THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE ON ACADEMIC ACHIVEMENT:

A CASE STUDY OF AMANDLETHU SECONDARYSCHOOL

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Submitted as a dissertation component in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (South African Education).

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL - DURBAN

JANUARY 2000

DECLARATION

I, Vusumuzi Ronald Mahlobo, declare that this is my own work. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

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Durban on this the _____ day of _____ 2000

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude is extended to the following people for being instrumental in making this study a success:

My supervisor and mentor, Robert Morrell, for his guidance and assistance throughout this study.

The National Research Foundation for assisting me financially.

Patsy Clarke, of Information Technology Division, for developing my computer skills for analysis purposes.

My dearest wife, Lee, for her love, moral support throughout this study and for typing this report.

My two sons, Siyanda and Ntokozo, who were a great source of inspiration.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the role played by violence in poor academic achievement. Violence perpetrated by the stakeholders, i.e. teachers, pupils, the community, is the main focus of this study. The matric results of the school, over the last six years, are looked into. The observation reveals a constant decline in matric passes.

Observations, questionnaires and interviews were the research tools used in this study.

Pupils experience a lot of violence at school, perpetrated by teachers and fellow students. Outside the school premises most of the violence is perpetrated by gangs. Boys are more frequently the victims of violence. Girls experience most violence in the home.

Pupils believe that violence does not affect their academic work. This unexpected finding can be explained by referring to widespread violence in the area and to violence being common in the recent past. Respondents have experienced violence so much that, to them, it has become a norm. This is why they do not attribute their poor academic performance to violence. Some of the respondents have been exposed to gruesome violence in most cases culminating in maiming and loss of life. Acts of violence, like slapping, sexual harassment and threatening, are not considered to be violence at all.

Levels of school violence are escalating, and academic results are declining. This research project suggests that there may be a relationship between these two trends.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Historically the pass rate in black schools has been very low. The poor performance of matric students over the last few years has been attributed to overcrowding in classrooms, under-qualified and unqualified teachers, low teacher morale in the face of feared retrenchments, the policy of condoned promotions and under-resourced schools. Many township schools, however, do not suffer chronically from these factors, but the results are still atrocious. At Amandlethu Secondary School in Amaoti, Durban, where the researcher is employed as a teacher, there are 43 teachers for 1400 pupils. That makes the staff/pupil ratio even less than the 1:35 ratio prescribed by government. Because there are four learning, streams namely, science, humanities, commerce and technology, no teacher was declared in excess in the recent year rationalization and redeployment process. More than thirty of the teachers have university degrees in education and only a few hold only teaching diplomas. There is no unqualified or under-qualified teacher on the staff. The school boasts two laboratories, a typing centre , home economics centre, a library , a technical drawing centre and a woodwork shop. There are overhead projectors, audio and audio-visual aids.

This school is well resourced. Human and material resources are in abundance, but this school obtained a 21% matric pass rate in 1999.

In trying to explain this low pass rate, this study examines the role of school violence. Analysts examining poor academic performance generally neglect school violence, yet it is the contention of this study that this factor impacts on the academic pass rate.In the literature review of this case study school violence will be divided into two major categories. The first category will be violence within the school. This will be divided into pupil-pupil, teacher-pupil and teacher-teacher violence. The second category will be violence from outside of the school. This will be divided into political and gang violence.

This study will try to show the existence of violence in our schools, analyze its forms and demonstrate how it affects learning.

> " To be effective schools must be safe, thus crime and fear have no place in our nation's schools. The school must be a safe environment in which students/pupils can learn, work, play and gain respect for others, and in which teachers can teach without fear and disruption"
>
> (Van den Aardweg 1987:174).

The author points out that a very important issue about schools safety, because some schools, like the school under study, are reasonably safe from intruders because of security fencing and security personnel. The major problem is that violence at this school is mainly from within.

Unsafe schools are not just a South African phenomenon. Parks (1995: 48) points out that:

> " Data over the last forty years has clearly shown a consistent rise in all forms of violence in the United States. Schools have also experienced a dramatic increase in violent activity over the last several decades. Various reports during the 1970s and 1980s clearly document increased criminal activities in the schools. Such activities include homicide, rapes, assaults on teachers and students, weapons confiscations and other related incidents."

The forms of violence experienced by schools in the United States are more or less the same as those experienced by schools in South Africa. The frequency, extent and forms of violence may not be the same, but regardless, they are all likely to have a disruptive impact. On school violence in the United States, Parks (1995: 65) forwards the following solution:

> " there is a need for a specific national commitment to the prevention and control of collective youth crime, implemented by a planning body with the flexibility to abandon unsuccessful approaches and try new ones and a responsibility for careful evaluation of a range of remedial efforts."

Such recommendations are necessary in order to end violence in schools. It is felt, however, that research into the effects of violence on academic achievement is also necessary. If the public was to be made aware

of the effects of violence on academic performance, as a result of intensive research, it is felt that these recommendations would carry more weight. The public would then be aware that violence does not only disrupt schooling because pupils are prevented from learning or teachers are prevented from teaching because of injuries sustained during an assault or stay away from school for fear of being injured. Violence would be understood as a problem that affected all, even those who were not attacked. This study is an endeavour to highlight the argument that violence does have an effect on academic performance.

The pupils' parents, do little to challenge violence that goes on in the school. Latecomers are beaten with sticks or belts by the teachers outside the school gates in full view of the public. Some parents in the past have come to school, when their children have been assaulted by fellow students, but the matters just fizzle out. No one at school ever knows what the outcomes of such attacks are. What usually happens is that both perpetrators and victims continue schooling and it is business as usual. Cases of extreme violence are reported to the principal, but he does not report such matters to the police. In some cases the parents of the principal calls in the parents of the perpetrator to school to discuss the matter. In most cases the matter is discussed between the parent and the principal and neither the victim nor the victim's class teacher, who would have reported the matter to the principal, know the outcome of the hearing. In other cases the principal calls the perpetrator to the office and talks to him or her behind closed doors alone. Nobody ever becomes the wiser as to the outcome of such a meeting. What the researcher has observed in many cases is that the perpetrators repeat the acts of violence.

Van den Aardweg (1987: 180) argues:

> " School violence is a fact and in the last decade has become a reality in the schools of the RSA, and is gaining momentum."

A closer look at the school under study will support Van den Aardweg's view that school violence has gained momentum in South African schools, particularly in this decade and more since she conducted her research.

AMANDLETHU HIGH SCHOOL

Amandlethu, the research site of this study, is a high school formerly under the control of the DET. It is exclusively African in its student body and admits both boys and girls. It is situated at Amaoti which is about thirty kilometres north of Durban. Amaoti was a rural area which fell under the Amaqadi Tribal Authority under *Inkosi* Mzonjani Ngcobo. The chief provided a sanctuary for political refugees in the 1980s. Refugees who were fleeing IFP warlords all converged on Amaoti. Refugees came from as far south as Mzimkhulu and from as far north as Mtunzini. Amaoti was then transformed from a serene rural area to a bustling informal settlement.

Towards the close of the 1980s political violence broke out between IFP and UDF supporters. Thousands of people died from both sides. Eventually all IFP supporters were driven from the area. Amaoti is now an ANC stronghold with a population of about 100 000 people. Amaoti is still a slum area. There are very few brick and mortar houses. After the 1994 elections political violence abated. What has emerged at Amaoti are gangs and crime. Unemployment and poverty are the prominent characteristics of this informal settlement.

The following information on the origins of the school is the result of an interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, the former principal of Amandlethu, held at his home in Northdene, Durban, on 13 July 1999.

The only high school which catered for the residents of Amaoti before the advent of the refugees was Ohlange High school situated at Ohlange about a kilometre west of Amaoti. With the ever-increasing population of Amaoti it was felt that a high school had to be established, as Ohlange would no longer be able to accommodate the swelling school-going population. Anyway, Ohlange was a private school which charged fees and even though the fees were low, many could not afford them.

The community came together in 1984 and discussed the possibility of establishing a secondary school. A certain Ngcobo family donated land as a site for the school. The community made financial contributions and the school was built in 1985. The school was situated on a hilly terrain more or less in the centre of the township. It catered for about 80 000 people.

The original name of the school was Mbozane Secondary school which was a privately run and unregistered school. There were eleven privately paid teachers earning an average R120 a month. Pupil enrolment was 837.

In response to parents' urgent pleas the ex- Department of Education and Training undertook in October 1987 to organise the registration and taking over of this school. Approval was granted and the school operated under the new name, Amandlethu, from 25 January 1988. The principal was Mr. Cebekhulu a former principal of Chesterville High School. The school operated as a junior secondary school which had standard six to eight only

In 1992 the school was upgraded into a high school or senior secondary school. The first standard ten of the school sat for their examination in 1993. The school obtained a 34% pass. In 1994 the school experienced a wave of disturbances. Sithole (1996) outlines how the present principal, Mr Manzi, ousted Mr Cebekhulu, using violent means. The present principal was voted into office by pupils through a secret ballot. After assuming duties as the acting principal, teachers were dissatisfied with his management style. At the end of 1994 the teachers were chased away from the school by pupils. All teachers were subsequently redeployed to other schools, and a new cohort of teachers was appointed to replace the displaced teachers, in February 1995. The researcher was among the new teachers.

When the researcher and other teachers started working at the school, it was noticeable that the principal was holding many meetings with some pupils. The researcher later learnt that these students were members of the Students Representative Council.

Not all of them were members of the SRC, but they were the Group of Concerned Students (GCS). Sithole (1996: 7) points out:

> "They (1) alleged that he (2) had instigated a group of students (known as the Group of Concerned Students) to harass those teachers whom he labeled his enemies and a threat to his newly found mini-kingdom."

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These students would walk around the school during tuition. At one time a teacher had punished a student by making the student stand outside the class near the door. Two members of the GCS approached the teacher and ordered the teacher to take the pupil back into class regardless of the teacher's intentions. This definitely undermines the teacher's authority over her pupils. This led to most pupils openly defying teachers and reporting teachers to these pupils; as such learning was negatively affected.

At one time during 1995 the Group of Concerned Students attacked some students during a meeting which involved boys only. The meeting was held during tuition time. Teachers were requested to assemble in the staffroom while the meeting was in progress on the school grounds. At that meeting four pupils were beaten stabbed and chased away from the school.

The following day the staff was informed by the principal that the victims of the attack had been guilty of smoking dagga at school. Since these pupils were all in Standard Ten and had already registered to write their examinations at the school they normally would have come back to write their examinations at the school. Instead special arrangements were made for them to write their examination at a neighbouring school. This is an indication that the principal was prepared to go to any length to remove anyone whom he regarded as a threat to him.

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1. These were the teachers who had been chased away by the students.

2. The principal.

When the researcher started this he traced one of the pupils and talked to him at his home at Ohlange, a township near Amaoti. Firstly he told me that he is a teetotaler and does not use any drugs at all. I learnt that the reason for the meeting in the first place was to question their loyalty to the new principal. Because they showed that they were not happy with many of the actions of the principal and the GCS they were attacked. The student believes that the principal was behind their attack. No charge was laid against the attackers.

To illustrate the present conditions at the school under study the researcher will cite the following:

Three things are worth noting. The principal's instructions are that all teachers must be in the staffroom during break time. All cellphones should be off. Should a teacher be anywhere but in the staffroom or if a cellphone starts ringing, the principal becomes furious and the offender usually gets a tongue-lashing and is humiliated in front of all other staff members. Secondly, no union activities are allowed in the school, especially the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). Thirdly it should be noted that although the GCS is no longer active at the school, all subsequent S R Cs have been hostile to teachers, and very loyal to the principal. In the period between 1995 and 1999 there have been many incidents of the members of the S R C challenging teacher actions in their classrooms. In many incidents teachers have been threatened with violence by the members of the SRC.

In 1998 there was a "chalk down" call by SADTU. When the teachers came back the following day the president of the S R C addressed the students in the morning assembly. His address was leveled at inciting students to chase away all the teachers. He swore at the teachers much to the delight of the students. The situation was diffused by the chairman of the School Governing Body, who happened to be at school at that time, by bringing the teachers and the S R C together. Throughout the discussion the principal was condoning the action of the president of the SRC, that shows the alliance between the principal and a small cohesion of students persists.

While all this has been going on, there has been a significant decline in matric results since 1995. The decline is thus:

1994   : 41%

1995   : 35%

1996   : 31%

1997   : 28%

1998   : 22%

1999   : 21%

What is noticeable is that in 1993 the pass rate was 34%. It went up in 1994 to 41%. The pass rate then took a nosedive from 1995. Unfortunately there is no local literature available about the effects of violence on academic achievement. The aim of this study is to try and establish if there is a relationship between the two aspects. However, there are works that deal with this relationship in comparative settings. This will be dealt with in the literature review section.

This introductory chapter has clarified the main objective of this research. The origin and a description of the research site were also given. The second chapter will give a literature review of violence in schools. The third chapter will give the methodology which involves the rationale for the choice of the study and the methods used when conducting this research. The fourth chapter will give research findings whilst the fifth will provide an analysis for these findings. The last chapter will be a conclusion and a few recommendations will be forwarded regarding methods and action to be taken in order to try and curb school violence.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review on Violence in South African Schools

International and South African data suggest that violence is a problem of epidemic proportion among the youth (Flisher et al 1993: 490). Violence is endemic in the South African education system, especially in township schools. Violence embodies such aspects as vandalism, rioting, pupil-pupil assaults, parent-teacher assaults, teacher-pupil assaults and other socially damaging behaviour (van den Aardweg 1987: 174). For the purposes of this study I will concentrate on violence against people rather than against property. To begin with, I will examine recent South African Police Services figures on crime committed against people. These figures are inclusive of all crimes committed in that area, not specifically in schools. It should also be noted that these figures reflect crimes that were reported to the police. Many acts of violence are not reported. Police stations are too far away and there is a lack of communication facilities like telephones. Victims also fear of unsympathetic treatment from the police in cases of rape. These figures may therefore be higher. The figures are calculated on the preliminary results of the 1996 census. All provinces were listed but I will only concentrate on national(RSA) and Kwazulu-Natal (KZN) figures. The statistics are from January to May 1999.

