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**THE EFFECTS OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE ON LEARNERS IN A RURAL
CONTEXT**

by

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DECLARATION

This is to confirm that this
thesis is my own work which
I have never previously submitted to any other university for
any purpose. The references used
and cited have been acknowledged.

Signature of candidate.....

On theday of 2011

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the learners of Swayimane:

those who are directly affected by violence as well

as those indirectly affected by violence.

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ABSTRACT

Much has been learned over the past decade about the way children respond to experiences of violence in their community. The goal of this study is to examine the effects of violence on the academic performance of learners, those who have been directly affected and those who have been witnessing violence being perpetrated either against close friends and relatives or against other people generally. The findings of the study suggest that both direct and indirect victims of crime are affected by violence which, in turn, has negative effects on their school performance.

This research was conducted at Swayimana, a rural area in Pietermaritzburg under the Umshwathi municipality. In this area perpetrators of crime are young people against other young people, although occasionally senior members of the community have instigated violence.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Community violence is by no means a new phenomenon in South Africa (Straker *et al.*, 1996: 48). In the past, community violence had strong links to politics in South Africa and this had a devastating impact on children and adults alike (Barbarin *et al.*, 2001). A literature search has demonstrated a general lack of South African empirical evidence on the effects of community violence on the academic performance of learners, who have been either direct or indirect victims of violence despite the fact that profound legislation on the protection of children has been passed since South Africa's new political dispensation.. Community- and school-based violence (mostly categorized differently) has been affecting learners negatively over a period of time. Such violence has many adverse effects on the academic performance of learners. For example, a review of a study conducted by Medina *et al.*, (2009), which examines the cognitive, emotional, behavioral and social effects of violence exposure, highlights the ways in which these effects can disrupt children's adaptation to school and academic competence. They further argue that, although the effects of violence exposure are presented as distinct, in reality the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social results of violence are interrelated and contribute to one another. For example, if children who are exposed to violence are less flexible and resourceful in their reasoning, then these cognitive processes may be associated with problems with peers and school work, which may then lead to depression and anxiety.

Medina *et al.*, (2009) also point out that exposure to violence often goes hand in hand with numerous other adverse life experiences. For example, children living with violence typically experience other stressors such as poverty, neglect, poor nutrition, overcrowding, substance abuse, lack of adequate medical care, parents' unemployment and parents' psychopathology (Medina *et al.*, 2009). These factors can exacerbate and extend the negative effects of violence exposure in children. For example, children whose

parents suffer from psycho-pathology or who struggle with substance abuse may not have had the opportunity or guidance to develop pro-social coping skills to deal with their exposure to violence in their community. Although children exposed to violence may have a greater need for nurture and protection than children without such stressors, they may actually have less access to social support from their caretakers. “Therefore, efforts to grasp the effects of violence exposure on children also must evaluate the context in which the child is embedded” (Richters, 2002: 24).

Thomson (2005) argues that the effects of violence on learners or young people have not been adequately researched in South Africa. In addition to this lacuna, there is an absence of information on how educators and managers are able to cope or deal with victims of community violence. Furthermore, while studies on school-based violence (Greef & Grobler, 2008; Burton, 2008; Vogel *et al.*, 2003) abound in South Africa, studies on the effects of community violence are still lacking.

1.2 Background to the Study

According to the World Bank (2011), most African and Latin American countries have witnessed an increasing rate of violence over the years. This has led many such countries to adopt and implement policies targeting the reduction of the levels of violence. In addition, it has been noted that violence impacts the economic productivity of the affected countries. This effect has been quantified in dollar terms for countries around the world. For instance, the cost of violence in Guatemala was \$2.4 billion which is 7.3% of the country’s Gross Domestic Product. In 2007 in Mexico, the cost was \$9.6 billion. These costs are usually the “lost sales, jobs and investment” (World Bank, 2011). Economically, a nation that is known to have high levels of violence and crime will lose out on investments from international investors (World Bank, 2011). On a social level, however, violence can instill fear in people to an extent that they become perpetrators believing that they are protecting themselves (Simpson, 1993a). Furthermore, due to the fear of violence, one’s movement can be restricted and this can affect people’s willingness to take up employment or education (World Bank, 2011) which further disrupts their livelihoods in that they become fearful to engage in any money-generating activities.

There are common beliefs in society regarding the occurrence of violence: one is that community violence only happens among gang members in inner-city neighborhoods (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). It is true that the risk of exposure to violence is higher among poor, non-white individuals living in densely populated urban areas and rural areas (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). However, studies on rates of community violence are beginning to demonstrate that community violence affects a wider range of people (Hamblen & Goguen, undated). In rural areas, the effects of violence, especially on children, remain unknown due to such stereotypes as, “there is less or no crime or violence in rural areas” and that crime or violence is an urban or city problem (Margolin & Gordis, 2000).

According to the World Bank (2011) there are some forms of violence that are more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas. More significantly, the results of a study conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2005) revealed that violence against women was more prevalent in rural areas than in the urban areas.

Apartheid is thought to have contributed largely to the violent culture in South Africa (Simpson, 1993). Thus, due to the long and violent nature of the struggle for liberation from the apartheid regime in South Africa, many people perceive violence to be normal (Simpson, 1993). They view violence as a means of conflict resolution or even a means of bringing about change in society (Simpson, 1993). Relating violence to apartheid, Simpson states:

The racially-based, hostile stereotypes generated by apartheid coupled with the resultant political intolerance, have continued to articulate closely with the experiences of economic impoverishment and encroaching poverty for the majority of South Africans. In the absence of an effective social welfare net and in the context of dramatic levels of unemployment, conditions are created which offer a solid foundation for the social, political and criminal violence which pervades South Africa.

South Africa is a predominantly patriarchal society which is characterized by the oppression of females (Dangor & Hoff, 1998). This system persists because the oppressed and the oppressors both accept violence as a means of conflict resolution and/or a mode of instilling discipline (Simpson, 1990). In the majority of South African

cultures(e.g. Zulu); men are viewed as supreme over women and children, hence are respected and regarded as powerful and men in general (Diesel & Ngubeni, 2003). This situation is worse for people living in rural areas. The patriarchal system in rural areas (and in some urban areas) persists to such an extent that women cannot even report the acts of violence to authorities such as the police. However, if they do report to traditional leaders, men end up speaking on their behalf during the hearings and this results in the acts of violence remaining unresolved as the women are usually compelled to obey their husbands (Dissel & Ngubeni, 2003). Women generally accept abusive behaviour as the norm in their culture (Dissel & Ngubeni, 2003) - a notion which is shared by the United Nations (2007: 12) statement that, “violence against women is both a means and a consequence of women’s subordination”. As such, violence against women persists as one form of violence which remains unreported. It manifests itself as private violence or public violence (UN, 2007).

Johnson (1995: 284) refers to patriarchal terrorism as:

...a product of patriarchal traditions of men’s right to control ‘their’ women, ... a form of terroristic control of wives by their husbands that involves the systematic use of not only violence, but economic subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics.

This is the kind of exposure to violence for a child that is thought to be a “public health problem of epidemic proportions” (Glodich, 1998 as cited in Margolin & Gordis, 2000: 446). The effects of such violence on children generally as victims or witnesses may impact the child’s physical health, mental or psychological health, social relationships and academic performance (Margolin & Gordis, 2000).

Patriarchal systems are predominantly characterized by “inequality, oppression, injustice and violence” (Muthien, 2008). However, it must be stated here that some patriarchal systems exist which are peaceful and non-violent such as that of the KhoeSan community (Muthien, 2008). In South Africa, the rate of exposure to violence for children is very high (Ward, Martin, Theron & Distiller, 2007). In Cape Town alone, the rate of violence against children exceeds the world rate by 59.2 per 100 000.

The insecurities or the feelings of helplessness caused by social, political or economic pressure are other aspects contributing to a violent culture in South Africa (Simpson, 1993 a). The feeling of helplessness may drive people to resort to violence - the only aspect of their lives which they feel they can control to get some power over their situation. This is usually expressed as community violence either within families or outside their families. As such, it is a primary motivation of some perpetrators.

Researchers have stressed how difficult it is to obtain statistics on violence in South Africa (Simpson, 1993 b; Dissel & Ngubeni, 2003). Police stations were the only place any statistics on violence could be found, however, even such sources are unreliable as they only constitute reported violence and a gap remains for all the unreported violence (Dissel & Ngubeni, 2003). This gap exists because most victims of violence do not report the incidences to the police for fear of intimidation or retaliation. In addition, some victims fail to report violence because they blame themselves, or they think no one would believe them and they are ashamed to come out as victims (Bollen, Artz, Vetten, & Louw, 1999). Some studies, however have tried to come up with statistics of violence in communities. According to Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Levin, Ratsaka, & Schreiber, (1999) domestic violence in South Africa is very high. Dinan, McCall & Gibson (2004) also point out that inter-personal violence in South Africa has been on the increase with assault, murder and rape being the main methods used.

All children are affected by exposure to violence, that is, infants, children at school age and teenagers according to the American Medical Associated Council for Affairs (AMACSA) (1993.) However, it must be noted that the older the child, the less prone they are to physical injury in violent encounters (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). This is mainly due to the fact that as children grow older, they are less dependent on adults for their security as they are able to avoid physical injury, unless the violence is directly infringed on them. Furthermore, the effect of violence on teenagers may increase risk-taking behaviour, anxiety, depression, suicidal behaviour, drug abuse and early sexual encounters (Brown & Finkelhor 1986; Rossman & Rosenberg 1998a) further exposes the teenager to health problems. The teenagers can also react to violence by being violent themselves towards other family members and the community and also by trying to

prevent violence such as in attempting to stop a fight between parents, the teenager can end up being violent in the process. This mostly happens when the teenager realizes that he/she has to rely on him/herself for protection from violence (Margolin & Gordis, 2000).

According to Margolin and Gordis (2000), when children are exposed to violence, they are affected in different ways. Some of the ways include a threat to their safety, failure to adjust psychologically, failure to make relationships and also failure to excel academically. In addition, the child's perception of the world is disturbed especially his/her current and future expectations in life. For instance, a child who has been exposed to violence in a home will start to think that it is normal to live with violence and hence will perpetrate or will expect to be victimized in future relationships outside the home (Garbarino, Kostelny & Dubrow, 1991; Ney, Fung, & Wickett, 1994) this demonstrates how long-lived the effects of violence are; they go beyond the current situation and may last a lifetime. Very young children, including infants, are affected by violence with the main threat being physical injury which may cause death.

Children react differently to violence. At the time of the violence the child may get angry, be fearful or feel helpless (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). However, overtime, this kind of reaction may disrupt the child's normal growth and thus the child may not be able to comprehend and develop fully to engage socially and academically. This kind of reaction or effect of violence is a secondary effect of violence (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). However, primary effects of violence may also include bedwetting, reduced verbalization and separation anxiety (Osofsky, 1995). In very young children such as infants, the effects of violence are expressed in "sleep disturbance, irritability, emotional distress, somatic complaints, fear of being alone, and regression in toilet behaviour and language (Osofsky, 1995; Zeanah & Scheeringa, 1997 as cited in Margolin & Gordis, 2000: 450).

For children old enough to be in school and who have been exposed to violence, they are always hesitant to encounter new things and generally exhibit very low levels of cognitive competence (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). In addition, the child may develop a bias in interpreting hostile events, may become over-concerned with security and may react aggressively to some events which are seen as threats. Thus the child becomes socially incompetent and may have a limited and negative way of responding to

situations perceived as threatening or to those which are just normal situations (Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1997; Margolin & Gordis, 2000).

In one international study conducted by Thompson (2005) on sixth graders between the ages of 11 and 13 from four inner-city Chicago public schools, it was discovered that the level of exposure to family violence was significantly related to the levels of behavioral problems and negatively related to school achievement.

Augustyn, Frank, Posner & Zuckerman (2002), state that learners may be adversely affected regardless of whether they are victims or witnesses. For example, children are exposed to community violence when they witness a stranger in the street, a casual acquaintance from their neighborhood, or another student at their school, physically assaulting another person for the purpose of robbing him, settling a fight, venting anger, or making a threatening statement (Augustyn *et al.*, 2002).

