntwana wakho mayelana nokubamba iqhaza kwakhe.Uma nobabili nivuma, ngicela nigicwalisele ifomu elingezansi nilibuyisele kumina

Ngyabonga ngokubambisana

Umhloli wocwaningo

Prof. Deevia Bhana

Tel:(031)2602603

Email:bhana1@ukzn.ca.za
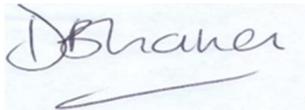
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UKUZIBOPHEZELE

Mina...(amagama agcwele omzali/mbheki) ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyakuqonda konke okuqukethwe yilo mbhalo mayelana nocwaningo. Ngiyavuma ukuthi indodana/ndodakazi yami ibambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi indodana/indodakazi yami ingaphuma noma kunini kulolu cwaningo uma efisa.

Sayina (umzali/mbheki)...

Usuku...

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT TO PRINCIPAL

Date:

The Principal

Name of School……………………………………………….

Dear Mr/Mrs/Dr………..

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 learners' interactions 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 participants' real 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.

137

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely

[signature: DBhana]
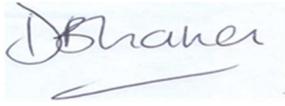
Project Leader
Prof. Deevia Bhana
Tel: (031) 260 2603
Email: bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za

Permission Form

Ií   (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.

í í í í í í í í í í í í í í í í í
í í í í í í í í .
SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL   DATE

í í í í í í í í í í í í í í í   í í í í í í í í ..
SGB CHAIRPERSON   DATE

APPENDIX D

School of Education,
College of Humanities,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Edgewood Campus,
21 February 2015

The Station Commander
BB1497 Bhekithemba Police Station
1 King Shaka Circle
Umlazi
4031

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO STATION COMMANDER

My name is Siyanda Ngcobo I am a teacher at Kwa-Mathanda high school and an Education, (Masters) candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus.

I am interested in learning more about gender violence in and around schools and explore of what might work to end such violence. I am studying cases from grade 8 to 12 and this requires that the Masters candidate should collect data informed by crime categories and statistics provided by the South African Police Services (SAPS).

I need your permission to allow me access to different crime categories occurring within our geo-political community which falls within your area. From 12013-2015. Notably, this could help us in our study to identify crimes that impact on learners (particularly girls) with a purpose of developing intervention strategies that will eliminate gender violence in school and around our community.

Please note that:

Confidentiality and dignity is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to any person, but reported only as a population member opinion.

The research will cause no harm to you and no scientific experiments will be conducted on you.

Any information given by you will not be used against any person, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.

Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.

Crime statistic are purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

Yours in education
I can be contacted at:
Email: syanda.fuze@gmail.com
Cell: 0618239367

My supervisor is Professor Deevia Bhana, who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
Contact details :(031) 260 2603

Professor Deevia Bhana, PhD
School of Education

College of Humanities

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X03

Cnr Mariannhill & Richmond Roads

Ashwood

3605

South Africa

Tel: +27 (0) 31 260 2603

Fax: +27 (0) 31 260 3793

email: bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the Research Office through:

Mariette Snyman

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Research Office: Ethics (HSS)

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X54001

Durban

4000

Tel: +27 31 260 8350

Fax: + 27 31 260 4609

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

Ií (full   names
and) surname of a person concerned) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of

this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to my participation in the research project.

SIGNATURE   DATE

í í í í í í í í í í í í í   í í í í í í í í í í í í í

APPENDIX E

Semi-structured interview schedule for individual and focus group discussions

Focus group discussion questions

Tell me who do you play with here at school during break time?

Tell me more about gender violence and what do you understand about it? Letøs discuss and talk about it.

How would you feel if you learn that your sister has been sexually harassed by a boy on her way to and from school?

Can you tell me how it feels like to be marginalised and discriminated against by your friend on the basis of gender?

Tell me more about cultural activities in your area that you think contribute to gender violence in your area.

Tell me more about gender violence in the media such as TV and radio.

If you were a school principal what strategies would you use to stop violence against girls?

Tell me more about the vulnerability of girls to gender violence in the school.109. In which areas is this exactly happening and why donøt you report these incidents?

What do you understand with 16 Days of Activism and human rights day?

What is the impact of gender violence particularly on girls?

Donøt you think the school should do more to protect girls?

What other risks are do you think are linked to gender violence?

What does the school policy say about gender violence?

How do you view the sexual harassment of girls by boys?

Individual interviews questions

Learning to be a girl, what does it mean to be a girl?

Can you discuss ways you think boys and girls enter in to conflict with each other, what makes boys and girls get into conflict with each other, we have a situation where by boys fight with girls or with each other and girls doing the same, how does this happen?

Can you tell me more about the experiences of abuse that you observed which involves a relationship between boys and girls?

Do you see this in school or around the community? Are there any interventions that occur in trying to stop the fight or break up any fights or conflicts solving people when they occur? How people can solve things? Like after you report the incident someone tries to solve that conflict?

What do you think of such relationships? Please elaborate more into what you have just said?

Have you witnessed violence in class and or out of the class, outside school during breaks? Is it the same sex or different sexes? Is it between the boys that do this or girls, or mixed reactions?

When does most incidents of gender violence happen?

Do you have a relationship with a boy or a girl in school?

What do you think of the learners that are gays and lesbians? How would you treat such learners?

Are they accepted or treated equally?

11. Can you tell me more about the experiences of abuse you have observed that involve some kind of relationships between boys and girls? Tell me more about dating.

12. Can you tell me more about your experience of power and abuse that include some kind of relationships between boys and girls? What does cultural practices mean for gender relations and gender stereotypes?

13. Are there any stereotypes attached to these cultural things? What does cultural practices means for gender relations and gender stereotypes?

14. Do learners at your age make statements that women are weaker?

15. Do you have any relationship with a boy or a girl in school?

16. Can you identify areas here at school where girls become vulnerable to gender violence?

17. Tell me how it feels like to be marginalised and discriminated against on the basis of gender?

18. Can you think of any culture that contribute to gender violence?

19. What do you think of learners who are gays and lesbians?

20. How do you view the sexual harassment of girls by boys? Can you tell me more why itøs not a good thing.

22. Can you tell me more about your experiences of power and abuse including the kind of   relationship between boys and girls? Do you see this type of incident in school or in the community? Are there any interventions when this occurs?

23. Have you ever witnessed violence in or outside classrooms during breaks, or outside the school premises, just a brief explanation, something like when and where does it usually occur?

24. What do you think of learners who are pregnant in school? Are pregnant treated equally in this school? Why? Please elaborate.

Turn-it-in Originality Report

Exploring girlsø perceptions, understandings and experiences and how it affect their lives/ schooling. By Ngcobo Siyanda Charles

Turnitin Originality Report

From Gender Education article (Masters)

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ID: 621832323

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APPENDIX G

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

06 October

Mr Siyanda Ngcobo (206519294)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0712/014M (Linked to HSS/1197/013)
Project title: Girls' account of gender violence in a school at Umlazi

Dear Mr Ngcobo,

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 01 July 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned 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 Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Deevia Bhana
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
Cc School Administrator: Mr Thoba Mthembu