Table 1   **Crimes per 100000**

Crime	RSA	KZN
Murder	22.6	29.0
Attempted murder	26.7	34.4
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	90.0	99.9
Rape	47.5	39.3
Assault GBH	235.1	139.1
Assault common	208.8	133.6

(Source: Bulletin on Reported Crime in South Africa for period January to May 1999)

These figures serve as evidence that violence is common in South Africa. It should be noted that data specifically on school violence is very difficult to obtain. An intensive search to obtain statistics on school violence nationally, provincially or even locally proved fruitless. On many occasions anecdotal evidence will therefore be used to support claims of the existence of violence in schools.

African schools are worst affected by violence (Morrell, 1998, 222). Although township schools are the worst affected by violence, even Model "C" schools, which are "elite" schools, do experience violence. This is evident, for example, in the Vryburg High School incident in the North West Province. At this school a white 18-year –old schoolboy was stabbed in the neck by a black 19- year- old schoolmate during a quarrel. This incident occurred during a period of protracted racial tension in 1998 (Mercury 18 February 1998). Other incidents of more or less the same nature in Model "C" or even private schools occur but do not enjoy the same sensationalist status and media coverage. Nevertheless the frequency of violence in these schools is unlikely to be as high as in township schools for reasons which will be discussed in relation to Amandlethu School later in this thesis.

For the purposes of this study school violence will be categorized under two main headings. They are: violence instigated from within the school and violence from outside the school.

Violence instigated from within the school

Introduction

Schools are not sheltered from violence. While it was once thought that they were havens from violence or that violence only occurred incidentally within them, there is a body of literature, which now argues that schools are complicit in school violence (Morrell, 1998). Violence in the community is reflected by violence in the school. The most frequently cited causes of violence are deteriorating living conditions in many big areas (van den Aardweg 1987). That is the reason why most school violence is found in schools situated in poverty-stricken African areas. In most cases the violence has a gender dimension. Boys/men tend to be the

major perpetrators and victims of murder and assault, while females are the major victims of rape and sexual assault.

Definition of violence

Daniels, Marshall and Ochberg (1970) as cited by van den Aardweg (1987: 175) state that:

> "Violence is the exertion of physical force to injure or destroy, accompanied by the emotion of anger and hostility."

Lauer (1989) as cited by Hoffman and McKendrick (1990: 3) defines violence as "the use of force to harm, injure or abuse others." It is evident from these two definitions that violence can take the form of physical injury as in assault. It can also be abuse as in the case of bullying, whereby a more powerful person forces a less powerful person to do certain things against the person's will. Abuse can also be in the form of sexual harassment. This form of abuse is usually against females.

Gender violence

In patriarchal societies that most people live in, men dominate women. Jones (1985: 33) argues that:

> "Schools do not exist in a social vacuum. They reflect and reproduce the power relations within a male supremacist society – a society in which the dominant group (men) ultimately maintain that power position through force."

Although the author was writing from the American perspective, male dominance is a global phenomenon and violent masculinities exist within homes and the school. The patriarchal social order of the home is extended to schools. Morrell (1999: 12) confirms this:

> "School masculinities are not separate from the world and while they definitely are key features of the gender regimes of schools, they need to be understood as spanning the private and public spheres and the two key institutions of home and school."

Schools being within societies where male dominance rules supreme, it is not surprising, then, to find that the perpetrators of violence in most schools are males. It can either be schoolboys or male teachers. It is very

unusual to find females being the perpetrators of violence. The reason for this is that boys learn from home that a male is superior to a female. This practice is particularly found in co-educational schools, where both boys and girls attend the same school. Male violence in mixed schools serves to support boys as they practise their sexual domination over girls and it attempts to teach girls that it is 'natural' for them to be tyrannised by men into subordinate position. The central themes of domination, control, humiliation and mutilation serve as propaganda by which men learn that it is acceptable to abuse women and girls (Jones, 1985).

The forms of violence most common in South African schools (in order of seriousness) are murder, rape assault and sexual harassment.

Murder

Definition of murder

Murder is defined as:

> "the unlawful killing of another person with what is generally known as an intent to kill"
>
> (Claassen, 1976).

This form of violence has been reported in many township schools, but it is not as common as the other forms of violence, which occur in schools. Most murders in schools are committed by outsiders. During the political violence era murders in schools were committed by vigilantes (Nzimande and Thusi, 1991). Now that political violence has abated, murders in schools are mostly committed by gangs. This will be discussed in the violence from outside the school section.

Murders committed from within the schools are usually committed by male pupils, killing other pupils (boy or girl); male pupils killing teachers (male and female); male teachers killing other teachers and pupils. One recent incident, which made headlines, was when in Gauteng a male teacher shot and killed three of his colleagues. The victims were one male and two females (Mercury 30 July 1999). The attack, it is alleged, was sparked by the male victim. It is alleged that the victim continually taunted the perpetrator about his alleged impotence. If this is true, then masculinity creeps in as the cause of the violence.

Another incident in 1999 which made headlines happened at Zithokozizwe Secondary School in Scottburgh, KwaZulu-Natal. A pupil was killed and two others were injured after being shot at by a teacher (Sunday Tribune 27 June 1999). The cause of the shooting was that pupils had demanded R2 refund for transport they had paid for a school outing. When teachers refused to pay them, pupils stoned the teachers' cars. The teachers retaliated with gunfire. This is another case where masculinity was an issue. Teachers felt that they had to stamp their authority by using lethal weapons. The matter could have been resolved in a more amicable manner. Maybe the situation was not conducive for reasoning, but when the teacher or teachers started using firepower they were making it clear who was in control, regardless of the consequences. Nowhere in the newspaper report is it mentioned that their lives were in danger. It was their cars that were being stoned.

Assault

Assault is defined as:

> "a demonstration of an unlawful intent by one person to inflict immediate injury on the person of another" (Anderson, 1969).

Assault is one of the most common forms of violence experienced in schools. There have been reports of pupils assaulting teachers and vice versa. At this point the focus is on individual cases, i.e. one pupil assaulting one teacher, and one teacher assaulting one pupil in each incident. Group assaults will be dealt with in the group violence sub-section.

At the school under study, cases of assault of pupils by fellow students are reported frequently to teachers. The perpetrators are usually boys, and the victims are usually girls. It is possible that most assaults are by boys other boys but that these are not ever reported because it is unmanly to report injury. This is why it appears that most assaults are on girls. It is not usual that the perpetrators are girls. The reasons for the assaults vary. It can be a quarrel over a pen, a jilted lover or even a rejected amorous proposition. The underlying cause could be the assertion of masculinity which is usually accelerated by drug and alcohol

abuse. Girls have been known at times to drop out of school, because of assaults or threats thereof. In March 1999 a Grade 12 boy assaulted his female classmate, at the school under study. The latter sustained a swollen cheek. The reason for the attack has never been known to the researcher, because the girl has since left school. On being asked about the attack, the boy just says that the girl was insolent, and he doesn't go beyond that. To other teachers he simply says that the matter was sorted out by the principal. No teacher knows the reason for the girl's dropping out of school. It may have nothing to do with the assault, or the assault may well be the cause.

Teachers at the school under study have been observed by the researcher, assaulting pupils, which goes beyond corporal punishment. What differs a little here is the fact that even female teachers have been involved in assaults as the aggressors. This will be dealt with under the findings chapter.

Sexual harassment

Definition: Herbert (1992) defines sexual harassment as:

> "…….. unsolicited and unreciprocated sexual male behaviour towards women and girls which may be obscured by what is considered normal behaviour" (Herbert 1992 : 14).

Research has shown that mixed secondary schools constitute one site amongst many where male sexual violence is learned and practiced. It functions in schools as it does elsewhere – in the social control of girls and women (Mahony 1985, Russell 1991). Boys and male teachers alike perpetrate sexual harassment.

> " In most schools verbal sexual harassment is an everyday experience for girls and women teachers to suggestive sexual comments appraising looks and leers" (Jones 1985: 28-29).

There are many forms of sexual harassment. Larkin (1994) lists these forms, from the Canadian point of, view as follows:

Verbal harassment: This is the form of harassment whereby the harasser passes lewd remarks or actually swears at the victim. This form of harassment, according to the author, appears to be inherent in the lives of many female students.

Physical harassment: This form involves touching, grabbing and rubbing. The author goes on to say that another form of physical harassment is sexual assault. She acknowledges that it is difficult to distinguish between sexual harassment and sexual assault. One would be tempted to say that sexual assault is when the touching involves a certain measure of force which may result in injury.

Visual harassment: leering is the form of harassment which is common in schools. Leering means a form of invasive watching, a look that continues for a length of time and is experienced by the recipient as intimidation or intrusive.

Some forms of harassment which the researcher has observed, not necessarily during the research, was when boys would indecently expose themselves to girls. At times the boys would show pornographic material to girls, much to the disgust of the girls. It should be noted that on many occasions teachers have come across boys and girls crowded and giggling over pornographic magazines. The issue of harassment comes in when the girls are shown such photographs or literature against their will.

Most schools in South Africa experience sexual harassment. This includes the traditionally white schools. At Montclair Senior Primary School in Durban, a pupil was expelled after allegedly sexually harassing a girl at the school, by touching her breasts (Sunday Tribune 27 June 1999).

Teachers, too, sexually harass schoolgirls. Jones (1985), in the United Kingdom, states:
> "Male teachers were quite open about their attitudes towards the girls, often putting their arms around the girls"(Ibid, 29).

While this refers to U.K, this behaviuor is experienced in South African Schools. At Zwakele Primary School at Amaoti, Durban, which is the feeder school for the school under study a male teacher was arrested and charged with having sexual relations with girls below the age of consent. Because cases of sexual assault are seldom reported, the same may be happening at the school under study, but has not yet surfaced.

Rape

Rape is another form of violence that is experienced in schools and is perpetrated by male students on female students.

Definition of Rape

Rape is defined as:
> " An act by a man of sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent, through
> force or threat of force" (McHenry 1993 : 941).

Rape, as the definition suggests, is a violent crime. South Africa's rape statistics are among the worst in the world. Police estimate a rape takes place very two minutes. That means 139 rapes every hour or 3 335 every day. Police say more than half the victims know their attackers, but only one case in 35 is reported (Lillah-Chiki and Matela, 1997). Schools are not immune to this form of violence.

Mokwena (1991) in his seminar paper writes of a culture of township rape called 'jackrolling', which originated in Soweto. The word was coined to refer to the forceful abduction of women in the township by a specific gang called the *Jackrollers,* which operated in the Diepkloof area in the years of 1987/1988. The most notable practices of the Jackrollers were rape and abduction, car theft and robbery. But as the seduction of women became fashionable, anyone who did it could be called a jackroller, and jackroll became a commonly used verb in the township. (Ibid, 16)

Jackrolling did not end in Soweto but it spread to most big townships. This trend also infiltrated schools. In townships rape of girls by gangs, either from within the school or from outside of the school, is common. In most schools where jackrolling occurs boys walk into a classroom, grab whichever girl they want, take her away and rape her. Russell (1991:66) in her interview with Mary Mabaso, a Soweto community leader, confirms the above by saying:

> "Most of the time the jackrollers use force on the girls. Sometimes they go to school with guns and say, 'Teacher. Please we want so-and-so.' And because the teacher is afraid of the guns, he or she will release the girl. The girl is innocent. She does not even know them."

Russell (1991; 75) brings up the question of masculinity, as one of the causes of such rampant rape incidents in the townships.

> "Real men are supposed to be strong, tough, aggressive, successful, competitive, dominating, and powerful. Above all they must dominate girls and women, who, for their part, are supposed to be passive, unassertive, soft, powerless, and dependent."

This shows that rape is an act of conformity to the normative male sex role in the South African society (Ibid). Russell cites three factors as the possible causes of rape in the townships.

Alcohol and other drug consumption are the first to be blamed by Russell's interviewee. The author agrees by pointing out:

> "While many researchers deny that alcohol and many other drugs cause men and boys to rape, many agree that there is an association between them"(Ibid).

Many township pupils, even girls, use drugs and alcohol. Most of them even play truant to go and drink. The smoking of dagga is usually done at school. Some of the violent actions of the pupils at school, including rape, may be the direct effect of drug abuse. At the school under study, many pupils, especially boys have been found smelling of dagga.

Television is the second to take the blame.

> "The uninhibited portrayal of sex and/or the merging of sexual abuse in some foreign mainstream movies, in some television programmes, and on some videos, now consumed by males in Soweto" (Ibid).

Although X-rated movies are plentiful and videos of the same make are easily accessible to youngsters, it is not likely that these could have any significant impact on the young rapists. Many of them live in areas where there is no electricity. Even those whose parents could afford electricity are unlikely to be able to afford videos. They may steal video machines, but they cannot afford to hire the movies. Pupils at the school under study live in typical Third World conditions without electricity and running water so it is unlikely that they could be influenced by blue movies, yet they do engage in acts of sexual assault, especially outside of the school. Rape incidents may be happening at school, but the statistics show that many cases of rape are not reported.

Unemployment, Resentment and Jealousy are the third factors mentioned.

> "The scapegoat theory of aggression – which by implication, includes rape – has been a popular psychological theory since pre-feminist days. According to this theory, when people cannot express their resentment and anger toward the real sources of these feelings, they frequently act out their frustration and aggression on some more vulnerable target"(Ibid).

Townships are the worst hit by unemployment. If the violence, including rape, that is escalating in the townships is attributed to unemployment, this could be true. In townships, many young people resort to crime because of unemployment. Mokwena (1991) confirms by pointing out that:

> "The deepening crisis of marginalisation and the resultant material impoverishment of black communities is feeding directly into the growth of a violent and criminal youth culture, manifested particularly in the escalation of youth gang formation in the African townships" (Ibid, 4).

At Amaoti township where the school is situated unemployment is very high. As a result there are many gangs that can be observed roaming the streets.