Augustyn *et al.*, (2002), further assert that exposure to violence as a witness is significantly associated with depression, anger, anxiety, dissociation, and post-traumatic stress disorder. In addition, exposure to violence as a direct victim or as a witness creates behavioral problems which in turn hinder the learner's ability to work with others, thus leading to poor performance especially in group work.

Furthermore, Augustyn *et al.*, (2002) state that despite the fact that attempts are made to keep child abuse and inter-parental aggression private and secret, community violence is discussed widely and often results in a rapidly spreading ripple effect. Thus, even children who do not directly observe community violence often have knowledge of violent events within their community or hear repeated accounts of a specific incident, and may form their own mental images of the violence. As a result, some children may try to avoid the area where the incidences of violence are reported. However, if doing this proves to be difficult they skip school, which has a negative impact on their school performance.

Past research has documented that exposure to community violence may have enduring consequences on children's development, beginning in the pre-school years and continuing through adolescence. The research has demonstrated that children who

witness community violence are likely to develop a negative view of the world as hostile and dangerous (Medina *et al.*, 2009)

Children who witness random acts of interpersonal violence or acts which target bystanders are at risk of developing a cluster of psychological symptoms related to post-traumatic stress. This can include avoidance of painful memories while at the same time re-experiencing the traumatic event (through repetitive play or “flashbacks” of the trauma). Traumatized children have fewer resources to deal with current developmental challenges, such as performing well in school or making and keeping friends (Foy & Goguen, 2000:5). Although they are not fully aware of their preoccupation with the past, children may have difficulty concentrating on the “here and now” because their emotional energy is devoted to avoiding the past and fighting the negative memories. It is important to remember, however, that after the initial shock and fear many children exposed to community violence may not develop symptoms related to post-traumatic stress and that in some children symptoms may develop only later in life (Foy, *et al.*, 2000: 5).

Literature on child violence reveals a link between exposure to violence and their perpetration of violence (Dodge *et al.*, 1997; Margolin & Gordis, 2000). That is, as children are exposed to violence, they learn the violent behaviour and later become perpetrators of violence themselves. Children usually start exhibiting violent behaviour during play time with their friends, while teenagers mainly engage in disruptive behaviour especially in the school environment ((Foy, *et al.*, 2000). Furthermore aggression has been observed among sexually abused children. However, it must be noted here that physically abused children behave more aggressively than sexually abused children (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). Abuse, on the other hand, is related to self-destructive behaviour in trying to avoid the abuse (Farber, Kinast, McCoard & Falkner 1984). Another way abused children behave is by attention-seeking behaviour with adults and strangers (Tong, Oates & McDowell, 1987) including inappropriate sexual behaviour such as masturbation and sex play (Friedrich, 1993).

Children’s interpretation of abuse in the home is often that the world is not a safe place to live in and they are not worthy of being kept safe (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1998). This kind of interpretation causes the child to start having negative perceptions towards themselves.

Researchers (Kolko, 1992; Allen & Tornoski 1989; Koverola, Pound, Heger & Lytle, 1993; Oates, O'Toole, Lynch, Stern & Cooney, 1994) have found a link between violence against children and depression. In addition to depressive behaviour, violence is linked to low self-esteem and perceived self-competence in children (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). However, this depressive behaviour is only associated with actual victims of violence and not with witnesses of community violence (Martinez & Richters, 1993).

Community violence also affects brain development since it is during early childhood that the brain develops. Thus, if a child is always receiving over-stimulation of one part of the brain, then it means that the other parts of the brain may not develop fully (Perry, 1997). Exposure to violence is also thought to affect the growth of children into puberty as well as their sexual behaviour (Margolin & Gordis, 2000) in that the stress from violence affects the production of hormones responsible for puberty which in turn affects the sexual development of the child. In addition, for victims of sexual abuse, stress contributes to changes in hormones (like androstenedione and dehydroepiandrosterone) which cause the victims to be aggressive sexually and generally (Margolin & Gordis, 2000).

Another link to community violence is that of peer relationships (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). It is believed that because children, who have been exposed to violence, usually have insecure and disorganized attachments with their guardians and they face problems when relating to their peers as they are predominantly angry (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). According to researchers (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Howes & Espinosa, 1985) such children usually lack role models in situations where violence occurs within the family and this impact on their socialization. In addition, with continuous exposure to violence in the home, the children often become hostile and violent towards their peers mainly because of their lack of emotional security.

The family's role in the exposure of children to community violence is the "most prominent, persistent, and proximate developmental influence for children" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993 as cited in Gorman-Smith, 2004: 440). Due to this factor, the risk of children's exposure to violence varies. There is also a relationship that exists between family violence and the risk of exposure to family

violence (Wewers et al., 1993). Thus children who experience violence in their homes are thought to be at higher risk of experiencing and/or witnessing community violence.

The mother's education is another factor which emerged from the research, especially in how it relates to the exposure of violence to their children. That is, children of educated mothers are viewed to be less distressed than those of uneducated mothers (Gorman-Smith, *et al.*, 2004) according to Cicchetti and Lynch (1993 cited in Gorman-Smith *et al.*, 2004: 441) “ families that provide a dependable, organized refuge may mediate the impact of violence exposure”.

Furthermore, safety and stability in a home is also related to the adaptability of children in school (Richters & Martinez, 1993). Thus children who come from homes where their parents use drugs and guns are emotionally and academically unstable. Furthermore, the level at which the children, who have been exposed to family violence, received support from their families determined the level of aggressive behaviour and depressive behaviour (Gorman-Smith et al., 2004). Gorman-Smith et al., (2004) further state that children from homes with parents that have poor parenting skills and who are emotionally unsupportive are more at risk of witnessing or being victims of violence. In addition, such children also have a higher risk of being perpetrators of violence.

Finally, living in a war zone creates its own problems for children. It is pertinent to note how children easily fall victim to war. To consider this we looked at research by Donald, (1994) on the Angolan War of 1961– a war which extended over two decades and thus two generations had to develop and grow up under conditions in which a national conflict dominated their lives and this meant the war became a part of their everyday reality. Donald, found that in Angola, at that time, children comprised half of the population and they suffered directly with an estimated figure of about 500 000 child deaths.

In addition, he reports that the death of parents during this war saw children being left without any source of income. This increased the number of children ordinarily being left with no source of income in normal peacetime society, and increased the number of child-headed households so making large numbers of unaccompanied children physically and psychologically vulnerable.

The war, he notes, also impacted negatively and heavily on the infrastructure of the country with schools, roads, communications and health infrastructure falling into disrepair, disorganization and near-collapse. This added to the already depleted resources and the economic strain caused by poverty. The collapse of the health infrastructure resulted in the outbreak of many diseases (malaria, measles, and tetanus) and further aggravated the negative conditions in which children found themselves.

Donald asserts that war stresses also caused an increase in the level of family violence. Following the war, the youth were uneducated and lacked employability which meant, of necessity; they turned to a life of crime as the only means of survival.

Furthermore, this researcher argues, that while some children in normal times show signs of being psychologically damaged, most children in war situations display severe psychological problems and as such present both chronic and acute symptoms that may affect their behaviour into adulthood. Some of these symptoms have been identified as: aggression, depression and acute flashbacks, concentration problems, nightmares, and hyper-vigilance reactions.

1.3 Motivation

One of the least understood topics in the field of criminology and criminal justice today is that of rural crime and its effects on young people, especially when viewed through an academic lens. This may be attributed to many factors, some of which form part of the discussions that follow. First and foremost, research into rural crime and its effect remains sparse since scholars and researchers have spent most of their efforts on trying to understand urban patterns of crime (Johnson *et al.*, 2008). Additionally, an area that has been significantly under-researched in rural contexts is that of violence (Johnson *et al.*, 2008). Research on teen violence, traditionally, has been based on data from large urban areas, which excluded the rural experience. More recent research, however, has recognized the unique crime and violence issues of rural areas and found surprisingly high levels of violent behavior and victimization among rural youth (Johnson *et al.*, 2008). For example, a study comparing teens from rural, urban and suburban school districts in New York found rural teens to be more likely to report being the victim of

violence than urban or suburban teens (Johnson *et al.*, 2008). “A related study in New York showed a significantly higher risk for rural teens to carrying a weapon at school, carrying a gun on or off school grounds, and using tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs” (Johnson *et al.*, 2008: 1).

Most children exposed to violence are rarely exposed to only one incident or one type of violence. Researchers have determined that there are high rates of concurrence between exposure to community violence and interfamilial violence, and within the family, high rates of concurrence have been detected between interparental violence and parent-to-child violence (Medina *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, it also has become clear that these different forms of violence are frequently recurring events. The present study, therefore, was designed to investigate the effects of family and community violence on school going children and youth. This research also seeks to explore the effects of community violence on the lives of young people’s academic performance.

Madlala and Els (2008) argue that violence impacts on children’s developmental skills, school adaptation and academic performances. Other researchers link exposure to chronic abuse and violence to lower IQ scores, poorer language skills, a decrease in visual-motor integration skills and problems with attention and memory (Medina *et al.*, 2009). This inadequate attention regulation and memory failure weakens the child’s ability to accomplish the fundamental requirements of academic achievement and school adaptation, which are needed to organize, recall and express an understanding of new information.

Similarly, Shakoor and Chalmers (1991) argue that school children who are physically abused tend to score lower than non-abused children on tests of verbal ability and understanding, reading and mathematics). They further argue that, children exposed to community violence in general tend to show lower school achievement. The cognitive effect of violence means that the children who experience difficulties with attention and memory may become insensitive to important social clues and expectations. This can cause children to have difficulties in keeping up with school rules and classroom instructions, which potentially generates its own set of complexities. Thus the effect of cognitive function may disrupt successful functioning of the children in the school

environment (Swartz, 1998). Shakoor and Chalmers (1991) identified deleterious effects on cognition, memory, school performance and learning. These problems were identified as the possible result of exposure to violence. It is possible that violence and co-victimization in youth are not just measures of violence, but may also correlate with poor school performance and learning which are symptoms of psychic trauma in youth (Swartz, 1998).

It is against this background that this research attempts to understand the impact of community violence on learners.

From personal experience, most of the perpetrators of crime are young people against other young people although occasionally senior members of the community sometimes may instigate violence. My statement is supported by Reza, Krug and Mercy (2001) that violence by young people is one of its most visible forms in society. Around the world, newspapers and the broadcast media report daily on youth violence by gangs, in schools or on the streets. The main victims and perpetrators of such violence, almost everywhere, are themselves adolescents and young adults (Reza *et.al*, 2001). The impact of this violence results in learners using alternate routes and learners not attending school for fear of being hurt. The violence that I experienced was fuelled by past political and ideological differences. In addition, some young people were confronted with territorial rivalry. My own experiences of community violence as a learner had a bearing on the choice of this research topic.

Such a background led me to believe that exposure to community violence had an impact on learners in an academic and psychological way. Similarly, Swartz (1998) states that children who witness acts of interpersonal violence are at high risk of developing a cluster of psychological symptoms related to post-traumatic stress. This situation Swartz says, is aggravated by the lack of social support from their communities. Hence I was motivated to determine whether violence has any effect on the lives of school going children.

1.4 Aim

The aim of this study is to ascertain the effects of violence on learners' lives through empirical research.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives arising from the aim of the study are:

-Firstly, to describe the effects of violence on young learners' academic performance either as witnesses of violence or victims. Learners who are exposed as witness or as direct victims may be affected by violence which could lead to the disturbance of their academic performance. As they are from the rural areas, where sometimes violence is used for initiation, they may not talk about it and as a result the effect it has on them will never be known.

- Secondly, to determine the perpetrators of violence. It is usually grown-ups who are very violent and most of the crimes are perpetrated by adults. But young people may also turn to violence. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate who perpetrates the violence which affects learners socially, academically or psychologically.
- Thirdly, to determine the forms of violence to which learners are exposed. There are many varieties of violence and it is important to understand if the learners in rural areas are exposed to the same kind of violence as urban learners.
- Fourthly, to discover the coping strategies developed by learners who experience violence. People respond differently to violence: some respond with violence as a way of coping, for instance, they become more violent themselves, while others may become traumatized and depressed as they are afraid to report it to their parents. So it is imperative to find out from the learners themselves.