Corporal Punishment

This form of violence was legal until it was prohibited by the passing of the South African Schools Act of 1996. Morrell (1999) points out:

> "In 1996 the passing of South African Schools Act illegalised and prohibited corporal punishment" (Ibid, 5).

Although corporal punishment is now illegal, some schools still use it. Morrell (1999), in his research on corporal punishment around Durban schools, reveals that. He discovered that some pupils are in favour of corporal punishment.

> "For the large majority of learners it is accepted that discipline is best maintained by the use of force by some body in authority" (Ibid, 12).

Holdstock (1990: 342) is adamant that corporal punishment is nothing but child abuse.

> "We can call corporal punishment by a thousand names and find a thousand justifications for its use, but it nevertheless remains child abuse. The abuse is many – faceted. Not only does it cause physical pain and emotional turmoil, it also invades the personal space and violates the human rights of the child."

The debate for and against the use of corporal punishment is over. It was felt that corporal punishment, as Holdstock puts it, does more damage to the child than good. At some schools especially African schools the cane is still being used liberally. The school under study is one such school.

Group Violence

A form of group school violence, which is common in African schools, is rioting by large numbers of students to vent their anger and dissatisfaction over certain issues. This trend toward militant action by students against the authorities emerged in South African mission boarding schools as early as the 1940's. (Hyslop, 1987: 4) Two anecdotes will be used to support this claim. One incident happened in 1946 and the other in 1999.

On 7 August 1946 at 9.30 pm, Lovedale, one of South Africa's leading missionary educational institutions, was hit by an explosion of student anger. A crowd of 150 to 200 male students stoned the houses of some of the staff and set fire to some small buildings and equipment. Staff who tried to intervene were themselves stoned. When police arrived to disperse the riot, students threw stones at them as well. The police then fired warning shots and the students fled to the hill behind the school. At dawn they gave themselves up and 157 students were arrested. Of these, 150 were found guilty and of those 64 were sentenced and were given between six and ten cuts as punishment. The others were given sentences of five pounds or two months in jail. The supposed cause of the whole incident was students' discontent about the rationing of sugar (Hyslop 19 87: 3)

On 21 April 1999 at Zamdela Secondary School, Ngqeleni, Eastern Cape, more than a hundred pupils beat and stoned their principal and held teachers hostage during a lengthy standoff with the police. Tensions boiled over at the school when pupils confronted the principal, over the pending redeployment of certain teachers to other schools and accused him of "expelling" a group of technical drawing teachers. 76 pupils were arrested and released on warning to appear in court on May 12 (Sunday Tribune 25 April 1999).

Group violence can be differentiated from gender violence in that, both boys and girls become involved in group violence. Although in the Lovedale incident boys stoned the houses of the staff, at the end both boys and girls got involved. Group violence was particularly rife during the era of the political struggle.

Violence from outside the school

Introduction

Some schools in South Africa especially African schools experience violence from outside the school. The two major forces that bring violence into schools from outside are political violence and gangs.

Political violence

This type of violence was at its peak in the 1980s and from early up to mid 1990s. Political violence can broadly be divided into two. Firstly there was violence between political parties; for example between Inkatha and the United Democratic Front (later the African National Congress [ANC]). Secondly there was the confrontation between the youth and the South African Defense Force (SADF) together with the South African Police (SAP).

Political violence has declined to the extent that it is almost non-existent. Although political violence is no longer as rampant as it was in its heyday, it is worth looking into it as it was partly responsible for the mushrooming of youth gangs. These gangs terrorize communities including schools. Flisher et al (1993:491) point out that violence engenders violence. It is possible then that the violence experienced by the youth could be responsible for the acts of violence that the youth engages in these days. Gang violence will be discussed later in this chapter.

Violence which takes place within the school is usually between individuals and rarely between groups. Political violence, on the other hand, in and out of school, left devastation in its wake. Nzimande and Thusi (1991: 1) observed political violence in KwaZulu-Natal thus;

> "Life for entire communities has been marked by endless killings, burnings, kidnappings, disappearances, displacements, detentions and shootings; the list of devastation seems almost endless."

After conducting research on schooling and violence in Pietermaritzburg, Gultig and Hart (1990:1) state that:

> "Violence has brought large-scale dislocation in its wake, with people fleeing the conflict and becoming refugees in other communities. Large numbers of pupils have been de-schooled by the violence, adding to burgeoning population of school-leavers who are unemployed and unable to find places in schools."

Nzimande and Thusi (1991: 1) attributed political violence in Kwazulu –Natal to political intolerance between supporters of Inkatha and the United Democratic Front (UDF) . This violence also spread to the PWV area.

> "The violence in Natal has been described by some observers as the most devastating social and political upheaval since the Bhambatha rebellion of 1906…..the most depressing development to this violence has been its spread to the PWV area."

For the purposes of this study, only political violence and youth will be discussed. It should be noted that since 1976 the youth had taken over the lead in the struggle against apartheid.

> "Acts of violence against both property and persons associated with the state became a logical extension reinforced by the call from the ANC in exile to 'make the country ungovernable'. The youth responded to this call willingly" (Marks 1995:5).

Mogano (1993: 4) emphasizes that:

> "The crisis of authority in our school has one root and that is that the highest authority in this country, the government of South Africa is not acknowledged by our pupils. In consequence every institution, however remotely connected with the state bears the taint and is similarly challenged. Any person or institution who either works or acknowledges the government is strained and accused of compromise with the authorities."

One such institution which was regarded by the youth as being a government lackey was Inkatha. On the other hand Inkatha was trying to assert itself over the youth by targeting the schools.

> "The way in which Inkatha tries to assert itself at school level is through the establishment of Inkatha Youth Brigade branches in each school under its control. This is despite the fact that over the years most students have joined organisations that are aligned to the mass democratic movement" (Nzimande and Thusi 1991:13).

The situation at these schools was a recipe for disaster as the youth at school was resisting Inkatha indoctrination, more so because Inkatha and the KwaZulu Government were synonymous.

> "Inkatha is constitutionally linked to the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly"
>
> (Gultig and Hart, 1990: 3).

The KwaZulu Government was an institution formed by the apartheid government, therefore it was undesirable to all those who were in the struggle against apartheid.

Inkatha was determined to exercise control over its schools, and held that opposition to Inkatha was illegitimate (Nzimande and Thusi 1881: 8). Consequently, attacks on the youth opposed to Inkatha took place both inside and outside school premises. There was victimisation of students because of their political affiliations (Ibid: 66). To launch these attacks Inkatha mobilised vigilantes sympathetic to the organization to attack students (Ibid: 5).

Not only were the vigilantes used to attack students but the KwaZulu Police (ZP) also brought violence to schools. One of the respondents in Nzimande and Thusi's research said:

"Our school is periodically raided by the ZPs looking for student activists associated with the ANC and the UDF. In a number of cases these ZPs have shot students inside school premises" (Ibid: 56).

Political violence was most severe in KwaZulu-Natal and the schools under the control of the KwaZulu Government were mostly affected. Department of Education and Training schools were also affected by the violence countrywide.

In his report on the status quo of South African township violence in 1986, Frank Chikane reported that:

"A new generation of young militants has emerged. They are the youth who have committed themselves to the struggle for a democratic future. These are the young people who continued the battle on the school grounds"(Chikane, 1986: 333).

Marks (1995: 5) emphasizes the violence in schools brought by the SADF and the SAP by saying:

"Youth were confronted with violence on a day to day basis; had poor chances for educational advancement as the schooling crisis deepened;….and, the constant and violent presence of the security forces in the township at large and even more disturbingly for most youth, in the school grounds as well."

Evidence from all the authors cited show that political violence did disrupt schooling for many students. It also gives a picture of how violence was brought in from outside the school.

Gang violence

With political violence now relatively insignificant, gang violence has taken over as the scourge of many African schools especially township schools. Gang violence is rife in many, if not all, townships.

"70% of the people who live in urban townships live in fear of gang violence" (Ibid: 2).

Township schools are not immune to the gang violence prevalent in townships. The television series *Yizo Yizo* brought to light what is actually happening in township schools. This drama series showed a school where learning takes place amidst criminal activities like firearm carrying, drug trafficking, substance abuse and total disregard of school authorities. Griggs (1997) points out that:

> "Turf wars not only spill onto school grounds but the school itself is a territorial prize. Gangs need a controlled area from which to sell drugs and recruit members"(Ibid: 2).

This is exactly what South African viewers witnessed in the drama series *Yizo Yizo*. To some South Africans this may be the closest they will ever be to gang violence, but to many more this is a real life daily experience.

The factors which may be responsible for schools to be unsafe would firstly be unequal education provision. Schools in the suburbs are properly fenced. This was provided by the government before schools were handed over to the School Governing Bodies. Township schools and African rural schools were not provided with fencing. Now that schools have to provide their own security it is an uphill battle for schools in poor communities like those in African areas. For the schools which were already fenced all they have to provide is security personnel. In most cases they can afford to do so. Schools in poverty-stricken communities are inadequately secure with regard to fences, patrols, ready access to police and many other factors that would help produce a secure environment. The result is that many learners and educators are regularly subjected to violence and trauma resulting from intimidation, theft, robbery, assault, rape, vandalism and other serious problems that undermine efforts to bring up children in a normal and healthy way

Another factor which could be held responsible for violence in schools would be the mushrooming of youth gangs in the townships. These gangs are a result of, inter alia, political violence and poverty.

Apart from being persecuted and displaced, township youth had taken over the struggle against apartheid. The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) inspired blacks to seize the initiative and take responsibility for their country's destiny. The impact of the BCM was felt mostly among the youth and professional sectors of

the black population. The Soweto uprising of June 1976 was a direct outcome of the defiance bred by the process of conscientization by BCM and the willingness of school pupils to challenge the apartheid government. Children became used to power and control (Ramphele 1992:17).

After 1990 many young people who had been engaged in political violence both as victims and perpetrators all of a sudden found themselves with nothing to do, because a peaceful settlement was being negotiated. The armed struggle to which most youth had been sympathetic, had been suspended by the ANC.

"Many of the young people who were the one-time engine of the South African liberation struggle now

lie idle and disaffected" (Mokwena 1992:39).

Over and above being passive during the negotiations, there was also the question of unemployment. Being dropouts these young people had very few chances of being employed, especially now that the country is experiencing economic recession. Mokwena (1992) states that:

"Gangs provide possibilities for material advancement in the absence of any possibility of employment" (Ibid: 40).

Gang formation was the option chosen by the youth in the face of unemployment and poverty. It must be remembered that these youngsters were used to violence, hence joining gangs for purposes of violence, the researcher feels, posed no problems. The difference is that this time they had a different target; their communities. Schools fall victim to these gangs because they (the schools) are within the target areas.

It is such situations that may have led to incidents like the one which happened at Oliphantsvlei in Gauteng, where two gunmen entered a school and killed a teacher in her classroom, while she was teaching (Daily News 11 June   1999)

Griggs (1997:3) tells of an incident at Mzuvele School, KwaMashu, where five armed youngsters marched into the school in daylight hours and took jewelry off pupils at knife and gunpoint. The school under study is

also exposed to the same type of gangsterism. The only difference is that this school is fenced and most of the violence comes from within the school.

Academic achievement

Violence, which is rampant in schools, could have an impact on academic achievement. South African schools experience violence just as schools in the United States, Britain, France or any other country abroad. The frequency and the forms of violence may differ from country to country.

It is unfortunate that in South Africa there is no literature on the effects of violence on academic achievement. However there is information on this subject in comparative studies.

In the United States, Weishaw and Peng (1993:6) found that students who do poorly in school have much higher rates of misbehaviour. In Britain Weis et al (1998: 67) say:

> "Given that biographies of violence permeate the homes and lives of many of our students, what does this mean for our own understanding of children's behaviour and resulting classroom practice? It must be clear that whether or not a child is living with such abuse currently or if a parent has a history of violence it definitely affects the child."

In Canada, Kelebay (1994:14) writes of Montreal and Quebec students. In Montreal there is a lot of violence caused by gangs. A police report has identified twenty-seven street gangs with an aggregate of 600 to 700 members at eight different schools. These gang members threaten to extort money or clothing from high school students - a veritable protection racket. Although Quebec had its own misdemeanours, they were not of a violent nature. As a result Quebec students outscored their peers in the national mathematics test.

While most researchers have got similar results, in France, Deltaglia (1990: 446) found that academic achievement level of the study population of sexually abused children "was comparable" to the general population. This is an exception to the findings of other researchers. That is the reason why the researcher found it necessary to undertake this study, because it can never be assumed that where there is violence there will necessarily be poor academic results.

Elliot and Vos (1974) as cited by Weinshaw and Peng (1993: 6) found that low achievement in school may cause rather than be a result of misbehaviour. They discovered that after many delinquents dropped out of school they stopped being delinquents. This view is, to the researcher, endorsed by his younger brother's behaviour. At school he was a delinquent and was always involved in fights. He repeated Grade eight and Grade ten. He did not do any tertiary education. Today he is a very successful salesman. The researcher has come to the conclusion that his brother's being involved in fights at school was a result of under-achieving, not that he had to repeat grades because he was involved in delinquency.

Researchers abroad have found out that violence may have an impact on academic achievement. In South Africa the black youth in particular has been exposed to violence and to the popular slogan: "Liberation now Education later." The result thereof is overgrown pupils in low grades, who struggle to cope with schoolwork and compete with their younger colleagues and are very aggressive. This was the case at Mtunzini where the researcher started teaching. The same is commonplace at the school under study.

The absence of a culture of learning in African schools manifests in poor matric results. The government has now launched the COLTS programme, which is the Culture of Learning and Teaching Services. With this programme the government is trying to resuscitate the culture of teaching and learning, which was lost when 'pupil power' took over the schools.

Methodology

Rationale and background

This research project addresses the school's declining results and most importantly the school's culture of violence.