1.6 Key research questions

The critical questions that guide this study are:

- What do young people perceive as the causes of violence in their community? Perceptions about violence vary. Some actions are considered as violent by some people but not by others. So this research aims to find out learners' perceptions regarding the causes of violence in their community.
- How do young people respond to violence in their community? Reaction to violence is inevitable whether you are young or old, however, this research investigates learners' responses when they are exposed to violence in their community as direct victims or as witnesses of violence.
- What is the attitude of parents and guardians towards violence? There is a perception that violence is normalized in rural areas, and it is sometimes used as part of initiation. It is said that as parents are used to it they expect their children to be exposed to it to a certain extent. Investigating this is imperative as it the only way to know if this claim is valid. Only the learners who are exposed to violence will be able to reveal their parent's attitude toward violence.
- What is the perceived effect of violence on academic performance? Research has shown that exposure to violence has adverse psychological and social effects on the lives of young people. Academic life is a large part of their lives so it is highly possible that their performance is also affected. Here the aim is to investigate the effects of violence on their academic performance.
- What strategies (if any) does the community employ in dealing with crime? In some communities groups of people are nominated to look out for and deal with those who are deviant in the community. They serve as the community's eyes and ears and if anyone commits any crime in the community they beat them up. However, different communities use different strategies, and this research aims to find out the strategies used by the KwaSwayimana community – if any.

1.7 Chapter sequence

In Chapter One the introduction and background to this study are outlined to give an overview of the study. Here the statement of purpose, aim and objectives and the critical questions addressed in the study are presented.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature related to the area of this study. Chapter Three focuses on the theories that guide this study and provides the theoretical framework for the analysis and interpretations made in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Four describes the scientific methodology used in this study to achieve the study's objectives. The study was essentially a qualitative one.

Chapter Five is a detailed presentation and discussion of the data obtained in the study. The chapter also analyzes the data and explores similarities among the participants' responses.

Chapter Six as the concluding chapter of this study provides all the conclusions reached from this study and also submits various recommendations emanating from the results of this research.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter provides a general overview of the study by giving insight into the core of the dissertation as expressed through the background, aim and objectives. However, the following chapters dealing with the literature review and the conceptual and theoretical framework provide more insight into the theme of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter a review of literature relevant to the aim and objectives of the current study is discussed. The nature and extent of community violence is discussed by looking at available studies conducted internationally and nationally. Cooper (1998) believes that one of the purposes of literature reviews is to describe, summarize, evaluate, clarify and/or integrate the content of the primary report. He asserts that literature review uses as its database reports of primary or original scholarship and does not report new scholarship itself. The types of scholarship may be empirical, theoretical, critical, analytical or methodological in nature. Leedy (1989) believes that the function of literature review is to look at the literature in an area, not necessary identical with, but collateral to your own area of study. It is aimed at obtaining a detailed knowledge of the topic being studied. The intention of writing reviews is to demonstrate a professional grasp of the background theory on the research that is going to be undertaken.

This chapter discusses the role of media in defining violence as well as the influence of culture in understanding the meaning of violence and its impact. It also explores the effect of exposure to family as well as community violence and its relation to the academic performance of learners.

2.2 Definitions

Since this study involves the extensive use of the terms such as violence, effects, family violence, as well as community violence it is logical to start with defining these terms and to highlight their significance to this study.

2.2.1 Definition of violence

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high

likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.

2.2.2 Definition of community violence

Community violence is the term that has been used to refer to a wide range of events, including shouting, sniper attacks, riots, gang wars, assault, terrorist attacks, torture, bombing, war, and widespread sexual, physical and emotional abuse. One definition of community violence that has been used to encompass all of these types of violence is “frequent and continual exposure to the use of guns, knives, drugs and random violence”. Linares *et al.*, (2001) believe that community violence is exposure as a witness or through actual experience, to acts of interpersonal violence perpetrated by individuals who are not intimately related to the victim, for example, sexual assault, burglary, use of weapons, muggings, sounds of bullet shots, social disorder, issues such as graffiti, teen gangs, drug trafficking, abuse and racial divisions (Linares, *et al.*, 2001). However, Scarpa (2003), believes that community violence refers to violence that is experienced as a victim or witness in or near homes, schools and surrounding neighbourhoods. The definition of community violence is more inclusive in that it encompasses violence that occurs within and outside of the family or home. For the sake of this research I will use Scarpa’s definition of violence (Scarpa, 2003: 211).

2.2.3 Definition of family violence

Various individuals and groups have defined family/domestic violence to include everything from saying unkind or demeaning words, to grabbing a person's arm, to hitting, kicking, choking or even murdering. Domestic violence most often refers to violence between married or cohabiting couples, although it sometimes refers to violence against other members of a household, such as children or elderly relatives (Weithorn *et al.*, 1999). It occurs in every racial, socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious group, although conditions such as poverty, drug or alcohol abuse and mental illness increase its likelihood. Studies indicate that the incidence of domestic violence among homosexual couples is approximately equivalent to that found among heterosexual couples. This study will adopt both definitions.

2.3 Extent of violence in South Africa

South Africa ranks third in terms of the occurrence of violence, after Venezuela and Colombia. The victims of violence are mostly women, children and young men (Chopra, Lawn & Sanders 2009). The most common forms of violence include rape, homicide and child and domestic violence (Jewkes, *et al.*, 2009).

It is estimated that about 113 out of 100 000 men die of homicide every year and this rate exceeds the world average which is 8.2 out of 100 000 men (Abrahams, Jewkes & Martin, 2009). It was estimated by the South African Police Service that between 2007 and 2008, about 18 487 homicides were committed and the majority of these deaths were young black men (Rosenberg, Butchart & Mercy, 2006). In 1999, 3 800 homicides were committed on females while in 2000, 654 homicides against under five year-old children were committed. These statistics exceed the global averages six times and are twice the average for low- and middle- income countries respectively.

The main perpetrators of violence in South Africa are men (Abrahams *et al.*, 2009). For instance, in a study conducted by Jewkes Dunkle and Nduna (2006) 40% of the men interviewed reported to have been perpetrators of physical violence. In another study conducted by Dunkle, Jewkes, and Brown, (2004), 28% of men reported to have perpetrated rape.

To demonstrate the extent of firearm deaths, out of all the deaths in 1999 of teenagers and adult females, 1 147 (which is 33.3% of the total) were caused by gunshot injuries. Most (60.3%) of these deaths occurred at home and 30.6% of these were done by an intimate partner (Abrahams and Jewkes 2001). More than a third of girls in South Africa have experienced sexual violence before the age of 18 (Abrahams *et al.*, 2009).

Violence in South Africa can be attributed to various factors some of which are discussed here. The first and more obvious cause of violence in South Africa is the impact of the apartheid regime. During the apartheid regime, communities used to engage in violent acts as a way to protest the apartheid government as well as rendering their communities ungovernable. Thus, at that time, violence became a tool used against the then government, but by doing so the liberation struggle politicized crime and the apartheid

government criminalized any form of politics among black people (Hunt, 2003). Other causes of violence include drug and alcohol abuse, guns (which are still widely used to threaten and kill people), social norms (which support and perpetrate violence), weak law enforcement, Government's response to violence, poverty and social inequality, emphasized gender hierarchy, competition among men and widespread exposure of children to violence which promotes anti-social behaviour (Jewkes *et al.*, 2009: 1-2).

There is an undeniable link between health and violence. For instance, women in abusive relationships are more prone to HIV/AIDS than those who are not (Martin & Curtis, 2004). Violence has also other linkages to the health of the victims. It is estimated that about 1.75 million people seek medical help annually for treatment of injuries resulting from violence (Jewkes, 2009; Matzopoulos, Prinsloo & Butchart, 2006). Of all infections in women, 16% is associated to domestic violence perpetrated by their partners. Rape victims are mostly at risk of contracting HIV, unwanted pregnancies as well as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. These health problems can lead to substance abuse, depression and suicide if left untreated (Vetten, Jewkes, & Fuller, 2008; Wood, 2006).

Violence in South Africa is constantly high and it has massive effects on learners. It has gone to an extent where it requires government and other originations to put violence as a priority and devise strategies in order to tackle it. For instance, according to Yazeed Kamaldien (2010), Patrick Burton, executive director at CJCP, says they launched Hlayiseka (be safe) a Project after research at schools nationwide revealed worrying levels of violence: thousands of learners in primary and high schools had been assaulted at school. Boys and girls faced sexual violence, while alcohol and drugs were easily accessible at schools and so were weapons like knives or guns (Yazeed Kamaldien 2010)

Kamaldien, (2010) further states that one of the most high-profile cases of school violence occurred in 2008 at the Nic Diederichs Technical High School in Krugersdorp, where Morne Harmse killed fellow learner Jacques Pretorius with a sword and injured three others. He was sentenced last year to 20 years' imprisonment and the judge recommended that he be given psychiatric counseling and rehabilitation during his prison term. These kinds of violent events have a negative effect on the learners who witness

them and they impact severely on their feelings of safety which might result in some of the learners skipping school, thus affecting their academic performance.

Crimes that occur in the community are taken to school which then turns schools into places for violence rather than being the safe havens we think they are. Violence incidences at schools are reported from time to time and reflected in newspapers. For instance, Kamaldien (2008) reported that:

a 17-year-old boy was arrested after being found in possession of an unlicensed firearm at a school in Jabulani, Soweto. Johannesburg police said on Friday. This was the sixth case of violence in Gauteng this week involving school children.

Reports like these demonstrate the extent of violence in South Africa and how schools and learners are exposed to violence. Those who take weapons to school are engaged with outside activities and then bring weapons to protect themselves. Again this goes back to the issue of the culture of violence because carrying a weapon about in school means that you are ready for a fight. This has an effect on those learners who witness this tendency and those who have no access to these firearms.

Learners are exposed to violence at school and in the community at a very high level. To further indicate the extent of violence I quote other incidences reported by newspapers:

Two violent incidents occur in Heidelberg, south of Johannesburg; in the first a 17-year-old youth allegedly stabbed a 16-year-old classmate in the arm at the Hoer Volksskool on Wednesday. In Westbury Secondary School, Heidelberg, 12 pupils were involved in a gang fight. Police said the gang fight started in the township and spilled over into the school (Kamaldien, 2008).

The above quote illustrates how community violence affects school and learners. These crimes are committed by young people. This means violence caused by young people affects other young people themselves.

2.4 Influences on violence

This section discusses the various factors that influence violence. They include culture, media and role models.

2.4.1 Influence of culture

Socio-cultural factors are presumed to contribute to the manifestation of violence by locating the causes of violence within the broader society. Norms are shared expectations about behaviour. People learn to abide by norms in accordance with the groups to which they belong. Children may be taught the norms of using violence in defending themselves (McKendrick *et.al.*, 1990).

Culture seems to have immense impact on the lives of young people and it impacts on how they behave and how they view the world. For example, Leyre (2007) believes that in cultures accustomed to war and repression for a long time, young boys grow up as daredevils playing with danger for fun and believe that risks with less than 2% probability belong to the category of “bad luck” only happening to others. This is demonstrated daily in automobile traffic, sports, cigarette smoking and so on, but becomes a useful asset in war, where this defying death without dying is conveniently designated as courage.

Another issue which is overlooked is the influence of culture on violence against women. According to the study done by Weiner and Freedheim (2003), it was discovered that the chief causes of violence against women are historically unequal power relations between women and men in public and private life (i.e. patriarchy and men’s control over women). It underscores that violence against women is both a means and a consequence of women’s subordination. Weiner and Freedheim (2003) also state the majority of women in 33 countries (where statistics are available) found it appropriate for a wife to be hit or beaten by her husband for specific reasons. As a result young people who grow up observing these traditional, normalized behaviours, in turn practise these on their girlfriends because they believe it the right thing to do or it is how things should be. Consequently, owing to these cultural practices, the young in schools and in the communities become victims of violence by repeating the same behaviour on their generation so making them the next victims of the violence which is normalized by their elders (Weiner and Freedheim, 2003).

According to Lyre (2007) this is how aggression is passed from generation to generation. Youths naturally try to learn successful behaviour from their surrounding society through images and emotions. It is not important if those images are considered real, like a news programme or a fight in the neighbourhood or mere fantasy. In most cultures violence is normalized when young boys are brought up/or taught to fight at a very early stage. They are told to defend themselves as well as the members of their families. They grow up praising those who went before, thus, learning violence behaviour from them. Wolfgang's (1967) theory of the "Culture of Violence" maintains that aggression and violence in societies are used during childhood socialization as a means of securing youngsters' obedience and conformity both within the family and larger society. As such communities consider some form of violence as being normal, this then leads to the exaggeration of masculinity by young people and ends up by taking violence to the street.

However, when violence in the families and in the societies is considered as the means of socializing young people, the effects of that violence on young people may remain unidentified or undiscovered, due to the fact that it is considered normal (acceptable) and children may not complain or report it as they may be seen as disrespectful (Wolfgang *et al.*, 1967). Other researchers have identified some of the effects of violence affecting young people in particular, learners (Medina *et al.*, 2009). These effects range from social, behavioural, psychological to academic. The effects of violence will be discussed later in this chapter with the main focus on how they are associated with the performance of the learners who are exposed to violence.

2.4.2 Media influence on violence

While violence is not new to the human race, it is an increasing problem in modern society. With greater access to firearms and explosives, the scope and efficiency of violent behaviour has had serious consequences (Beresin, 2011). While there are multiple causes of youth violence which include such variables as poverty, family psychopathology, child abuse, exposure to domestic and community violence, substance abuse and other psychiatric disorders, the research literature is quite compelling that children's exposure to media violence plays an important role in the etiology of violent behavior (Beresin, 2011). While it is difficult to determine which children who have

experienced televised violence are at greatest risk, there appears to be a strong correlation between media violence and aggressive behaviour within vulnerable "at risk" segments of youth (Beresin, 2011).

Furthermore, researchers hypothesize that viewing television violence can lead to three potentially harmful effects and these are: increased anti-social or aggressive behavior; desensitization to violence (becoming more accepting of violence in real life and less caring about other people's feelings) or increased fear of becoming a victim of violence. "Most young people tend to imitate what they see on the television, as they grow and their behaviors is altered to violent behavior, especially if their role models on the screen are violent people" (Strasburg and Wilson, 2002: 333). Change in behaviour affects other young people, because they practice what they see on television (TV) on other young people. The TV programmes which have extreme influence of violence on young people are those which show violence in schools, such as bullying and initiation of the newcomers.

In addition, Anderson et al., (2003) assert that media violence produces long-term effects via several types of learning processes leading to the acquisition of lasting (and automatically accessible) aggressive scripts, interpretational schemas, aggression-supporting beliefs about social behaviour and reduces individuals' normal negative emotional responses to violence (i.e., desensitization). Certain characteristics of viewers (e.g., identification with aggressive characters), social environments (e.g., parental influences), and media content (e.g., attractiveness of the perpetrator) can influence the degree to which media violence affects aggression (Anderson et.al: 6)

Strasburg and Wilson, (2002) state that laboratory experiments have indicated that exposure to media violence increases children's tolerance for real-life aggression. For example, when third and fourth-graders were left in charge of two younger children they could see on a TV monitor, the ones who viewed an aggressive film were much more reluctant than those who had not seen the film to ask an adult for help when the younger children began to fight, even though the fight was becoming progressively aggressive. As a consequence, children end up accepting violence in such a way that they even think that it is normal. Most of the children do not report when they see violent incidences because

they do not want to be attacked by the perpetrators. And those who are direct victims do not report because they do not want to be called cowards, so they try other means to avenge themselves, for example, by calling upon their brothers, friends or uncles for aid, thus violence continues. This occurs more especially in rural areas. It is similar to what was referred to as “a blood feud” in the old days. Feuds begin because one party (correctly or incorrectly) perceives itself to have been attacked, insulted or wronged by another (Jonas, 2002). A blood feud is a feud with a cycle of retaliatory violence, with the relatives of someone who has been killed or otherwise wronged or dishonored seeking vengeance by killing or otherwise physically punishing the culprits or their relative, it was most prevalent in rural areas (Grutzpalk, 2002). In most rural areas like Swayimana, assaulting a child is seen as an insult to the parents if the perpetrator is an adult. But if the perpetrator is a youth then it is an insult to the brother thus he is the one who will avenge.

A recent study demonstrated a relationship between children’s bullying and their exposure to media violence (Strasburg and Wilson, 2002). Children who were identified by their peers as being the ones, who spread rumours, exclude and insult peers and behave in ways that hurt others, were more likely to have watched violence than non-aggressive children (Strasburg & Wilson, 2002).

One study demonstrated that TV habits of children are significant predictors of adult aggression and even criminal behaviour, regardless of children’s initial aggressiveness, intelligence quotient (IQ), social status or parenting style (Strasburg & Wilson, 2002). In the same study, boys who preferred and viewed more violent programming at an earlier age were more likely to be aggressive as teenagers and have arrests and convictions as adults for interpersonal crimes such as spousal and child abuse, murder, and aggravated assault (Strasburg & Wilson, 2002). Anderson et al., (2003) support Strasburg by stating that recent large-scale longitudinal studies provide converging evidence linking frequent exposure to violent media in childhood with aggression later in life, including physical assaults and spousal abuse. However, he believes that because extremely violent criminal behaviours (e.g., forcible rape, aggravated assault, homicide) are rare, new longitudinal studies with larger samples are needed to estimate accurately how much habitual childhood exposure to media violence increases the risk for extreme violence.

Furthermore, Strasburg and Wilson (2002) state that the National Institute of Mental Health in the USA found that the consensus among most of the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behaviour by children and teenagers. Not all children become aggressive, of course, but the correlations between violence and aggression are positive. In magnitude, television violence is as strongly correlated with aggressive behaviour as any other behavioral variable that has been measured. The American Psychological Association concurs with the National Institute of Mental Health by concluding that there is absolutely no doubt that higher levels of viewing violence on television are correlated with increased acceptance of aggressive attitudes and increased aggressive behaviour (Strasburg & Wilson, 2002).

In general, violence on television and in movies often conveys a model of conflict resolution. It is efficient and frequent but inconsequential. Heroes are violent and, as such, are rewarded for their behaviour (Jonas, 2002). They become role models for youth. It is "cool" to carry an automatic weapon and use it to knock off the "bad guys." The typical scenario of using violence for a righteous cause may translate in daily life into a justification for using violence to retaliate against perceived victimizers (Grutzpalk, 2002). Hence, vulnerable youth who have been victimized may be tempted to use violent means to solve problems. Unfortunately, there are few, if any, models of non-violent conflict resolution in the media. Additionally, children who watch televised violence are desensitized to it. They may come to see violence as a fact of life and, over time, lose their ability to empathize with both the victim and the victimizer (Grutzpalk, 2002).

There are other, new forms of violence to which children and adolescents are exposed. In one recent study, it was demonstrated that 15% of music videos contain interpersonal violence. Still another new source of violent exposure is access to the Internet and video games (Beresin, 2011). There is little data on the incidence of violence on the Internet, however, there is concern about sites that may advocate violence, provide information on the creation of explosive devices or reveal how to acquire firearms. There is also little research on the impact of violent video games. We do know, however, that they are extensive and have a role-modelling capacity (Beresin, 2011). It is especially concerning

to experts that the child gets to act out the violence, rather than to be a passive observer, as when viewing television or movies,

Though the scientific debate whether media violence increases aggression and violence is essentially over, several critical tasks remain (Anderson *et al.*, 2003: 10). Additional laboratory and field studies are needed for a better understanding of underlying psychological processes, which eventually should lead to more effective interventions. Large-scale longitudinal studies would help specify the magnitude of media-violence effects on the most severe types of violence (Anderson *et al.*, 2003: 10). Meeting the larger societal challenge of providing children and youth with a much healthier media diet may prove to be more difficult and costly, especially if the scientific, news, public policy and entertainment communities fail to educate the general public about the real risks of media-violence exposure to children and youth (Anderson *et al.*, 2003: 9).

2.4.3 Role model behaviour and youth violence

Individuals tend to display attitudes and behaviours that are learned (deliberately or inadvertently) through the influence of example (Bandura, 2000). Whether youth learn positive and/or negative attitudes and behaviours depends on available models in their environment. Beyond simple exposure, youth are likely to identify role models whom they deem to be more worthy of imitation than others (Bandura, 2000). A role model is an individual who is perceived by others as worthy of emulation (Pleiss & Feldhusen, 1995). The behaviour of these role models may be more influential on youth outcomes than the behaviour of other people in youth's lives. Thus, role model behaviours may be a crucial determinant of youth attitudes and behaviours, particularly among early adolescents.

Depending on where adolescents reside, they may have differential opportunities for role model identification (Hurd *et al.*, 2011) According to social disorganization theory, neighbourhoods with higher levels of unemployment and concentrated poverty may have fewer social control mechanisms and less collective efficacy (Boyle & Hassett-Walker, 2008). In socially disorganized neighbourhoods, crime and social disorder may be more prevalent (Boyle & Hassett-Walker, 2008) and adolescents in these neighborhoods may

have higher rates of exposure to negative adult behavior (Anderson, 1999). As adolescents in disorganized neighbourhoods identify role models, they may be more likely to identify adults who model violent or deviant behavior. These adults may be identified as role models due to limited alternatives. Conversely, these adults may be identified because they are seen by adolescents as some of the most powerful and prestigious adults in their neighbourhood (Anderson, 1999).

According to Anderson (1999), the “code of the street” that prevails in some economically disadvantaged, predominantly African American communities upholds violence as a means of gaining power, status and the respect of others. Thus, adolescents in these communities may identify role models who engage in violent behaviour. At Swayimana the power amongst youth is gained by the number of victories one has. This results in the recycling of violence because the young ones look up to those who are more violent and want to imitate them as they are feared. Nevertheless, it is important to note that an adult role model may display both negative and positive behaviour. (Anderson 1999)

Hurd *et al.*, (2011), assert that early adolescents residing in low-income communities may be influenced strongly by the behaviour of non-parental adults in their day-to-day lives. As Pleiss & Feldhusen, (1998) found, youth are more likely to do what they see adults doing rather than what adults tell them to do. Furthermore, non-parental adults in youth’s lives have a responsibility to demonstrate the type of behaviour they want youth to emulate (Hurd *et al.*, 2011).

2.5 Effects of witnessing or experiencing violence

Children may be exposed to violence at home, in the community, and in the media. This exposure can have significant effects on children as they develop and as they form their own intimate relationships throughout childhood and adulthood. Risk factors are cumulative; the risks for negative outcomes multiply, placing some children in "double jeopardy" (e.g., the child exposed to domestic and community violence). Children who are victims of direct assault or who witness repeated episodes of violence are more likely to have significant negative outcomes compared with children who are exposed to a

single instance of violence (de la Rey, Duncan Shefer, Van Niekerk, 1997). However, de la Rey et al., stress that even though no comprehensive statistics regarding the effects of counter-violence are available, it is widely acknowledged that the consequences of violence on the lives of children are substantial (de la Rey *et al.*, 1997).

There are many effects that arise from exposure to violence and these impacts adversely on the academic performance of learners. For example, the review by Medina *et al.*, (2009) examines the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social effects of violence exposure and highlights the ways in which these effects can disrupt children's adaptation to school and academic competence. Although they claim that effects of violence exposure are presented as distinct, in reality the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social effects of violence are interrelated and contribute to one another. For example, if children who are exposed to violence are less flexible and resourceful in their reasoning, these cognitive processes may be associated with problems with peers and school work, which may then lead to depression and anxiety.