The research was undertaken under hazardous circumstances. Even when completed this thesis could place the researcher in danger because he could lose his job; he might forfeit promotion opportunities; he may face physical threats or even be actually attacked. The researcher has observed in the past how the principal has dealt with anyone with whom he was in disagreement. Because of the dangerous nature of the study, nobody at school knew of the project.

Few teachers will openly challenge or question the principal. His demand for absolute obedience from staff and the de facto prohibition on criticism or critical thought required that this research project be conducted clandestinely.

TYPE OF STUDY

The case study was chosen by the researcher to be the vehicle of carrying out this research. The print and electronic media report incidents of violence. They also report about poor matric results. On both issues, however, the media only scratch the surface. The researcher chose the case study so as to be able to get below the surface.

> "Unlike the experimenter who manipulates variables to determine their casual significance or the surveyor who asks standardized questions of large representative samples of individuals, the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit, a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs" (Cohen and Manion 1994: 106-107).

Another factor which the researcher considered was the fact that since education belongs to the social sciences it would be appropriate to use the case study. Yin (1993: xi) argues:

"Case study research continues to be an essential form of social science inquiry."

Apart from being essential in social sciences research, the case study has many advantages. Cohen and Manion (1994) summarize the advantages as follows:

"- Case study data paradoxically is strong in reality but difficult to organize. In contrast, other research data is often weak in reality but susceptible to ready organization. This strength in reality is because case studies are down-to earth and attention holdings, in harmony with the reader's own experience, and thus provide a natural basis for generalization.

- Case studies allow generalizations either about an instance or from an instance to a class. Their peculiar strength lies in their attention to the subtlety and complexity of the case in its own right.

- Case studies recognize the complexity and embeddedness of social truths. By carefully attending to social situations, case studies can represent something of the discrepancies or conflicts between the viewpoints held by participants. The best case studies are capable of offering some support to alternative interpretations.

- Case studies considered as products may form an archive of descriptive material sufficiently rich to admit subsequent reinterpretation. Given the variety and complexity of educational purposes and environments, there is an obvious value in having a data source for researchers and users whose purposes may be different from our own.

- Case studies are a step to action. They begin in a world of action and contribute to it. Their insights may be directly interpreted and put to use; for staff or individual self-development; for intra- institutional feedback for formative evaluation and in educational policy making." (Cohen and Manion 1994:123)

The case study was also selected because it is suitable for research that has to be carried out in a limited time period by an individual researcher.

> "The case - study approach is particularly appropriate for individual researchers
> because it gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be carried out in some
> depth within a limited time scale" (Bell, 1993:8)

Finally the case study was chosen for this research because the research site was easily accessible to the researcher, as he is a teacher at the same school. Date collection had to be carried out covertly because of the danger surrounding the whole research. So data was collected as the researcher carried out his daily tasks.

> "In a natural setting it is difficult for the researcher who wishes to be covert not to act as a
> participant. If the researcher does not participate there is little to explain his presence, as he is very
> obvious to the actual participants. "(Cohen and Manion 1994:109).

Stenhouse (1988) defines the case study as follows:

> "Case study methods involve the collection and recording of data about a case or cases and the
> preparation of a report or a presentation of the case - The collection of data on site is termed
> 'fieldwork' and it involves:

(a) Generally participant or non-participant observation and interviewing.

(b) Probably, the collection of documentary evidence and descriptive statistics and the administration of tests and questionnaires and

(c) Possibly the use of photography, motion pictures or videotape recording" (Ibid, 50).

Of all the data collection techniques, photography and tape recording would have been extremely dangerous. Detection by the principal would endanger the project. He would stop the researcher from proceeding with the research thereby making it difficult even for questionnaires to be distributed.

Reliability of Data

Although data collection was risky in this research project, validity and reliability of data had to be maintained through process of triangulation.

> "Triangulation can be a useful technique where a researcher is engaged in case study, a particular ex
> example of 'complex phenomena.' (Cohen and Manion 1994: 241)."

Ball (1981:508) emphasizes that there are techniques of verification for establishing the reliability of data. The two most often used are respondent validation and triangulation.

"Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour" (Cohen and Manion 1994:233). Denzin (1988) states that "the diverse methods and measures, which are combined (in triangulation), should relate in some specified way to the theoretical constructs under examination. The use of multiple methods in an investigation so as to overcome the weaknesses or biases of a single method taken by itself is sometimes called multiple operationalism."

"The idea of triangulation is founded upon an analogy with navigation, the idea of fixing a concept in logical space. In the case of data triangulation the notion is that every form of data is potentially biased and that the use of a variety of different forms of data collection (e.g. observation, interview and questionnaires) can either eliminate or highlight these biases by convergence" (Ball 1981:508).

In the case of this research, because of the potential danger, observation was the major tool of data collection. Questionnaires and interviews had to be used to effect triangulation and enhance reliability of data. But questionnaires had to be surreptitiously distributed and collected, and interviewees had to be carefully selected as will be discussed later in this chapter. All this was done as a precaution against possible derailment of the project by the principal.

Data collection

Observation was the major instrument for data collection. This tool was safer to use because what the researcher had observed could always be recorded later, without anyone noticing what was going on..

> "Observation clearly calls for some kind of recording and the held notebook is the classic form" (Stenhouse 1988: 51).

There are two types of observation, namely the participant and the non-participant observation. In this study the researcher was a participant observer. The current vogue enjoyed by the case study based on participant observation is not difficult to account for. This form of research is eminently suitable to many of the problems that the educational investigator faces (Cohen and Manion 1994:100).

Although the researcher did not at any time participate in violent activities at school, he was a participant observer on the strength of being a teacher there. As a teacher the researcher was responsible for the other prong of the study, which is academic achievement. It is because of the above that the researcher feels that he was a participant observer.

Bailey (1978) as cited by Cohen and Manion (1994) identifies some advantages in the participant observation approach:

"- Observation studies are superior to experiments and surveys when data are being collected on non-verbal behaviour.

- In observation studies investigators are able to discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs and are able to make appropriate notes about its salient features.

- Because case study observations take place over an extended period of time, researchers can develop more intimate and informed relationships with those they are observing, generally in more natural environments than those in which experiments and surveys are conducted."

While the researcher appreciates Merriam's statement that the "case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection"(1988:10), these advantages strengthen the case for the researcher's decision to use participation observation.

Even though diary entries of observed incidents start from February 1998 up to October 1999, informed observations of violence in the school under study started in February 1995 when the researcher joined the staff. The decline of matric passes in the school was also informally observed over the years. It was these observations that prompted the researcher to conduct this research.

The observation approach has some limitations. Stenhouse (1988:51) argues that it is not easy to keep a good record. Taking notes during observation is generally intrusive and field notes are usually written from memory. Bell (1993:110) states that there are problems with the observation approach, not least the researcher's interpretation of what is seen. Observers will have their own particular focus and interpret significant events in their own way. The interview was another research tool used in this study. Anderson (1990) defines the interview thus:

> "An interview is a specialized form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter" (p 222).

When drawing up the proposal for this study, the researcher had the desire to interview teachers and parents on school violence and pupil's academic achievement to augment the questionnaires and observation. When the research got under way it became clear to the researcher that the methodology had to be altered. The methodology was determined by the conditions in the school under study. Danger, violence and dishonesty were the factors which determined what methodology was to be pursued.

Interviewing teachers was abandoned for two reasons. Firstly, teachers are aware of the unsavoury conditions prevailing at the school. If the researcher suddenly started interviewing them about violence at the school this would probably cast suspicion and their responses would not be reliable.

Secondly, some teachers are very close to the principal. One of the teachers is his son. These teachers would definitely report to the principal that there was a researcher asking questions about violence in the school.

The normal route would be to get permission from the department of education and then conduct interviews with the department's permission. That would, however, not guarantee the safety of the researcher.

Interviews with the parents would have been very fruitful, as they would have shed light on home conditions, which have a profound impact on learning and performance. Interviewing the parents of pupils was, however, not viable. It was difficult to identify parents whose children had suffered violence. Talking to parents about the study would maximise the opportunities of the research being derailed by the school governing body and the principal.

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The researcher managed to secure interviews with the former principal of the school under study, and one ex-pupil of the school. It was safer to interview these two former members of the school, because it was unlikely that they would go back the principal of the school and inform him of the interviews. They had both been victims of the on-going violence at the school, in which the principal had been instrumental.

Both interviews were very fruitful. The researcher received very useful information on the origins of the school and violence in the early history of the school.

> "The interview is often superior to other data gathering devices….. People are usually more willing to talk than to write. After the interviewer has established a friendly, secure relationship with the subject, certain types of confidential information may be obtained that an individual might be reluctant to put in writing…… Another advantage of interviewing is that the interviewer can explain more explicitly the investigations purpose and just what information he or she wants" (Best and Kahn 1986:186).

The information about the school's history and how the former principal was ousted was the focus of the research at the time of the interview. Such information could not be extracted from the present principal as he would be suspicious of this research and was also an agent in the school's violence.

Questionnaires were used in this research. The use of questionnaires was imperative to effect triangulation. Wolf (1988) defines a questionnaire as:

> "A self-report instrument used for gathering information about variables of interest to an investigator" (p 478).

Best (1977:157) points out the advantages of questionnaires as follows:

-The person administering the instrument has an opportunity to establish rapport, to explain the purpose of the study, and to explain the meaning of items that may not be clear.

-The availability of a number of respondents in one place makes an economy of time and expense and provides a high proportion of usable responses.

In this study the questionnaires had to be filled in by pupils at school in the presence of the researcher. The researcher's presence was necessary for two reasons. Firstly the researcher had to clarify certain questions to the respondents where they encountered difficulty. Secondly, the researcher had to monitor the filling in of the questionnaires to make sure that no questionnaire would find its way to the principal's office.

For the first time in the study the researcher had to risk coming out in the open to acquire desired information.

> "The decision to use a questionnaire is generally motivated by a need to collect relatively routine data from a large number of respondents" (Anderson 1990:207).

Because of the danger the researcher would be exposed to, during the collection of data through questionnaires, he had to wait for a time when the risk was relatively low. This will be discussed later.

Construction of Questionnaires (see Appendix 1)

Only questionnaires for pupils were drawn up. For the researcher to maintain its clandestine nature, questions not related to the study were included in the questionnaires. There were questions like who the respondent lived with; where their parents worked if they were employed and how they travel to school. These questions were necessary to camouflage the real purpose of the questionnaire.

Question 6 is mainly to ask if the pupil had ever been assaulted at all. The question is subdivided to ask if the respondent was assaulted during schooldays or holidays, where the assault took place and who the perpetrators were. Question 6 (d) and 6 (e) are multiple choice questions. These are quantitative questions to take stock of the number of students who are assaulted at school. The word assault was used in the questionnaire to indicate to the respondent that the incidents to be supplied were those involving body blows meant to injure. Words like "bullying" were not use because they may assume mild forms of violation, like compelling someone to do something for a stronger person, but which may not necessarily mean personal injury to the victim.

The rest of the questions are qualitative questions because they are intended to explore how violence affected the respondent's academic work if the latter was actually affected by the former.

The initial questionnaire was constructed by the researcher and given to Dr Roger Deacon for evaluation. At that time the researcher's supervisor and mentor Professor Rob Morrell was on a Sabbatical abroad, that is why the questionnaire was evaluated by Dr Deacon. Secondly, because of the uncertainty about the pending redeployment of teachers in the province, the researcher felt that if he were redeployed before collecting the necessary data the research project as a whole would be jeopardised. Collecting the data as early as possible would ensure that the study was sustained regardless of whether the researcher was moved out of the school or not.

Sample population

For the purposes of this study it was of paramount importance that the pupils be a source of data over and above the observation conducted by the researcher. As part of the research process a sample population had

to be identified, because an important characteristic of inferential statistics is the process of going from the part to the whole (Ary, Jacobs and Razavich 1990:169).

> "The small group that is observed is called a sample and the larger group about which the generalization is made is called a population" (Ibid: 169).

While all the pupils in the school were the population the researcher targeted Standard 10 pupils as the sample. These pupils have been at school longer barring the slow learners who may be at lower grades because of repeated failures. Another reason is that Standard ten pupils are more mature as they are the most senior class in the school. For these two reasons the researcher felt that their responses would be more reliable as they would be answering responsibly. Having spent more years at school than pupils in other grades the researcher felt that they most probably have many experiences of violence as well. They also may have perceived the effects of violence on academic achievement.

It was in August 1 after the June examination and before the trial examination, when the questionnaires were filled in. At this time of the year pupils are mostly concerned with passing their examinations. Some may not have done well in the mid-year examination and are striving to perform better in the trial examination, which may be an indication of their ability to pass their final examinations.

The final reason for targeting Grade 12 pupils is that being their English teacher; the researcher had easy access to them. It was easier for the researcher to plan when and how to distribute the questionnaires "safely". Even if the principal were to find the researcher in class with the pupils, this would not raise any suspicion as the researcher is expected to be with these pupils. The principal then would not be expected to demand to know what activity the pupils were engaged in. All this then would save the researcher from the wrath of the principal.

Filling–in process

The process of filling in the questionnaires was made to look like a normal class. Exercising response honesty was emphasized. Questionnaires were filled in during the study hour from 13h30 to 14h30 on 10 August 1999. There are four sections in Grade 12 and the researcher moved from one classroom to the other helping pupils to fill in the questionnaires. On this particular day the principal had left early. The researcher had been assured by the school clerk that the principal would not be back that day. This was the opportunity the researcher had been waiting for, because filling in the questionnaire with the principal around would have been risky. Nothing would stop him from entering the classroom right in the middle of

the session and demanding to know what was going on. Even though the questionnaires were camouflaged, there was a risk of him being suspicious of the questionnaire.

186 pupils were issued with questionnaires out of a possible 200. Fourteen were absent. The absent students were not accommodated at a later stage because the researcher did not want to push his luck. The absentees did not all come back on the same day. So to give them questionnaires as they came back or to wait until they were all back, then give them the questionnaires would have endangered the cover used to make the process look like a normal class exercise. The risk of fallout would be enhanced. The fact that filling in of the questionnaires initially had not been detected by the principal did not guarantee that a repeat of the filling in process would be successful and undetected.