Research has not consistently found significant differences in outcomes among children who were victims of violence compared to those who were only witnesses of violence (Trickett & Horn, 2003). Indeed, some research suggests that not all forms of community violence exposure are the same, at least when considering their detrimental effects on families and children (Horn and Trickett, 1998; Trickett *et al.*, 2003). However, it is possible that different types of violence exposure have varying effects (Trickett *et al.*, 2003). Being robbed at knifepoint, witnessing a fistfight in the school yard, or hearing from someone of a drive-by shooting are discrete, heterogeneous events that are likely to differ in their severity and impact on children (Horn & Trickett, 1998; Trickett *et al.*, 2003). It is likely that other factors too, such as a child's relationship to the victim, his or her physical proximity to the event, the recent timing and severity of exposure, his or her previous traumatic experiences and losses, his or her developmental status - all may affect the impact of exposure and later youth outcomes (Trickett *et al.*, 2003).

According to Kliewer *et al.*, (1998) exposure to community violence has been associated with a variety of childhood problems across a broad age range. For example, Kliewer *et al.*, argue that community violence has been linked to behaviour problems in children from early school age through late adolescence and to emotional problems, including depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms. Significantly, these effects do not occur only when children themselves are victims; in some studies simply witnessing community violence has also been associated with a range of emotional problems (Kliewer *et al.*, 1998). In addition to Kliewer's statement, the generation of intense negative emotions interferes with the usual course of development of emotional regulation (Osofsky, 1993). Such negative affective experiences may influence the task of differentiating affective states and the capacity to elaborate on their affective expressions (Pynoos, 1993). In addition, self-attributions of shame, ineffectiveness, or blame can lead to negative self-images that may challenge adaptive functioning (Lewis, 1991). Such interferences with the course of emotional regulation may lead to disruptions in the development of empathy and other pro-social behaviours.

In a study conducted in South Africa in 1997 by Ensink Robertson, Zisis and Leger in which 60 Xhosa-speaking black children, ages 10 to 16 that were recruited from a children's home located in a Cape Town township with a higher level of community violence. It was discovered that all participants had been exposed to community violence, 56% were victims and 45% had witnessed at least one killing. Of the 60 participants, 40% were diagnosed with one or more psychiatric disorders (dysthymia, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), major depression, conduct disorder), 42% reported psychiatric symptoms - although they did not have psychiatric disorders - and 18% did not have any symptoms at all (Lynch, 2003).

Furthermore, Gary *et al.*, (1998), state that one survey indicated that more than one out of ten (10 %) said crime or threat of crime had caused them to stay home from school or cut classes. A similar percentage (12%) said it had caused them to get lower grades in school than they would have otherwise.

Another important issue is that violence exposure often goes hand in hand with numerous other adverse life experiences (Medina *et al.*, 2009). Children living with violence

typically experience other stressors such as poverty, neglect, poor nutrition, overcrowding, substance abuse, lack of adequate medical care, parents' unemployment, and parents' psychopathology (Medina *et al.*, 2009). These factors can exacerbate and extend the negative effects of violence exposure in children. For example, children whose parents suffer from psychopathology or struggle with substance abuse problems may not have had the opportunity or guidance to develop pro-social coping skills with which to deal with violence exposure in their community. Although children exposed to violence may have a greater need for nurture and protection than children without such stressors, they may actually have less access to social support from their caretakers. Therefore, efforts to grasp the effects of violence exposure on children also must evaluate the context in which the child is embedded (Medina *et al.*, 2009).

2.5.1 Educational Effects

There have been some mixed findings on the impact of exposure to community violence on educational outcomes in children (Rossman, 1998). However, some studies report that community violence is unrelated to academic achievement and social competence in school (Lynch, 2003: 270).

In contrast Medina *et al.*, (2009) argue that violence can impact children's developmental skills, school adaptation and academic performances. Exposure to chronic abuse and violence have been linked to lower IQ scores, poorer language skills, decrements in visual-motor integration skills and problems with attention and memory (Carroll, 2005). Inadequate attention regulation, language, skills and memory weaken the child's ability to accomplish the fundamental requirements of academic achievement and school adaptation, which are to organize, recall and express understanding of new information (Schwartz & Proctor, 2000).

School children who are physically abused tend to score lower than non-abused children on tests of verbal ability and understanding, reading and maths skills. In addition, children exposed to community violence in general tend to show lower school achievement (Medina *et al.*, 2009). The cognitive effect of violence extends to the fact that those children who experience difficulties with attention and memory may become

insensitive to important social clues and expectations and end up finding themselves struggling with school rules and classroom instructions. Thus the effect of cognitive function may disrupt successful functioning in the school environment (Carroll, 2005). Hughes, (2000), supports Carroll by stating that cognitive problems associated with exposure to violence and abuse comprise one of the most direct threats to the developmental task of school adaptation and academic achievement. Deficits in attention regulation, language skills, and memory undermine the child's ability to accomplish that central requirement of academic achievement and school adaptation, namely to encode, organise, recall, and express understanding of new information.

Youths tend to consider schools as safe havens, but they are places where they can be (and very commonly are) exposed to violence (Medina *et al.*, 2009). This tends to impact on a student's ability to concentrate, which is fundamental to success in school. Exposure to violence in schools causes anger and aggression, which very often lead to behavioural and discipline problems at school (Medina *et al.*, 2009). Others may withdraw and become depressed which seriously affects their ability to concentrate, creates a low self-esteem and consequently, adversely affects their performance (Medina *et al.*, 2009).

Academic performance also suffers when violence exposed-children attempt to cope with anger towards other children or with a frustration with academic material by behaving disruptively (Medina *et al.*, 2009). The long term consequence of exposure to violence is that adults exposed to community violence during their childhood have been found to have significantly completed fewer years of school and reported more episodes of trauma during their time in school compared to their non-exposed peers (Foy *et.al*, 2000).

Carroll (2005) noted that higher levels of attainment are linked with the desire of learners to be in school; it is insufficient for students to simply be present and do well. It is entirely reasonable that crime and violence issues are symptomatic of poor learner's attitudes towards education; the learners who are victimized in school would probably not choose to be in school otherwise, and therefore they would have lower test scores as a result of their inclinations towards truancy. As these sorts of incidents continue, however, the academic environment would be expected to deteriorate significantly. Therefore, the

relationship between school discipline problems and academic achievement is expected to accelerate (Carroll, 2005)

According to Jones, (2001) no matter how it enters the building, violence simply stands in the way of education. “Regardless of whether a learner’s fear of violence is real or exaggerated, it often prevents learning”. Logically speaking, it is expected that learners would have a lack of focus if they were worried about their own safety. However, are there any facts to back up the idea that violence impedes learning? According to Jones, there is evidence of this. He writes of a 1995 study performed by mental health researchers. This study “...showed that exposure to violence negatively affects memory, concentration, abstract reasoning, and emotional reactivity, making learning difficult” (Jones, 2001). It is also believed that learners will skip school or call in sick because of their fear of impending violence (Jones, 2001), which interrupts their education. While truancy is not a desirable option, the students’ fear is understandable and quite valid. Truthfully, it is difficult to learn verbs and prepositions when one is really worried about dodging bullets on the way home from school. Equally difficult is trying to concentrate on English when a friend’s head was just repeatedly bashed against the wall during the passing period. Obviously, violence affects a student’s concentration, which, in turn, impedes his/her education (Catey, 2001)

2.5.2 Behavioural effects

Margolin et al., (2000) noted that the behaviour of a children exposed to violence change e.g. some become aggressive or passive, become out of control, refuse to go school and even their intellectual competency become reduced. Gary *et Al.*, (1998) add by stating that children who are physically and verbally aggressive in the classroom have a negative impact on the education of their classmates by driving their teachers from teaching and reducing the amount of time learners engaged in learning

Violence does change the attitude and behaviour of young people who are exposed to it. This is supported by research conducted by Medina *et al.*, (2009) who observe that exposure to violence is related to difficulties in regulating anger, frustration and other negative feelings. In addition, it is also related to the inability to empathize with the

feelings of others. These difficulties can lead to significant behavioural and social problems for children and they result in the disturbance of the academic performance of learners as it prevents them from socializing with others thereby preventing them from performing team tasks with their class mates (Medina *et al.*, 2009).

Philp (2008), in addition states that problem of violent anti-social behaviour has increased in the United Kingdom. Some children come from broken homes and are either victims or exposed to domestic violence (Philp, 2008). “Revenge for loveless and violent upbringings and general disrespect for the children (unique to Britain) are the true motive behind Britain’s wave of teen mayhem” (Philp, 2008: 22).

Children learn that violence is an acceptable behaviour from what they observe and they may believe that fighting and violent behaviour is acceptable in and outside the classroom (Krefting, 2000). They do not learn to negotiate when solving problems but instead they simply lose control of their emotions. This reduces their chance of getting along with their class mates and they may end up not performing the assigned tasks (Krefting, 2000).

Exposure to violence in schools causes anger and aggression, which very often leads to behavioral and discipline problems at school. Some may withdraw and become depressed which seriously affects their ability to concentrate, creates low self-esteem and consequently adversely affects their performance (Medina *et al.*, 2009). Academic performance is also affected in that some violence exposed-children may behave disruptively towards other children in an attempt to cope with anger (Foy *et al.*, 2000: 5)

Shakoor and Chalmers, (1991) state that violent behavior is one of the effects of exposure to violence which leads to frustration, substance abuse and emotional disturbance. This ultimately impacts on the academic performance of young people. According to Margolin *et al.*, (2000), Children’s immediate reactions to community violence are likely to be some combination of helplessness, fear, anger, and high arousal. They are recurring events; over time the child may experience persistent, high levels of arousal that disrupt his or her efforts in age-appropriate academic and social pursuits.

The impact of violence on children does not end in childhood, but is often carried forward into adulthood ((Medina *et al.*, 2009). The long-term consequences of exposure to violence in childhood is seen in that adults exposed to intra-familial violence in childhood are also at greater risk of arrest for violent crimes and for earlier and more chronic involvement in criminal behaviour (Medina *et al.*, 2009).

2.5.3 Psychological Effects

Another effect of violence on children is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder PTSD (Linares *et al.*, 2001). Children who witness acts of interpersonal violence are at high risk of developing a cluster of psychological symptoms related to post traumatic stress (Linares *et al.*, 2001).

If children are victims, they are often exposed to chronic or multiple events (Linares *et al.*, 2001). The situation is aggravated when their mothers show distress in reacting to the same violent events or (as they often do) lack the social support of other understanding adults (Linares *et al.*, 2001). Researchers have determined that both chronic and acute exposure to violence is linked to heightened levels of PTSD symptoms, including diminished concentration, sleep-disturbance, and sudden startling and intrusive thoughts (Merriam, 1998). Hamblen & Goguen, (undated) believe that adolescents with PTSD also experience nightmares, may be easily startled and avoid reminders of the trauma. In addition, they can become depressed, angry, distrustful, fearful and alienated, and they may feel betrayed. Many do not feel they have a future and believe that they will not reach adulthood. Thus, they do not see the need to participate in school activities and the tasks given to them, as a result they fail their tests and assignments. This is especially common among adolescents who are chronically exposed to community violence. Other trauma-related reactions can include impaired self-esteem and body image, learning difficulties and acting out or risk- taking behaviour such as running away, drug or alcohol use, suicide attempts and inappropriate sexual activities (Swartz, 1998).

Traumatized learners struggle to control their feelings and emotions. They may display impulsive rage, revenge, mood swings and violent behaviour (Lane, 2001). A key to understanding children exposed to violence is that all human processes, store, retrieve

and respond to the world according to their individual mental and emotional state. An anxious and stressed learner will be unable to process and store the verbal information the educator is providing and instead will be focusing on non-verbal information such as the teacher's facial expressions, hand gestures and when she seems distracted (Lane 2001).

Further to that, Lane (2001: 6) emphasizes that learners raised in violent environments have learned that non-verbal information is more important than verbal information and their brains have internalized this. These learners can often misinterpret non-verbal communication, for e.g., a teenage boy might perceive making eye contact with him as a threat and this may trigger an aggressive response from him. Some educators have observed that many traumatized learners with which they work are often judged to be bright but cannot learn easily and are labeled as learning-disabled.