The questionnaires were numbered from LI to L 186.

Limitations of the study

The major limitation in this study was fear. The study was carried out in a dangerous research environment. The researcher's diary was always kept at home and all entries were made from memory. At times the researcher made a note of an incident on a piece of paper and on many occasions the papers went missing and the researcher had to rely on memory.

The interviews which had been planned initially, had to be omitted because of fear. The researcher feared that such interviews might have repercussions, which would sabotage the research and possibly endanger the researcher's life.

Most qualitative questions were not responded to by many pupils even though they claimed to have been assaulted. The reason for this non-response was the language issue. It could be that they did not understand the questions, but the researcher was there to help those who did not understand the questions. Another reason would be the limitations in their articulation. To these pupils English is a second language and most of them only use it at school during lessons.

CHAPTER 4

Findings and statement of results

Questionnaires

In this chapter the data gathered during the research process will be presented. The major aims of the questionnaires were to find out if pupils ever experienced violence. Details of the violence included; the perpetrators of violence; the location where violence usually occurs if it does and lastly to find out if violence does affect academic progress and achievement.

In the sample, there were 107 males and 79 females making it 186 pupils. In figure 1 the age and gender analysis is shown. The 18 to 21 years category has most of the pupils. The 15 to 17 years category has the least pupils. In all categories there are more males than females.

Of the 186 respondents 148 pupils responded that they had experienced violence. In subsequent analysis only the 148 respondents will be considered.

In a normal situation a Grade 12 student would be at least 17 years old, if initial school entry were made at six years of age. Figure 1(see end of chapter 4) shows that 162 students are over 18 years. This may be due to socio-economic factors. That is to say that some students would have been forced to leave school, because of poverty, to help with family finances by securing some form of employment. The same students may then re-enter school a year or two later. Another cause of this age gap may be that Grades are being repeated, because of academic under-achievement.

There is also a big age difference between the youngest and the oldest. This age gap may affect their experiences of violence, and the way they respond to some of the sensitive questions. The younger respondents may respond freely to some questions, while the elder respondents may not respond to some questions, because of maturity they may feel that their privacy is being exposed.

Of the 186 respondents 148 (80% of the sample) responded that they had experienced violence. The fact that more then three-quarters of the sample had experienced violence signifies that if this feature is generalised to the whole school, then violence at the school under study is rife.

Figure 2 (see end of chapter 4) shows three categories. The first category shows the number of pupils who experienced violence during schooldays. The second category shows the number of respondents who experienced violence during weekends or holidays. The third category shows the number of students who experienced violence during schooldays and holidays. When comparing the first two categories, it is noted that assaults which occurred during schooldays are 43% more than those which occurred during weekend

36

and holidays . This signifies that more violence takes place at school or en-route to school or from school than at home.

85 respondents, which is more than half the sample, have experienced violence during both, the schooldays and holidays. This signifies that many of the pupils under study live with violence at home and at school

In figure 3 (see end of chapter 4) there is a gender distribution of the categories discussed in figure 2. In all categories there are more boys than girls, as was the sample proportion. What is noticeable is that there is a regular pattern which appears in all categories, which is that the number of female respondents is slightly less than the number of males. This means that both males and females experience violence indiscriminately.

It is with interest to note that in the weekends / holidays the difference between boys and girls is 50% while the schoolboy category has a difference of 20%. While it is appreciated that there were 14% more boys than girls in the sample the difference in the schooldays category is smaller than the other two.

Figure 4 (see end of chapter 4) shows that more violence was experienced at school than at any other location provided in the questionnaire. The next most common location of violence is the home. Following closely to that is the category whereby respondents experienced both at home and at school. This shows that schools are dangerous places.

Figure 5 (see end of chapter 4) shows the gender distribution of figure 4. Although the sample had more boys than girls, it is worth noting that in the category where respondents experienced violence at home and at school, there are more girls than boys. This indicates that women suffer violence mostly at home than at any other place.

Table: 2 The gender profile of victims of violence

Perpetrator	Male	Female	Row Total	%
Student	11	3	14	9.5
Teacher	16	24	40	27.0
Family member	5	3	8	5.4
Gangs	21	16	37	25.0
Parent	4	4	8	5.4
Other	5	2	7	4.7
More than one perpetrator	24	10	34	23.0
Column Total	86	62	148	
Total	58.1	41.9		100

Table 2 identifies the gender profile of victims. 86 boys as opposed to 62 girls experienced violence. The sample had more boys than girls, so it is not surprising that there are more boys who claim to have suffered violence than girls.

The teacher category shows more girls than boys. This could possibly be sexual harassment as there are more girls in this category. This is going to be discussed further in chapter 5. More boys have fell foul with the gangs, which may be caused by the fact that boys are mostly streetwise.

Table: 3   Violence experienced by the respondents

Form	Frequency	Percent
Physical violence	24	16.2
Corporal punishment	49	33.1
Threatening	7	4.7
Verbal abuse	17	11.5
Sexual abuse	6	4.1
Rape	1	.7
More than one form of violence	16	10.8
No response	28	18.9
Total	148	100.0

Table 3 shows forms of violence experienced by the respondents. While 28 of the respondents did not respond to this question, 16 of them experienced more than one form of violence. This may signify that some pupils at school are subjected to more severe violence than other fellow pupils who also experience violence. Other pupils may have experienced more than one form of violence, but are citing the most recent incidents since there was no time frame provided in the questionnaire. It is unlikely that where 80% of the respondents have experienced violence, which is an indication that violence is rife in the community, only 11% of those have experienced only one form of violence.

Figure 6 (see end of chapter 4) represents the gender distribution of the forms of violence experienced by the respondents. Six female respondents have experienced sexual abuse. One female respondent was raped. These figures are not reliable. Herbert (1992) writes about sexual harassment in Britain and points out that most victims of sexual harassment regard such incidents as 'normal behaviour'. Although the author was writing about the British scene, this may also apply to the South African situation. At the school under study the researcher has on many occasions witnessed male students touching up female students. On all occasions

the victims just ignored the perpetrators. It was mentioned earlier that only 1 rape in 35 is reported (refer to chapter 2). All this signifies that these figures should be treated with caution.

The 'no response category also throws some doubt on the figures. Respondents have come forward and claimed that they had been assaulted, but they would not disclose what form of violence it was. Even on the issue of physical violence there may be some doubt as to the reliability of the figures. The researcher has on many occasions witnessed teachers slapping and punching pupils. It is now very surprising when not a single respondent claims to have been assaulted by a teacher. 49 respondents cite corporal punishment as the form of violence that they have experienced. Some of these respondents may have actually been assaulted by teachers, and since teachers were perpetrators, to the pupils these acts may pass for corporal punishment. 28 pupils did not respond at all. If they had language problems with their answers the researcher was there to assist them, but they decided to ignore the question. This may mean that these students have something to hide. The following may shed some light

Jones (1985: 30) had this to say on her research findings on male violence in a mixed school.
> "....the older the woman the less likely she was to report cases of violence knowing that she was unlikely to be believed or that boys were inadequately punished."

Jones conducted her research in the UK, but this very much applies to this research, as the two studies deal with violence, although the conditions may not be the same. At the school under study the principal discourages the reporting of violence and he actively ignores much transgression.

On the question of whether violence affected the respondent's schoolwork , 98 respondents said the violence they had experienced did not affect their schoolwork, as is shown in figure 7 (see end of chapter 4). That is 66% of the total number of respondents who experienced violence. There were no responses from 5% of the respondents. Only 29% (43 respondents) said that their schoolwork was affected by the violence they had experienced. The distribution of these figures shows that learners do not believe that violence affects schoolwork, and hence that academic achievement is not affected by violence either. This is a surprising and contradicting response. An explanation might be found by referring to the age of the students interviewed. Many are old for high school. This may be a result of repeating grades, the causes of which may be violence. They may have been exposed to violence so much that to them it has become a norm. A second explanation may be that respondents misunderstood the words 'affected' and 'violence.' The reason for this suggestion is that the questionnaires were in English and the Zulu-speaking respondents found it difficult to understand the questions. In addition, the respondents may have understood 'violence' to refer to only serious acts like murder and rape. Many of the respondents have experienced violence and the matric results are plummeting, yet many of the respondents claim that they had not been academically affected.

On the question of *how* the schoolwork was affected, 32 respondents gave a variety of responses. The bulk of this group says that they failed their tests and examinations. For instance, L166 says:

I fail examination.

L151 says:

I am afraid will not pass the test.

L153 points out:

I failed the test and examination.

These responses like many others in this group attribute their failure to violence. This endorses the hypothesis that violence affects academic achievement, but this group is too small to make an impact on the whole sample.

The impact of corporal punishment on academic achievement was also investigated. Only two respondents responded. As a result of corporal punishment, L101 says:

I am not pass my test as I do before.

Contrary to this view L2, who also experienced corporal punishment, says:

After that I gain something like subject.

To African pupils corporal punishment has always been a key feature of discipline and it is still being practiced (Morrell, 1999,11). Corporal punishment is often held to be the reason for academic success. For an African pupil to say that he failed because he received corporal punishment suggests therefore that corporal punishment was excessively used, and thus lacked the expected beneficial and disciplinary effect.

After being threatened and physically assaulted, a female respondent, L1, says:

I pass my test as usually.

L46, after suffering the same fate, shares the same sentiment when she says:

He was pass all test and examination.

These two respondents said that their schoolwork was affected after experiencing violence, yet they go on to say that they passed their tests and examination as usual. This means that they do not understand the meaning of the word 'affected' or they do not understand the meaning of 'physical violence.'L44 suffered sexual abuse, was academically affected and she said:

I pass all my test by 90% at school but before I only get 20% in all my subjects.

This signifies a state of total confusion on the part of the respondent. It is not realistic that sexual abuse can improve the victim's grades, unless it is a part of 'buying' the support of a teacher.

L152 responded differently to many respondents, when he said:

Because after that I didn't like to see him again because he had a bad altitude (sic) about me.

L64 joined in by saying:

My cousin hit me and hurt my eye is my left eye and a mark/ blue eye.

These two clearly indicate that they did not understand the question.

All these varied responses can all be attributed to the respondents' limitations of the English language. This then can be generalized to the whole sample, concluding once more that some of the responses from the questionnaire are not reliable.

Observations

The main research tool used by the researcher was observation. A diary was kept wherein incidents of violence happening at the school under study were recorded. Although the researcher has observed acts of violence since joining the school in 1995, it was only in June 1998 that the researcher started systematically recording incidents of violence for research purposes.

Observation findings will be divided into two major headings. Those will be observed sexual harassment and observed physical violence. Physical violence will further be sub-divided into violence perpetrated by the principal; by the teachers; by the students and by the gangs. Only two incidents from the categories of physical violence will be cited because of space and time constraints.

Observed sexual harassment

In August 1999, the researcher went into one of the Grade 12 classes he teaches. He was returning test exercise books and was going to revise the test paper with the pupils. While the researcher was cleaning the chalkboard, one girl assisted by distributing the books back to their owners. As she was walking in between the desk rows, she suddenly let out a soft scream but continued with her chore. The researcher enquired what the matter was. She said that a boy had slipped his hand under her skirt. The researcher asked why the boy had harassed the girl. He said it was a joke. The researcher then asked the class if it was common practice for boys to indecently touch the girls. The answer from more than half the class, in unison was 'yes'. The next question, to the girls was whether they liked it or not. The answer from all the girls, in unison again, was negative.

The scream from the girl was an indication of disapproval. This incident was an indication of the existence of sexual harassment at the school under study.

The researcher did not observe any acts of sexual harassment of female pupils by male teachers. He is, however, aware of love affairs between some male teachers and female students. The researcher is not in possession of statistics, but such affairs have been confirmed by other teachers, who are not involved themselves.

It may be possible that some of these girls are in these affairs against their will, but have to conform because a teacher is a symbol of authority or from fear that they may be failed if they don't toe the line. This may be the reason why there are 24 girls against 16 boys (refer Table 1) who claim to have been assaulted by teachers, although many cite corporal punishment as the offence (refer Figure 6).

Observed Physical Violence

Principal-agitated violence

The incident that is going to be cited next happened before the beginning of the research, but it was noted from memory as soon as the research began. In March 1997, the principal had an argument with a school employee. The argument heated up and culminated in the principal punching the employee with bare fists. This happened during tuition time, but where some of the pupils and some of the teachers had a clear view. Most of the teachers, including the researcher, were later informed by eyewitnesses of the incident. No charges were laid by the victim and he is still employed at the school.

In September 1998 during the writing of the Grade 12 trial examinations, a female teacher asked a female pupil to tidy around her by picking up pieces of paper from the floor. The pupil refused. The teacher then reported the incident to the principal. The principal approached the pupil about the matter. The latter continued to be defiant. The principal then beat up the student with his bare hands. The student sustained a swollen bleeding mouth. The victim did not lay any charges. She remained at school until she wrote her final examinations.

These two incidents and many others indicate that the principal is not averse to solving problems with violence. It also shows how he uses violence indiscriminately. He attacked an adult male employee in the same way that he attacked a young female pupil.

During 1995 and 1996 in particular the principal used to walk around the school with a gun bulging at his hip. Of late he keeps his firearm in his desk drawer. Carrying a firearm indicates that he is prepared to use violence even if it means using a lethal firearm.

Teacher-initiated violence

Some teachers at the school under study are very much involved in violence. The following incident happened in the researcher's presence. A female Grade 8 class teacher called a 14-year-old girl by a nickname, which, the researcher was meant to understand, was used by all her classmates. The girl took exception to the nickname and actually stormed the teacher's table to confront the teacher on having used the nickname to call her. The teacher retaliated with a hard clap across the face of the girl. The researcher had to intervene to prevent further assaults on the pupil as the teacher was now standing up to continue with the onslaught. The same teacher had in 1996 been involved in an issue whereby another 14-year-old girl had sustained a broken finger after being punished by her (the teacher). In both cases no charges were laid by the victims.

In October 1999 during the seating arrangements of the pupils for the final examination, a male teacher punched and cut open a 19-year-old Grade 11 boy's upper lip. The reason for the attack was defiance from the boy. When ordered by the teacher to go and wait outside, while something in the classroom was being sorted out, the boy refused to oblige.

There are many incidents like these two, which occur at the school under study. These two were chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it is to illustrate the violent behaviour of both male and female teachers. This does not mean to say that all teachers at this school are violent. Secondly, it is to show that regardless of age and

gender, pupils at this school are not just innocent victims of teacher tyranny. They are also very rude and bellicose. This may signify that, because of the culture of violence which is found in this school pupils do not heed school authorities anymore.

Student-initiated violence

In June 1998 a Grade 10 boy stabbed a Grade 9 boy in the chest. The incident happened in the classroom. The victim was taken to hospital for treatment. The same perpetrator had the previous week assaulted a Grade 8 boy. Fortunately the victim in this case was not injured. Both incidents happened during break time in the victims' classrooms. The motives for the attacks are not clear. Both incidents were reported to the principal, but it is not clear how he responded.

In February 1999 one Grade 9 boy was allegedly involved in extorting money from freshmen. One Grade 8 boy could not pay, as he didn't have any money. The extortionist ordered his sidekicks to stab the boy. The boy was stabbed three times. He was taken to hospital. It is not clear how the principal handled this case. The extortionist continued coming to school. One week after the stabbing incident we at school learnt that the extortionist had been shot dead over the weekend. The motive and assailant were not known.

These two incidents signify the extent to which the culture of violence has been embedded among the pupils in the school under study. These incidents also expose the questionable resolution of incidents of violence by the principal.

Violence agitated by gangs

During 1995 and 1996 the researcher was a class teacher. He had administrative responsibilities for a class. He has since been promoted to being a Head of Department, and he no longer has to administer a particular class. It was in 1995 and in 1996 that 4 girls dropped out of school, 2 in each year and one boy in 1996. The researcher had made inquires as to the causes of the dropouts as each happened. Siblings and friends (never parents) informed the researcher that in all cases the cause was persecution by gangs. In the cases of girls, it was sexual harassment, while with the boy it was a case of physical violence or the threat thereof that was the cause. Many other pupils dropped out of school for different reasons, for example pregnancy among girls

or loss of interest in schooling among boys. The researcher has taken interest in the 5 pupils because their reasons for dropping out are in line with this project.

Although the intimidation, which led the 5 pupils to drop out of school, did not take place inside the school premises, they are very significant to this study. While these pupils decided to drop out of school there may be many more who did not drop out of school, but still endure the persecution by gangs, which may lead to poor performance in schoolwork.

In March 1998, 4 armed youths entered the school premises during break time. Students and teachers, alike, ran helter-skelter for cover as the gunmen started shooting at random. The gun-toting youths left without hurting or robbing anyone. At that moment the principal was not at school. The following day the principal came to school well informed of the incident. He took a couple of SRC members, and armed with a handgun, they all went after the culprits in the principal's car. They managed to apprehend three of the suspects. The suspects were brought back to school and sjambokked, kangaroo-court style, by the principal and the SRC members.

The fact that the youths left without harming or robbing anyone may mean that they lost their nerve and left before doing any damage or they had come to show their friends, who are schooling, that they can dare to enter the school premises. The reason that they could be easily traced means that the culprits and their associates are known to the pupils.

What is important in this incident is that when apprehended the suspects were not handed over to the police. They were violently beaten by the principal and some pupils. This means that at the school under study violence is regarded as a solution to most problems.

Academic achievement observation

As the examinations officer of the school under study, the researcher had access to school documents concerning examination results. Most of the Grade 12 candidates in 1999 were the Grade 8 class that was

admitted in 1995 when all the teachers, including the researcher were first employed at this institution. In 1999, the year in which this thesis was completed matric results at this school were at their lowest ebb, as indicated in chapter 1. Out of 103 candidates who sat for their final examinations, there were 4 passes with matric exemption, 17 senior certificate passes and 82 failures.

A particular interest was taken in this particular group of candidates, because when they started Grade 8 in 1995 it was the year in which the present principal started working as acting principal before being confirmed in 1998. He actually started acting in June 1994 (refer chapter 1). His first full year with a new cohort of teachers was in 1995.

The researcher observed that of the 250 pupils admitted in 1995 for Grade 8, only 50 had sat for the Grade 12 examinations. The rest of the candidates in 1999 had joined the institution for Grades 9, 10 and 11 in 1996, 1997 and 1998 respectively. (Pupils who come to do Grade 12 from other schools are not admitted). Only two of the 50 managed to obtain the senior certificate pass. Not a single one of them got a matric exemption.

The case of one student illustrates the dire condition of learning at the school. In 1997, a female student obtained a first class pass in Grade 10. In 1999 she failed all her Grade 12 (matric) subjects except isiZulu which is her mother tongue, where she obtained a third class pass.

There may be many causes for the decline of matric results in the school, and violence cannot be ruled out. High achievers gradually fade into obscurity. One-fifth of the initial enrolment at Grade 8 reached Grade 12 at this school at the expected length of time. (Some may have left for other schools). These factors indicate that whatever the cause is, it has had a negative impact. The hypothesis of this study is that the cause of this high failure rate is violence.

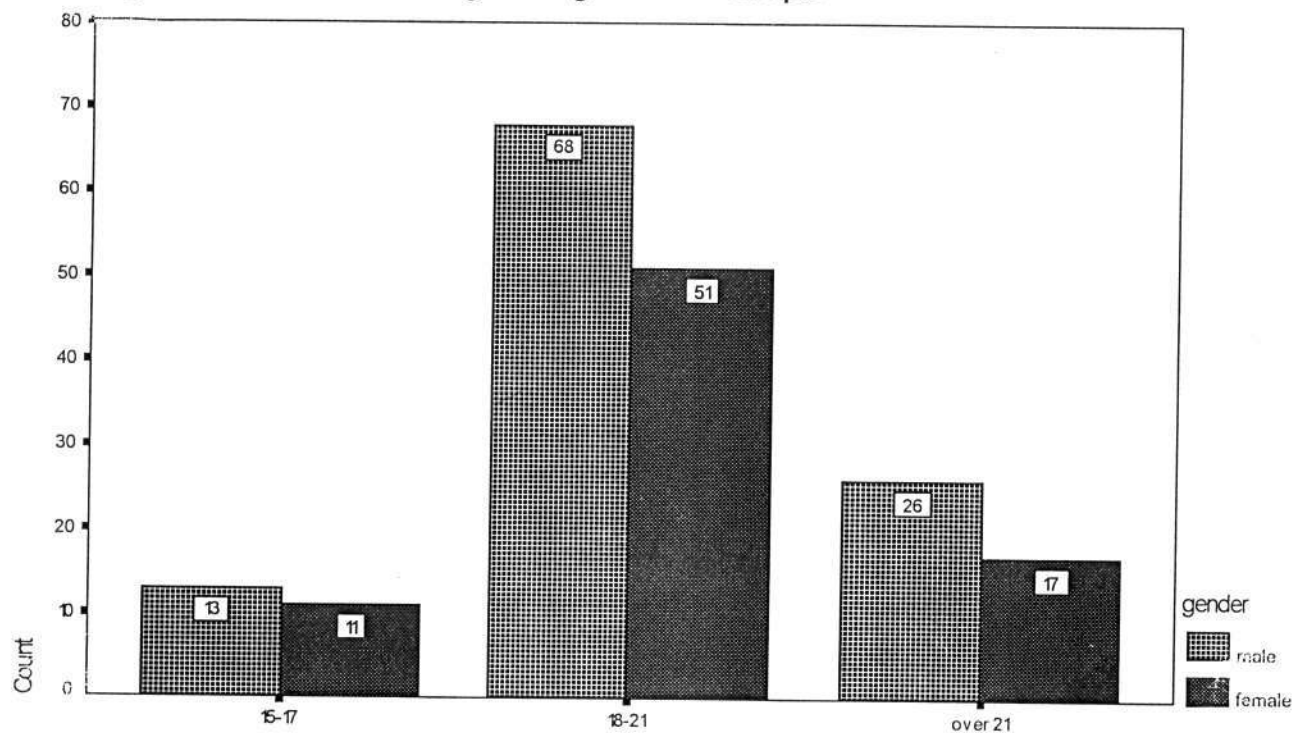## Figure 1: Distribution of age and gender of sample

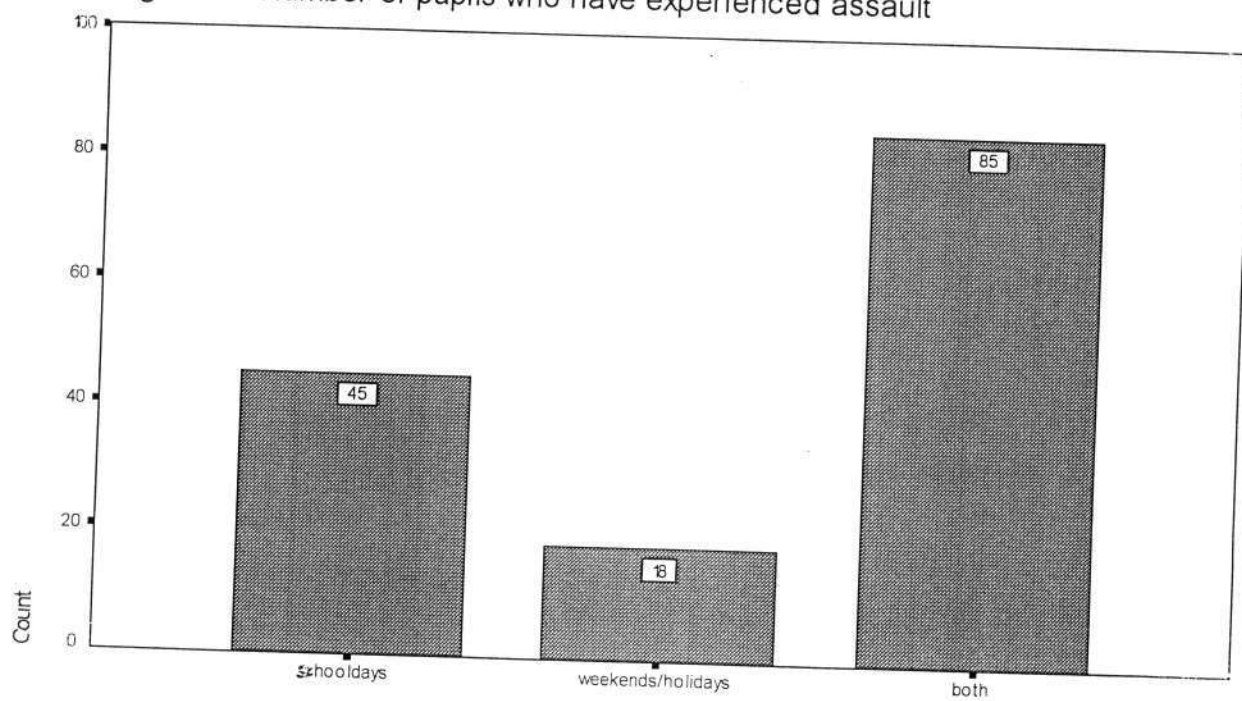## Figure 2 : Number of pupils who have experienced assault

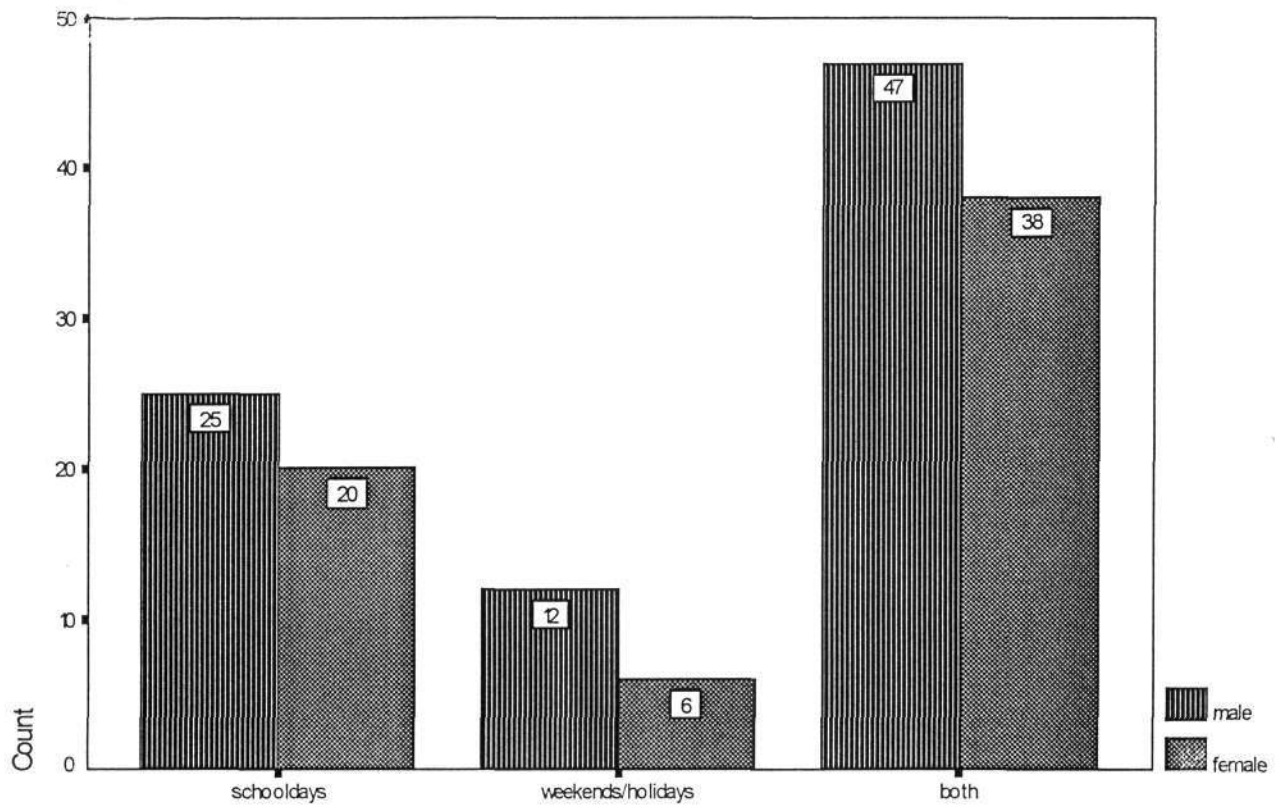Figure 3 : Pupils who have experienced violence : Gender distribution