School children who are physically abused tend to score lower than non-abused children on tests of verbal ability and understanding, reading and math skills (Hamblen, undated). In addition, children exposed to community violence in general tend to show lower school achievement. The cognitive effect of violence amounts to the fact that those children who experience difficulties with attention and memory may become insensitive to important social clues and expectations and end up finding themselves struggling with school rules and classroom instructions which potentially generates its own set of complexities. Thus the effect of cognitive function may disrupt operating successfully in the school environment (Swartz, 1998). Shakoor and Chalmers (1991) identify deleterious effects on cognition, memory, school performance and learning. These problems are identified as the possible result of exposure to violence. It is possible that violence and co-victimization in youth are not just measures of violence, but may also correlate with poor school performance and learning which are examples of psychic trauma in youth. Lynch (2003) believes that the combination of violence exposure and subsequent symptoms of traumatic stress may create particular challenges for academic achievement. He also states that there is some evidence that children exposed to community violence on a repetitive, ongoing basis can suffer cognitive impairments that lead to poor academic achievement and school failure (Rossman, 1998).

However, Rossman (1998) asserts that number of studies have measured the association between cognitive development problems and witnessing violence especially domestic violence. While academic abilities were not found to differ between witnesses and other children (Mathias *et al.*, 1993), another study found increased violence exposure associated with lower cognitive functioning (Rossman, 1998). One of the most direct consequences of witnessing violence may be the attitudes a child develops concerning the use of violence and conflict resolution. Jaffe, Wilson and Wolfe (1986) suggest that children's exposure to adult domestic violence may generate attitudes justifying their own use of violence. Spaccarelli, Coatsworth and Bowden's (1995) findings support this association by showing that adolescent boys incarcerated for violent crimes who had been exposed to family violence believed more than others that "acting aggressively enhances one's reputation or self-image" (p. 173). Believing that aggression would enhance their self-image significantly predicted violent offending. Boys and girls appear to differ in what they learn from these experiences. Carlson (1991) found that boys who witnessed domestic abuse were significantly more likely to approve of violence than were girls who had also witnessed it.

Dr Beverly Killian, head of the School of Psychology's Child and Family Centre, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg) is of the opinion that life in South Africa is not safe. According to Demi-Dimitriour (2008) there is a victim mentality owing to the extreme amount of violence in South Africa, this he observes, it is not a matter of if one will become a victim but rather a case of when one will become a victim (Demi-Dimitriour, 2008). He states further that children live in a cycle of anxiety and insecurity (which causes stress) that is compounded by crime. This, he explains, means that the types of crime to which children are exposed consist of either single incidents or repeated exposure to violence. Single incidents, he states, may include robbery, hijacking, rape and even bicycle-jacking and repeated trauma may include sexual abuse or exposure to domestic violence. He argues that in order to improve the lives of children who have undergone a violent and traumatic criminal occurrence, the child would need to regain a sense of security. Means by which this may occur are, for example, improving security in addition to ritual measures to show that safety has been restored. An example of a ritual

measure is moving furniture, cleansing ceremony or saying a prayer (Demi-Dimitriour, 2008)

2.5.4 Social effects

According to Ratner et al., (2000) there is a correlation between feeling safe and school performance. For example, children who report feeling safe may perform better than those who do not. Researchers observed relations between exposure to violence, and problems, the way children think about social relationships and their social adjustment in school. Violence-exposed children have been found to be less interpersonally sensitive and attentive to social cues, less competent at social perspective taking, less able to identify other's emotional expressions and to understand complex social roles and more likely to ascribe hostile intentions to the neutral behavior of others. The suboptimal processing of social information may contribute to the problem behavior seen in children exposed to violence (Carole, 2006).

Even children who do not directly suffer or witness violence are affected because they are often indirectly exposed to repeated accounts of specific incidents of violence from, for example, peers and the media. Exposing children to violence, whether directly or indirectly, affects the way they view the world, themselves, their expectation for future happiness and also their moral development (Carole, 2006).

Researchers found that Vietnam War veterans who were exposed to the violence of the conflict were susceptible to numbed responsiveness and social withdrawal. This in turn resulted in a high incidence of divorce, marital discord and domestic violence, high unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse and suicide. Simpson (1978: 498) reports that "Many of these veterans' children, in turn, were adversely affected as secondary recipients of these social problems". Simpson, (1978) further state these findings and argues that Vietnam veterans are known to have disengaged relationships with spouses and families and they have families which present evidence of the relative absence of structure, order and authority, - all of which have an effect on the children from these families (Simpson, 1978).

It seems that the aftermath of apartheid had similar effects on South African children. According to Donald, (1994) apartheid negatively impacted on African children in the form of structurally locating them outside areas easily accessible to employment and adequately resourced schools. He argues that as the Apartheid policies also incited a cycle of community violence, it is important to consider the effects of community violence. Community violence may have similar effects to those discussed in the previous sections. This includes mistrust of adults and increased aggressiveness. Children learn by example and some may feel that violence is justified and see violence as a valid way of dealing with interpersonal conflicts. In this context, Dawes and Tredoux's (1979) study of children exposed to political violence found that the effects of violence on children included changed attitudes to the police. Simpson (1978) adds that this also has effects on socialisation of the young. (Simpson, 1978)

Many young people, aware of the dangers that exist within their communities and schools, feel compelled to make changes in their lifestyles (Johnson, Farkas & Bers, 1997). According the survey done by Johnson about the effect of such awareness and fear of violence and crime and the loss of freedom that results, it appears that of the students interviewed, 29% said that they worried about being victimized in a drive-by shooting, and 46% had made at least one change in daily routines because of concerns about personal safety and crime and violence in their communities. Lists of changes made in daily routines were given as follows:

- changed friends (22%)
- avoided particular parks or playgrounds (20%)
- changed the way they went to or from school (13%)
- carried a weapon (e.g., bat, club, knife, gun) to protect themselves (12%)
- got lower grades in school than they think they otherwise would have (12%)
- stayed home from school or cut class (11%)
- found someone to protect them (10%)

- stopped attending a particular activity or sport (10%).

Johnson *et al.*, (1997), further state that approximately 1 in 8 students changed the way they went to and from school and more than 1 in 10 stayed home from school or cut classes because of concerns about crime and violence in their communities. Such behaviour reveals that many students fear for their personal safety while merely attempting to attend school. Snyder (1997) adds to Johnson *et al.*'s, statement by declaring that learners who live in fear of violence, witness violent acts, or actually become victims of violence suffer an array of consequences ranging from personal injury and debilitating anxiety, that interrupt the learning process, to a pattern of absence and truancy that can lead to dropping out of school and delinquency. Such disassociation restricts individual options and limits the development of academic and life skills (Snyder, 1997)

2.5.5 Emotional Effects

Exposure to violence almost always carries emotional consequences for children. Children's exposure to violence has been linked to depression and a more negative self-concept. Studies have shown that both witnessing and/or being a victim of community violence may put children at risk for increased anxiety and depressive symptoms (Medina *et al.*, 2009). Violence exposure can be interpreted by the child to mean not only that the world is unsafe but also that the child is unworthy of being kept safe. Whether related to violence in the home or in the community, these attitudes can undermine a child's school adjustment and academic achievement by contributing to a negative self-perception and problems with depression and anxiety (Medina *et al.*, 2009).

Medina *et al.*, (2009) also argue that children's efforts to manage the emotional consequences of violence exposure may interfere with school adaptation and academic achievement. Research has shown that children use both behavioural distraction and attention disengagement to cope with uncontrollable stress and reduce anxiety (Carole, 2006). Children's efforts to cope with the symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD may have a deleterious effect on their social awareness, social engagement, ability to solve problems and their attention resources (Medina *et al.*, 2009). Whereas some

children will cope with the emotional toll of violence exposure by isolating themselves and withdrawing from the environment, other children will use behavioural distraction to cope with overwhelming negative emotions. Both coping strategies can create problems in the classroom and on the playground (Carole, 2006).

Other children may respond through anger and temperament (outbursts) problems. They may become more aggressive and act out more frequently. Anger becomes their response to matters that do not warrant it, and the children may begin to lash out against themselves (Carole, 2006). Further to that, the emotional distress that can result from exposure to violence may lead some individuals to engage in behaviors that reduce negative internal states. Some investigators have suggested that substance use may represent one such strategy to cope with the stress produced by violence exposure (Lynch 2003). Research indicates a number of cases where learners were found drunk on school premises and they stated they were trying to forget violent incidences that they found themselves exposed to on daily basis. I would suggest that since parents and educators sometimes do not pay attention to these young people their emotional feelings can turn into violent behaviour. Smith (2010) supports my view by stating that for many young people the only way to get the attention they crave is to behave badly. It is especially so in societies such as Ireland and South Africa with high rates of newly rich people that self-obsessed parents may pay a little attention.

Smith (2010) further explains that South African parents and society only focus on the younger children and do not pay attention to youth or older children because they believe they are used to violence. As a result, children traumatised by one of today's most violent peace-time societies receive no psychological help and have no one to turn to. Some drop out of school and commit various crimes and those who stay at school do not perform very well as they find it hard to concentrate on their school work (Smith, 2010).

2.5.6. Peer Relations

Feelings of insecurity and alterations in social cognition may also affect the peer relations of learners exposed to community violence. A number of studies have demonstrated this, For example, college students who reported having been exposed to high levels of

community violence also reported experiencing a range of interpersonal problems (Scarpa et al., 2002). More specifically, the researchers state that exposure to community violence has been found to be associated with higher levels of peer-nominated aggression.

Traumatized children have fewer resources to deal with developmental and social issues such as making and keeping friends. Scarpa *et al.*, (2002) suggest that as a result of continued exposure to violence they may distrust adults and fear neighbours in their community, their feelings of safety and their confidence in adults may erode or diminish. In addition, children who are exposed to community violence often do not learn to communicate feelings and may be more easily pressured by peers.

There are a number of reasons why children from abusive or maritally violent homes could have social problems. If they are unusually aggressive as a result of parental coercion or abuse (Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990), they might face peer rejection. Aggression, however, is not always a social deterrent. Children who are aggressive might drive some children away, but they also often attract other aggressive playmates (Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman Gest, & Garipey, 1988)

As some authors have noted (Parker, Rubin, Price, & DeRosier, 1995), peer relationships are transactional, with children's styles of play and peer-directed behaviour inviting or discouraging other children. Successful peer relations require "a sense of felt equality in the forms of reciprocity, genuineness, and intimacy" (Mueller & Silverman, 1989: 566). Children who witness or experience domination and abuse in the home might have difficulty constructing such relationships.

2.6 The effects of family/domestic violence

According to Weithorn *et al.*, (1999), children's exposure to domestic violence typically falls into three primary categories: hearing a violent event; being directly involved as an eyewitness, intervening, or being used as a part of a violent event (for example, being used as a shield against abusive actions); experiencing the aftermath of a violent event.

Weithorn *et al.*, (1999) further explains that children who live with domestic violence face numerous risks, such as the risk of exposure to traumatic events, the risk of neglect, the risk of being directly abused, and the risk of losing one or both of their parents. All of these can lead to negative outcomes for children and clearly have an impact on their academic performance and how they interact with others. The lack of empathy for others is shown to them on a daily basis by their abuser, this is what tells them it is acceptable to harm others and not feel any moral compunction in doing so. And by hurting others they lose interaction which then results in them doing school work alone thus leading to poor performance (Bartlett, undated).

Studies have consistently found the presence of three categories of childhood problems associated with exposure to domestic violence. Firstly, behavioural, social, and emotional problems which are expressed as higher levels of aggression, anger, hostility, oppositional behaviour and disobedience; fear, anxiety, withdrawal and depression; poor peer, sibling, and social relationships and low self-esteem (Weithorn *et al.*, 1999). Secondly, cognitive and attitudinal problems which are expressed as lower cognitive functioning, poor school performance, lack of conflict resolution skills, limited problem-solving skills, acceptance of violent behaviours and attitudes, belief in rigid gender stereotypes and male privilege. Thirdly, long-term problems which are expressed as higher levels of adult depression and trauma symptoms, increased tolerance for and use of violence in adult relationships (Weithorn *et al.*, 1999). In addition, Fantuzzo & Lindquist (1989), assert that children who witness physical violence between their parents but are not themselves physically abused may also be more apt to be aggressive. As with internalizing behaviours, it may be possible to trace aggressive outcomes into adulthood.

Weithorn *et al.*, (1999) suggest that children exposed to domestic/family violence may demonstrate poor academic performance and problem-solving skills. Also, children may exhibit behavioural problems such as aggression, phobias, insomnia, low self-esteem and depression. For most children, exposure to domestic violence interferes with their ability to function in school and thus, leads to a decline in their academic performance (Weithorn *et al.*, 1999).

Weithorn *et al.*, (1999) also believe that majority of children who witness domestic violence carry over this exposure to their school life and exhibit a range of disruptive behavioural problems (that is, increase in aggression, social anxieties, difficulties concentrating among others). For a minority of children, however, extra parental support and parental barriers between home and school prevents domestic violence at home from influencing school life. In addition, family violence creates a high risk, stress environment that may make it more difficult for a child to concentrate on homework and work both inside and/or outside the classroom: thus the child falls behind and finds it difficult to get back on track.

“Children learn that violence is a way to deal with anger and conflict and therefore may exhibit behavioral problems at school when interacting with peers and adults’ (Weithorn, *et al.*, 1999: 27). Researchers have documented elevated levels of aggression and externalization problems among maltreated children, particularly among those who have been physically abused. Several studies link “physical abuse with aggressive behavior during play with peers with higher peer ratings of aggression, fighting, meanness, and antisocial behavior and with higher parent and teacher ratings on aggression and externalizing scales” (Margolin & Alena, 2000: 75). Physically abused children have been found to have more disciplinary problems at school than non-maltreated, neglected, or sexually abused children. Physical abuse appears to have a more consistent link with aggression than does neglect or emotional abuse. Physically abused adolescents have been found to be at increased risk for disruptive behaviour disorders (Margolin & Alena 2000).

2.6.1 Possible symptoms in children exposed to domestic violence

According Margolin and Gordis (2000) there are variety of symptoms which are demonstrated by children exposed to domestic violence and these include the following:

- Sleeplessness, fears of going to sleep, nightmares, dreams of danger
- Physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach-aches
- Hyper-vigilance to danger or being hurt

- fighting with others, hurting other children or animals
- temper tantrums or defiant behaviour
- Withdrawal from people or typical activities
- Listlessness, depression, low energy, anxiety
- Feelings of loneliness and isolation
- Current or subsequent substance abuse
- Suicide attempts or engaging in dangerous behaviour
- Poor school performance
- Difficulties concentrating and paying attention
- Fears of being separated from the non-abusing parent
- feeling that his or her best is not good enough
- taking on adult or parental responsibilities
- Excessive worrying
- Bed-wetting or regression to earlier developmental stages
- Dissociation and,
- identifying with or mirroring behaviours of the abuser.

Individual responses can vary considerably, there is no one "typical reaction" to family violence. Some of the problems described, e.g. depression, anxiety, can still be present in their adulthood (Margolin and Gordis 2000).

2.7 Community violence

This section reviews literature specifically on community violence. Community violence is distinguished from other traumatic experiences for its impact on witnesses.

2.7.1 The difference between community violence and other traumatic experiences

Although there are warnings of some traumas, community violence usually happens without warning and comes as a sudden and terrifying shock (Hamblen & Goguen, undated). They consequently argue that communities suffering from violence often experience increased fear and a feeling that the world is unsafe and that harm could come at any time. Although some traumas only affect one individual or a small group of people, they suggest that community violence can permanently destroy entire neighbourhoods. Finally, they note that although some types of trauma are accidental, community violence is intentional, which can lead survivors to feel an extreme sense of betrayal and distrust towards other people. Although the effects that Hamblen and Goguen argue for do not distinguish between adults and children there is no reason to believe that the effects are similar on both.

2.7.2 The effects of experiencing or witnessing community violence

Witnessing or experiencing violence has many effects and they impact greatly on the academic performance of learners both directly and indirectly (Batsche and Knoff, 1994). Therefore, in examining the effects of community violence, it probably is relevant to assess both the individual's direct experience of violence as well as the actual amount of violence that is occurring in the surrounding environment (which the subject may or may not be experiencing directly).

Batche and Knoff (1994) state that community violence, with its associated mental health problems, may affect a child's ability to function effectively at school. Their research demonstrates that increased levels of community violence are associated with decreased academic performance, as measured by grades, standardized test scores, and attendance. Psychological distress secondary to community violence exposure may be one explanation for these findings. However, they report that few studies have examined mental health symptoms as a mechanism through which community violence exposure influences a child's functioning at school.

Hamblen and Goguen, (undated) assert that as is the case with other traumas, individuals often experience PTSD as a result of community violence. PTSD can affect people of all

ages. Although some people think that young children are not psychologically affected by exposure to community violence because they are too young to understand or remember the violence, studies have found post-traumatic symptoms and disorders among infants and toddlers.

Hamblen and Goguen (undated) also state that symptoms expressed by children tend to look different from those expressed by adults. Children with PTSD display disorganized or agitated behaviour and have nightmares that may include monsters. They may become withdrawn, fearful, or aggressive and they may have difficulty paying attention. They may regress to earlier behaviours such as sucking their thumbs and bed-wetting, and they may develop separation anxiety. They may also engage in play that compulsively reenacts the violence. Batsche and Knoff (1994), support these findings by stating that some children may become anxious, fearful or withdrawn - symptoms that are referred to as internalizing problems or taking fears inward. On the other hand, children who witness violence may believe that the use of violence is justified and shows they are strong and powerful. They may learn to use violence to attain their wishes, or to identify with the aggressor as a way to solve interpersonal conflict with the adult world or with their peers. These children, they assert, show externalizing problems, that is, their fears may be expressed outward.

Further, Batsche and Knoff (1994:166) stress that the impact of community violence exposure is not felt by the youth alone. A child's or adolescent's exposure to community violence also affects his or her family. Extreme anxiety concerning the child's health and well-being is a common parental reaction. Resources for parents may be limited, which may lead to frustration and anger. Many parents blame themselves for not protecting their child adequately. They may become overprotective or use punitive discipline in response to their child's trauma-related acting-out behaviour. Relationships among family members can become strained. Parents find themselves having to face the task of reassuring their child. Hamblen & Goguen, add that most of the parents find it more difficult to pay attention to their children, more especially with regards to school work while trying to cope with their own fears, especially if there is a chronic risk for future

community violence. Thus, the parents are unable to assist their children with homework resulting in them failing.

In addition to symptoms of PTSD, Hamblen & Goguen assert that youth exposed to community violence often struggle with the following:

- -how to build trust again (which includes looking at issues of power, empowerment, and victimization)
- -how to find meaning in life apart from the desire for revenge
- -how to find realistic ways to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their homes from danger, and
- -how to deal with feelings of guilt, shame, powerlessness, and doubt.

In general, the research shows that youths are at greater risk for negative psychological effects, such as fear, distress or acting-out aggression if:

- they are victims
- they are exposed to chronic or multiple events, rather than a single isolated event
- their mothers show distress in reacting to the same violent events
- they lack the social support of other understanding adults.

2.8 Violence incidences and types of violence on the school premises

Community violence gives rise to subsets of associated violence that impacts schools. The effects of school violence can be devastating to both individual learners and specific learning environments. Schools that lack effective discipline respect for academic standards, and basic humanitarian values falter in their mission to provide safe and effective learning environments (Snyder, 1997).

School violence has proven to be severe worldwide, we read about many incidences on the newspapers and on television. For instance, according to Van der Merwe? Louise (2010) last year (2009), Johannesburg's King Edward School, which previously boasted

great names among its old boys (Judge Richard Goldstone, business tycoon Tony Bloom and others), saw its reputation tarnished. A father laid charges against four boys after his son was so badly beaten at a KES school party that bones in his face were broken. The writer further states that later that night at a private party, KES boy Mfundo Ntshangase died after being stabbed seven times, allegedly by youths from Athlone Boys' and another unnamed school, after he went to a friend's aid. Five young men aged 16 to 18 appeared in the Randburg Magistrate's Court. The friend, whom Ntshangase reportedly went to assist, was hospitalised with his injuries. This report shows that even though violence occurs in school premises it is linked to or it is due to community violence. Learners engage in grudges outside the school and come and settle it on the school premises, or some start at school and are settled outside the school premises. Like the case of the private party mentioned above. This is what Johnson (1997) is referring to when he states that the roots of violence reach deep into society. Van der Merwe (2010) supports this statement by saying the growing number of violent incidents in schools stems from problems within society.

In his survey, Johnson (1997) stresses that high school seniors reported the following types of victimization at school:

- having something stolen (more than 41%)
- having property deliberately damaged (26%)
- being threatened with a weapon (more than 15%), and
- being threatened without a weapon (more than 23%).

Of these seniors, 4.7 % had been injured with a weapon and 11.4 percent had been injured without a weapon. Schmidt (1994) adds that some of the general categories of school violence include bullying, fighting and assaulting inside or outside the school premises, bringing drugs and other harmful components to the school, sexual harassment, vandalism, robbing or stealing, bringing handheld weapons and firearms inside the school premises, etc. As a result, learning in this kind of environment is impacted severely. These kinds of violence not only affect the learners but the teachers as well. As a result

some of the teachers stop coming to school consequently affecting the performance of learners before exams as some of the chapters will not be covered due to teachers absenteeism. This has particularly serious implications in the case of Gr. 11 and Gr.12 learners

2.9 Coping strategies

Violence has different meanings for victims, and as such there are diverse ways in which they strive to make sense of incidents (Parkes, 2007 as cited in Andries, 2010). Van der Kolk (1989) supports Parks by stating that a threat or traumatic loss can lead to a major shift in an individual's perceptual sensitivities. How an individual interprets an event and copes with it is profoundly influenced by what other individuals in the situation are doing and how they are coping (Van der Kolk, 1989).

To cope with violence and with life at large, van der Kolk (1996), a theorist of development, believes children need to develop the abilities and strategies to understand violence, to respond to and cope with danger, and to harness environmental resources that offer protection and support change .These abilities become refined over the course of development. Moreover, he asserts that as children mature, the skills required in mastering current life challenges rest on competencies acquired earlier in development.

It is important to understand how children cope with social problems. Research has shown that children use both behavioural distraction and attention disengagement to cope with uncontrollable stress and reduce anxiety. They do this by isolating themselves and withdrawing from the environment, or using behavioural distraction to cope with overwhelming negative emotions (Medina *et al.*, 2009). However, both coping strategies can create problems in the classroom and on the playground and children may also see violence as a valid way of coping with interpersonal conflict.

Van der Kolk (1996) suggests that religion fulfils a critical function in providing a sense of purpose in the face of terrifying realities by placing suffering in a larger context and by affirming the commonality of suffering across generations, time and space. Thus, this researcher suggests, religion can help people to transcend the embedded nature of their individual suffering. Andries

(2010: 29) concurs with van der Kolk and also states that a lot of coping strategies for violence-exposed children include a sense of humour, religious coping, making meaning from the situation and relying on supportive peers and adults.

However, some violence-exposed learners use aggressive behaviour as a coping strategy. Aggression can be learned by children in the same way that other behaviours are learned - through a series of experiences. Aggressive behaviour patterns can be established in the individual through learning principles of imitation and reinforcement, which tend to prevent a learner from interacting with others in school (Mdhluli & Zwane, 1995)

Collins (2008) remarks that children who are often victims of violence, often become perpetrators themselves. He also discusses how young people react to violence. According to him, children become “helpers” in that they enter into helping professions such as doctors, social workers or policemen and policewomen in an attempt to improve the state of the country. A third response that children who have experienced violence may give is that they become hopeless and engage in self-destructive behaviour.

Are children with poor coping skills more likely to experience problems than children with strong coping skills and supportive social networks? Van der Kolk (1996) says children who utilize problem-solving strategies targeted directly at the source of disagreement demonstrate fewer maladaptive symptoms. However, other researchers (Sharf, 2001; Aldwin and Yancura 2004, as cited in Andries, 2010: 29) believe that even though some coping strategies are thought to be more positive, no coping strategy should be regarded as either adaptive or maladaptive. The effectiveness of a strategy is due to the degree of fit between coping strategies and the appraisal of a situation. Emotion-focused strategies, however, are less desirable because they often target internal responses to a stressful situation, which can result in less effective coping methods (for example, as van der Kolk, points out, in the case of domestic violence, children fantasize that their parents are “getting along”). Weiten and Lloyd (2006: 5) add to this point by mentioning that some strategies, e.g., problem-focused ones, are generally more likely to yield positive outcomes than others like emotion-focused strategies.