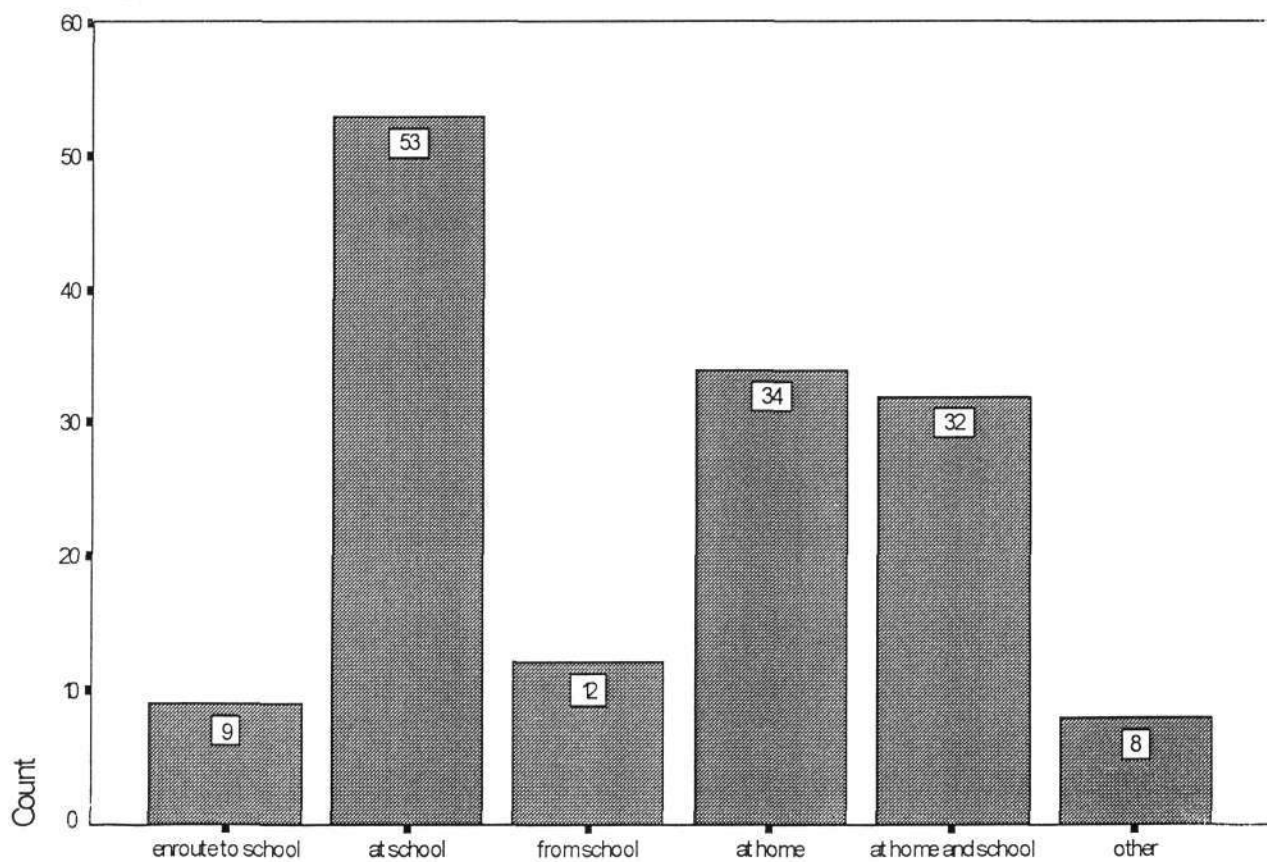Figure 4 : Location where violence was experienced
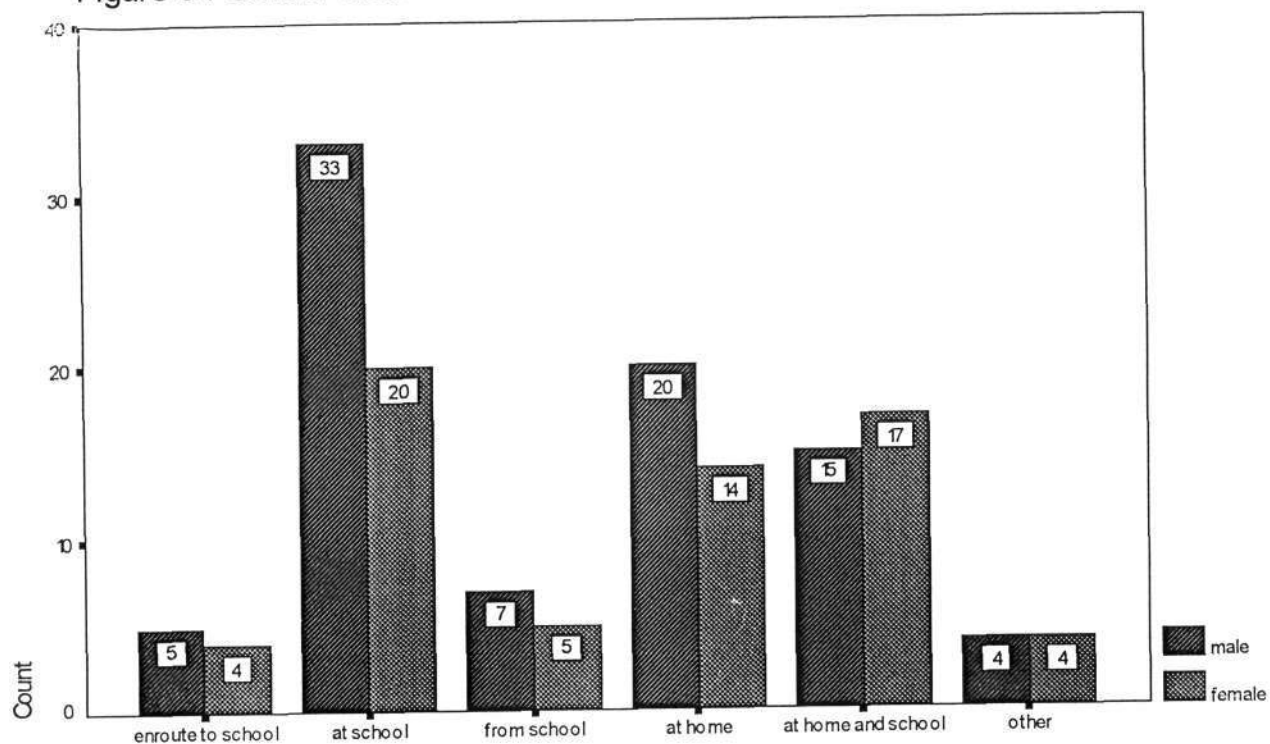
Figure 5 : Gender distribution of violence location
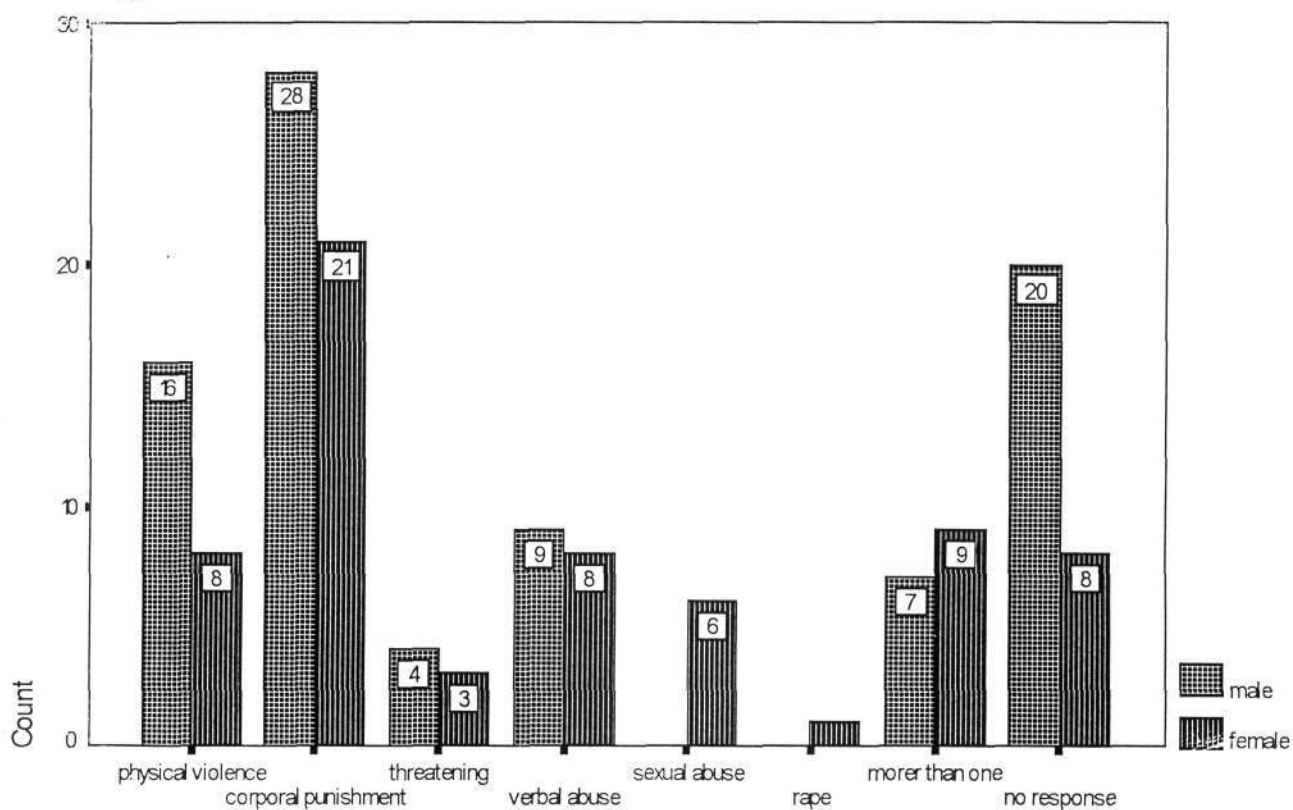

Figure : 6 Gender distribution of Table 3

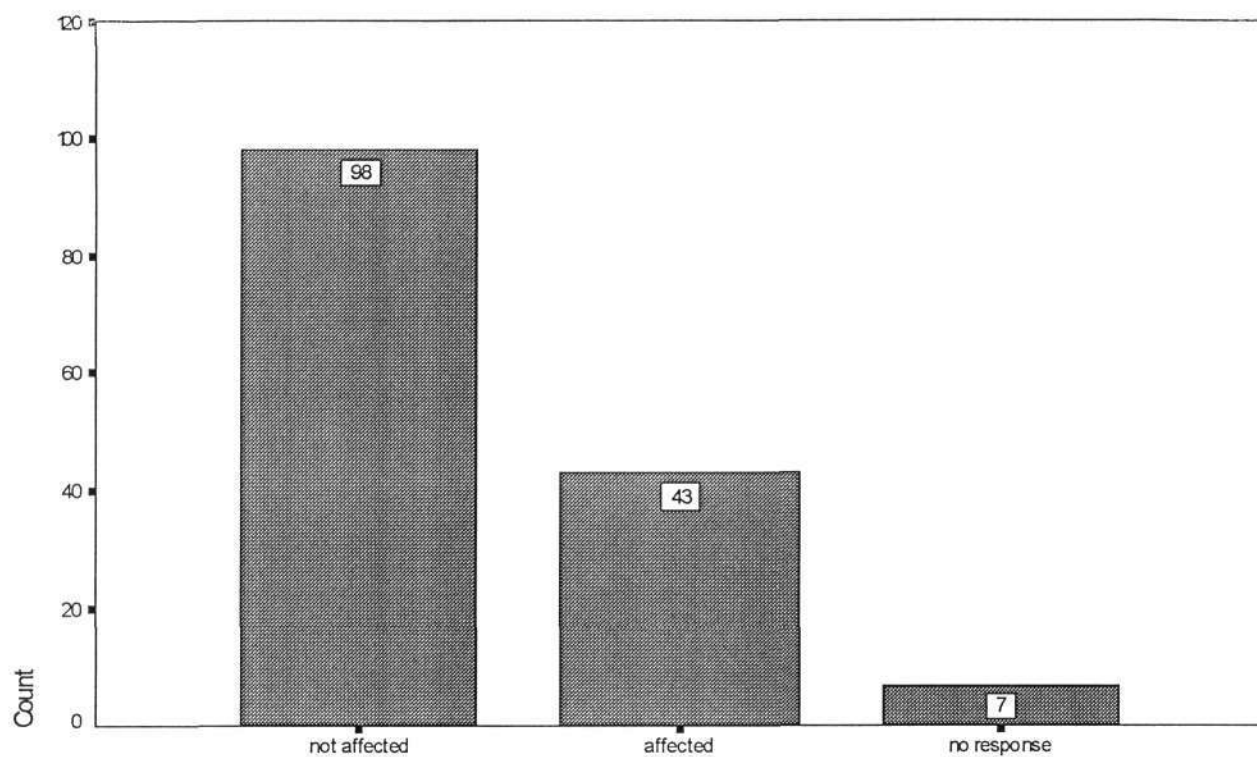Figure 7 : Number of pupils whose schoolwork was affected by violence
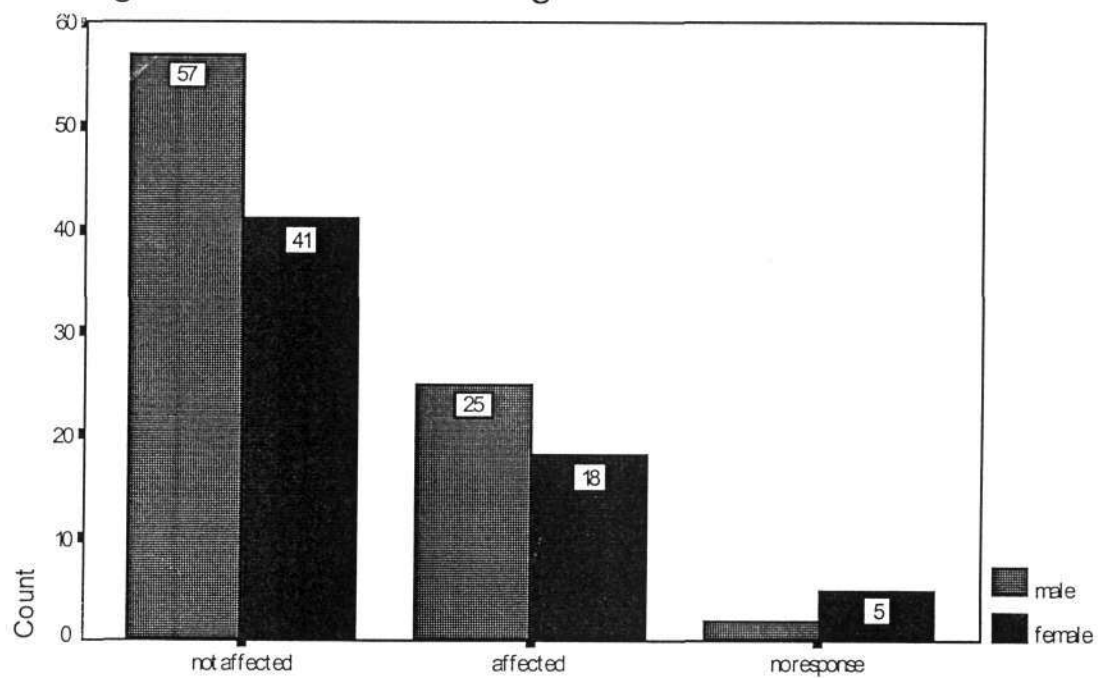

Figure 8 : Gender distribution of figure 7

CHAPTER 5

Data Analysis and discussion

This chapter will provide an analysis of the findings presented in chapter 4. Violence was found to be common at Amandlethu school. Unlike many other schools, Amandlethu is well secured – it has security fences and a security guard on duty 24 hours a day. This means that gangs and individuals from <u>outside</u> the school are not the major perpetrators of violence **in** the school. An explanation for the violence needs to be located within the context of the school itself. This study found that violence occurred in many forms. Institutional violence (corporal punishment), cases of assault between students and sexual harassment (gender violence which targets girls) were all common. The situation was aggravated by the atmosphere in the school and the role of the principal. Many forms of violence were accepted as 'normal' and little was done to promote a peaceful environment. On the contrary, the principal was not averse to resorting to threats of violence himself to secure what he deemed to be an orderly learning environment.

Amandlethu differs from many Durban schools where external violence (e.g. from gangs) is the major concern. Depressingly, however, it shares the problem of violence which threatens learning in many township schools. As was demonstrated in Figure 4, most respondents felt that school was the most dangerous place.

Figure 5 shows the location of the experienced violence and the graph is also divided into male and female as per sample. The graph shows that in the category of violence experienced both at home and at school, girls are in the majority.

Campbell (1992: 623) points out that:

> "The behavioural option of violence is a socially sanctioned 'recipe for living' which is available to all men of all ages for the reassertion of their manhood."

Violence is viewed by men as a socially sanctioned means of resolving conflict in the context of violence by fathers against mothers and the violence of older brothers against their sisters in their socially approved role of policing and guarding them (Ibid, 626). It is in this context that most girls suffer violence at home. Although this violence happens at home it can very much have a negative effect on the academic achievement of a female pupil.

On the question of perpetrators of violence, the findings from the questionnaire point at the teacher as the most frequent perpetrator of violence as Table 1 indicates. The observation of the researcher confirms that at the school under study teachers do engage in acts of violence, which go beyond corporal punishment. While most teachers usually assault pupils in classrooms, the principal, on the other hand, tries by all means to

publicize his actions. Most of his attacks on pupils (and so far, one factotum) are carried out in the public. After all his assaults, the principal comes to the staffroom at break time and among the day's announcements, mentions who the victim was, the offence and in detail tells the staff how the assault was executed.

Schools have been described as dangerous places earlier in this study. Schools are usually rendered unsafe because of gangs and to a lesser extent violent student gangs within the schools. When in schools like the one under study where teachers themselves are violent education as a whole is in jeopardy. The school is the extension of the home. Teachers are supposed to protect children at school, like a parent would do at home. Now when teachers hurt children, parents will be reluctant to send their offspring to school. The result will be the swelling of the illiterate masses, especially blacks.

Next to teachers gangs are the most frequent perpetrators of violence. This reflects the environment where unemployment and poverty are rife. These conditions usually breed gangs.

> "The deepening crisis of marginalisation and the material impoverishment of black communities feeding directly into the growth of a violent and criminal youth culture, manifested particularly in the youth gang formation in the African township" (Mokwena 1992: 4).

At the school under study there is enough security to stop gangs from entering the premises. The principal himself has a reputation which is a deterrent in itself. The problem is that outside the school premises the pupils are very vulnerable. Respondent L102, a male, was assaulted by gangs and as a result his attendance at school was erratic. He says:

> ***Sometimes I wasn't go to school.***

Being prevented from attending school or attending irregularly will most probably have a negative effect on academic work. At this school there may be more like this respondent who may not be attending school regularly because of fear of gangs hence they perform poorly in their academic work.

> "Both the incidence and severity of school violence is destroying the basic environmental conditions required to provide an adequate education" (Griggs, 1997, 1)

The presence of gangs around the school may have a detrimental effect on academic achievement of pupils even if they do not operate on the school premises. One male pupil was shot in the leg by gangs who were trying to rob him of his shoes. After firing the shot, they panicked and fled. That is how he escaped being robbed of his shoes but he did not escape injury. During the filling in of the questionnaire he was still away from school nursing his injury. If this pupil missed the filling-in process of questionnaires, it is not hard to

imagine how many lessons he missed as he was away for five weeks. Gorski and Pilotto (1995: 1) sums up the above concern as follows:

> "How can children feel safe to learn when they wonder if they will be killed for their brand-name shoes or leather jackets?"

On the question of whether violence that was experienced by the respondents did or did not have an effect on their schoolwork, the researcher was quite astonished to learn from the responses that students believed that violence had no effect on their schoolwork. In a school where violence has been observed to exist on a large scale, it is surprising to learn that pupils' belief is that it (violence) has had no effect on the academic achievement of the respondents. The researcher explains this anomale in the following way.

Firstly it may be that the respondents have lived side by side with violence so that it has become a norm to them. These pupils witness violence frequently from the teachers and the principal.

Secondly respondents may have different interpretations of violence. Acts like threatening, verbal abuse, physical assault, sexual harassment may not be viewed as forms of violence by the respondents. To them only deeds like murder and rape, maybe, may be regarded as violence.

Thirdly, they may not be aware that their schoolwork is affected because they were under-achievers anyway.

Fourthly, they may not have understood the question. This is evident in respondent L44's response (refer Chapter 4). It is not natural for someone who has been sexually abused to suddenly improve grades from 20% to 90%. Lots of meanings could be attributed to this phenomenon. The respondent may not know what sexual abuse means or she meant that she was getting 90% before the assault and now she was down to 20%. Otherwise the simple explanation to this is that she like many others did not understand the question.

On the question of whether violence had any positive effects, 70% of the respondents denied this. On the other hand two respondents L133 and L138 feel there is some good in violence especially in corporal punishment. They argue that after receiving corporal punishment they performed better than before. Holdstock supports them thus:

> "People who have been subjected to physical injury at school often claim that it has done them no harm or even that it has done them the world of good." (Holdstock 1990: 352).

Holdstock (1990) again points out that:

> "In a decade-long study of 2700 primary schools in Britain, Rutter and his colleagues

(1979) found that rigid discipline, punishment and teachers who were negative models tended to produce depressed achievement scores regardless of student potential at entry. Not only was scholastic performance impaired, but fear of school, fear of teachers and aversion to educationally related matters were generated. The long term educational harm that was done was unquestionable" (Ibid : 353).

The above may be very true of the school under study. The researcher has observed some teachers who go to class with a stick. Why would a teacher carry a stick into the classroom? How does the teacher know that the pupils will need a hiding even before the lesson begins? Unless of course if the beating of pupils is part of the lesson plan.

Violence in the school under study is a reality. The principal and the teachers have been observed on many occasions engaging in acts of violence. Pupils too, are in involved in acts of violence either as perpetrators or as victims. The academic results of the students have also been observed. There is a constant decline in the Grade 12 results. This means that there is a relationship between the two. That could mean that violence causes poor academic performance.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the hazardous conditions under which this research was conducted, the researcher hopes that it will make a valuable contribution to understanding the barriers to academic performance in schools. It is evident from the findings that the school is where most of the violence against pupils comes from. For both boys and girls the school seems to be unsafe.

The teacher seems to be the major culprit when it comes to perpetrating the violence. The third largest category is the "student" shown in Table 1. It would be unrealistic for the school management to expect pupils to stop violence at school when they frequently experience or observe violence being perpetrated by people in power.

The students who comprised the research sample believed that violence played no part in their poor academic achievement. The researcher has argued that their views are unreliable. By examining instances of violence in the school and the direct and indirect effects on students the researcher suggests that violence is at least a contributing, if not a causal, factor to poor academic results. The high correlate between school violence and declining matric pass rates supports this view.

It is important to conclude this research by giving some recommendations on how to improve the situation. But before that, here is an example of what is being done elsewhere to tackle the problem.

Jackson Katz (1995) worked at the Northeastern University, Boston, USA, worked with male college athletes in a programme called Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) to make them stop violence against women. It had been established earlier that the college athletes were the primary perpetrators of violence against women. Katz then designed a programme wherein these athletes would participate and change their attitude towards violence against women. He claims success at the very initial stages of the sessions.

> "Initial results indicate, not surprisingly, that the most powerful idea we have to counteract in order to be successful, is the idea that matters between men and women are 'private.' We also have received a great deal of written and verbal feedback from participating team members, that the MVP sessions are popular with and considered useful by the student athletes" (Ibid, 172).

Similar programmes can be introduced in our schools to curb violence. There is no guarantee that because it succeeded in America it can also succeed in South Africa as well. Given time through trial and error it may

work. This could be a long - term solution to the problem of violence. In the researcher's recommendations this form of therapy comes first. To try and curb violence the following should be considered:

- Counseling should be provided for traumatized violence victims, and therapeutic sessions should be provided for chronic aggressors, in programmes like the MVP.

- The principal and the teachers as professionals should lead by example. As the moulders of future leaders they should be good role models, and teach young minds that problems should be solved through negotiation instead of violence.

- Communities should be made aware of school violence in particular. Awareness campaigns should be as vigorous as the child abuse and AIDS awareness campaigns, that are being spread around the country at the moment.

- More research should be conducted in other schools to determine the role of violence in poor academic achievement.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

The aim of this questionnaire is to assess the effect of violence on academic achievement. It would be very helpful if you filled out this questionnaire sincerely. Please do not write your name. All details are confidential

Please cross (x) the appropriate space

1. Age :   Under 15   ____

                 15 to 17   ____

                 18 to 21   ____

                 over 21   ____

2. Gender :   Male   ____

                 Female   ____

3. Do you live with   :

                 both parents   ____

                 father only   ____

                 mother only   ____

                 other (specify) ____

4(a) What does your father/mother do?

          1.   unemployed   ____

          2.   self employed   ____

          3.   employed   ____

4(b)   If employed or self employed state your father's/mother's
          business/occupation _____

5.   How do you travel to school :

                 by private car ____

                 by taxi   ____

                 by train   ____

                 on foot   ____

Assault can be anything from physical violence, including corporal punishment, rape, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, threatening etc.

6 (a)   Have you ever been assaulted during schooldays

Yes   ====

No   ====

6 (b)   Have you ever been assaulted during weekends or holidays?

Yes   ====

No   ====

6 (c)   If you have been assaulted was it

en route to school   ====

at school   ====

from school   ====

at home   ====

other (specify)   ====

6 (d)   If you have been assaulted what form did it take? (Please use one or more of the words used above).

6 (e)   By whom were you assaulted? Was it by:

a student   ====

teacher   ====

family member   ====

gangs   ====

parent   ====

other   ====

7.   How did you react to this incident?

violently   ====

scared   ====

ran away   ====

contacted parents   ====

contacted teachers   =====

contacted police   =====

other specify   =====

8.   Have you ever assaulted anyone else?

                Yes   =====

                No   =====

9.   If yes where

10.   If yes what form of assault was it?

11(a) Were you able to concentrate on your schoolwork after this incident/s?

                        Yes   =====

                        No   =====

11 (b) Did you remain at school afterwards

                        Yes   =====

                        No   =====

11 (c) Did you receive treatment/counselling?

                        Yes   =====

                        No   =====

If the act/s of violence that you experienced was at school please state:

12 (a) How did / do your friends react to you?

12 (b) How did / do your friends react to the assailant?

12 (c) How did / do your teachers react to you afterwards?

12 (d) How did/do your parents react to you afterwards?

13. (a)　　Was your schoolwork affected after this incident?

　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　═══

　　　　　　　　　No　　　　　　═══

13. (b)　　If yes how was it affected (Explain briefly)

14.　　Do you think that violence might or does ever have a positive effect?

·15.　　If violence you experienced occurred outside school please state how did this influence your academic performance?

16　　What do you think should be done to curb this type of violence