Generally, boys exhibit more “externalized” behaviours (aggression or acting-out) while girls exhibit more “internalized” behaviours (withdrawal or depression). In addition, boys identify more with the male abuser and girls identify more with the female victim; and both may continue these roles throughout life if the issues are not addressed (van der Kolk, 1996).

2.10 Treatments and help available for individuals exposed to violence.

According to Whitman (2007), youth respond to violence in different ways, depending on their gender, age, and past experiences. Each treatment plan should be individualized, age-appropriate and tailored to the young person’s family history.

Hamblen and Goguen (undated) believe that rapid, timely and sensitive care for the community and affected individuals and families is the key to preventing PTSD in the wake of violence. Such care, they say, is also the key to reducing violence itself. They suggest that mental-health professionals with expertise in community violence can contribute in several ways. They can help community leaders develop violence-prevention and victim-assistance programmes. They can help religious, educational, and health care leaders and organizations set up relief centres and shelters. They can provide direct psychological services near the site of violence. These services may include debriefings, a 24-hour crisis hotline, identifying survivors or bereaved family members who are at high risk for developing PTSD, and getting individuals connected with appropriate continuing treatment. Finally, mental-health professionals can often work with teachers at children's schools to provide education, debriefing, and referrals for affected children.

According to Carole (2006), a caring, supportive adult in the child's life can greatly ease a child’s distress. The best reactions will require patience and understanding. They are to:

- spend time with the child and to ensure she/he understands that someone is willing to listen
- encourage the child to talk about the trauma, but do not force him or her to speak
- answer questions honestly in developmentally appropriate language

- be aware that children may develop new problem behaviours in reaction to the trauma.
- seek assistance from friends, family, medical professionals, and mental-health professionals for you and your child.

Carole (2006), also states that there are several forms of individual and group PTSD treatment available for youths. Individual treatment provides a controlled, supportive therapeutic environment while group methods offer validation and help normalize victims' traumatic reactions by encouraging members to share with each other. Cognitive-behavioral group therapy has been shown to be effective for other youth trauma populations, such as those exposed to sexual abuse, and may be applied to community violence populations.

2.11 Prevention and intervention

Prevention programmes are also important to keep community violence from happening (Sanders-Phillips, 1997). This involves gang prevention. Also, programmes can help youth at risk for violence learn how to peacefully solve problems. These programs work better if they happen in early age. Scheeringa and Zeenah (1995) concur with Sanders-Phillips by stating that past research on the intergenerational cycle of violence indicates that adults who were traumatized as children are more likely to commit crimes at a later age. To avoid this repetition, it is important to provide intervention at an early age to children who are exposed to or are victims of community violence. Sanders-Phillips, further points out that these programmes are also better if they are taught in the children's homes and schools. Programmes should also try to prevent high-risk behaviours such as alcohol and drug use and carrying weapons.

Scheerinda and Zeenah (1995) assert that the goals of primary prevention of youth violence, particularly during early childhood, are to help children:

- develop pro-social ways to deal with everyday frustrations and peer conflict
- learn problem-solving skills

- practise non-violent negotiation strategies.

Intervention programs vary. They can take place at the level of:

- the child, particularly the preschooler who has difficulty talking about painful memories and needs the support of a caring adult to feel safe
- the parents, by helping them develop appropriate techniques and enhancing family coping strategies
- the community, by upgrading the services and the quality of the neighborhood.

Intervention programmes may vary by type. They are:

- indicated programmes to focus on children already identified
- selective programmes to focus on high-risk children

By acknowledging the existence of community violence and understanding the added risk to children from domestic violence and other aggressive interactions, we can effectively promote a child's positive outlook on life.

2.11.1 A national campaign to change attitudes toward violence and tolerance of violent behaviour

Osofsky (1995) advocates that in the United States, a public stance should be taken by politicians, policymakers, media leaders and citizens to indicate that violence is socially unacceptable and contradicts America's societal emphasis on humane values, responsibility, and respect for the rights of others. He maintains that the media contribute to the problem of children and youth violence by glamourizing violence, thereby encouraging involvement in violent activities. Therefore, the cooperation of television and the media is needed to change the image of violence in American society from an acceptable and even admirable quality to one that is disdained without tolerance.

2.11.2 A family-centred and community-centred approach that builds on strengths within communities is needed

The encouragement and facilitation of community empowerment and self-determination programs are needed to address the issue of violence prevention Osofsky et.al (1995). Only Osofsky 1995 is in refs. As part of a violence prevention initiative, education, job opportunities and increased family and community support should be provided for all children and youth. Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman (1994) suggest community and family-centred programmes, including churches, schools and other community-based institutions should address issues of violence prevention. They state that children, parents, and communities require multi-institutional support to cope with the violence and trauma they have experienced and suggest that mental health practitioners should share their knowledge of post-traumatic and chronic traumatic stress with children and families

Other researchers say safe homes and neighbourhoods for children and families need to be created and maintained (Whitman, 2007). The coordinated efforts of both communities and law enforcement agencies are required to make neighbourhoods, schools, and playgrounds safe (Osofsky, 1995). Support is needed to build partnerships between child and family services, education, and law enforcement agencies to support parents and families who are both victims of and witnesses to violence in their communities.

2.11.3 Education is needed for parents, educators, law enforcement workers and others

Whitman (2007) advocates that education regarding the negative effects of violence exposure on children and how to help children after this has occurred should be part of professional preparation for all individuals coming into contact with children, including those working in day care centers, schools, law enforcement agencies, parenting education groups workers, teachers, coaches, therapists and shelter staff. He also believes that conflict resolution strategies and alternative approaches to violence in conflicts should be taught as part of all professional preparation. These are the people who can then recognize that a lifetime of exposure to violence may be pervasive in young people's lives.

However, Whitman (2007) also realizes that adolescents may feel embarrassed to talk to adults about what they are going through. He suggests that youth workers can help them feel comfortable using some of the following strategies:

- don't force them to talk if they don't want to
- find out what is making them feel unsafe and help them make a safety plan
- give straightforward explanations for things that are worrying them
- do not downplay their feelings by saying things like
- "Don't worry" or "Everything will be all right"
- do not make commitments that you cannot honour
- look at their options and suggest concrete steps they can take
- help them think of positive ways to keep busy, such

as playing sports, going out with friends, or making art or music.

2.12 Legislation and collaborative national, state and local programmes

Different states develop programmes and legislation working in partnership with local agencies in order to re-establish schools as safe havens and to curb disturbances at schools which result in poor performance. Rose (2000) has summarized these programmes and legislation as follows:

- Nearly all States have developed some sort of crime-free, weapon-free, or safe-school zone statute. Most States have defined the zones to include school transportation and locations of school-sponsored functions.
- The above statutes have given rise to zero-tolerance policies for such things as weapons and drugs. These policies are enforced by school districts and individual schools, often with support from local police forces or school-based resource officers.

- Federal regulations, established in 1994, mandate that all school districts set up programmes to test school bus drivers for drug and alcohol use.
- Schools are forging partnerships with court officials, probation officers and other youth-serving professionals to share information on and monitor students who have criminal records or who are in aftercare programmes following their terms of incarceration in juvenile justice facilities.
- School districts are formulating crisis prevention/intervention policies and are directing individual schools to develop such policies and individual safe-school plans.
- School districts, in response to local needs, have stepped up efforts to improve school security by installing security aids or devices and providing services such as:
 - completing criminal background checks on teachers and school staff members before a work assignment is made
 - establishing Neighbourhood Watch programs in areas near schools.
 - recruiting parents to provide safe houses along school routes and to monitor "safe corridors" or walkways to and from school
 - enlisting parent volunteers to monitor hallways, cafeterias, playgrounds, and school walkways in order to increase visibility of responsible adults
 - creating block safety watch programmes carried out by area residents at school bus stops as a crime deterrent for school children and area residents
 - fencing school grounds to secure campus perimeters
 - replacing bathroom doors with zigzag entrances, to make it easier to monitor sounds, and installing roll-down doors to secure bathrooms after hours
 - designating one main door entry to school, equipping exits with push bars, and locking all other doors to outside entry
 - installing bulletproof windows

- equipping the school with closed-circuit video surveillance systems to reduce property crime such as break-ins, theft, vandalism and assaults
- designing landscaping to create an inviting appearance without offering a hiding place for trespassers or criminals
- installing motion-sensitive lights to illuminate dark corners in hallways or on campus
- mounting convex mirrors to monitor blind spots in school hallways
- equipping classrooms with intercom systems connected to the central school office
- issuing two-way radios to security patrols or campus staff members
- purchasing cellular phones for use in crises or emergency situations
- requiring photo identification badges for students, teachers, and staff and identification cards for visitors on campus.

2.12.1 Safe Alternatives and Violence Education (SAVE)

In addressing the relationship between violence and the media, the realities of weapon possession and the consequences of violence Schmidt, 1994 describes the SAVE programme in the USA. SAVE is a violence-awareness education curriculum designed for 10 to 17-year-old students (and the parents of such students) who are found carrying a weapon on or near a school campus. The programme was designed in 1993 in conjunction with a countywide effort to reduce weapon possession by youth, especially on school campuses. When a student is found in possession of a weapon on, or near a school campus the student and a parent are required to attend the SAVE programme classes.

2.12.2 The Adolescent Social Action Program (ASAP)

Rose (2000) mentions that the University of New Mexico (UNM) uses peer resistance and decision-making training to increase self-efficacy, social responsibility and life skills.

Youth participants engage in social action activities to address conditions that lead to high-risk behaviours, such as substance use and abuse, gangs, and violence. Preliminary research findings indicate a significant impact on the development of positive coping skills, the ability to influence others, and reduced rates in teen drinking behaviours. Programmes like these are needed in South Africa and most especially in rural areas. Training our youth about life skills can assist them to cope with the violence they are exposed to and this can help in reducing the effects that violence has on their performance.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the research. The research will be guided by Wolfgang *et.al* (1967) theory of the “Culture of Violence” and Sutherland’s (1974) “Differential Association” theory.

3.2 Theory of the “Culture of Violence”

The culture of violence theory argues that “within large and complex societies, sub-groups learn and develop specialized norms and values through differential associations and organizations that emphasize and justify the use of physical force above and beyond that which is regarded as ‘normative’ of the culture as a whole” (Wolfgang *et.al*, 1967: 2). The theory also maintains that aggression and violence in societies, for example, are used during childhood socialization as means of securing youngsters’ obedience and conformity both within the family and society as a whole. However, while violence in families and in societies is considered as the means of socializing young people, the effects that the violence has on young people may remain unidentified or undiscovered, due to the fact that it is considered normal (acceptable). Children may therefore not complain or report it as they may be seen as disrespectful. Even when they are abused by other children, they cannot report the incident as they will be considered cowards or may be punished by their parents. These theorists think that the disproportionately high rates of violence among blacks can be put down to a black subculture of violence. They propose that among blacks in the U.S., there is a subculture of violence in which there is "a potent theme of violence current in the cluster of values that make up the life-style, the socialization process, the interpersonal relationships of individuals living in similar conditions" (Wolfgang *et.al*, 1967: 140).

In addition, Barak, (2003) states that probably the most familiar of these social learning theories is the intergenerational transmission of family violence explanation: that people who have witnessed or suffered physical family violence when growing up have a greater

likelihood of living in a violent domestic situation later in life. He adds that there are also associations between those people who have been sexually abused, especially boys, becoming sexually abusing teenagers and adults.

According to the culture of violence theory, affected individuals, regardless of their particular origin of violence, suffer from some kind of physiological and/or psychological imbalance(s) expressed by combinations of obsessive ideation, compulsive repetition, poor impulse control, rapid desensitization to violence, diminished affective reactivity, failure to adapt to changing stimulus-reinforcement associations, hyper dependence, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, paranoia, dissociation from their own feelings, anti-social tendencies, failure to empathize and a fear of intimacy (Wolfgang *et.al*,1967). The theory indicates that even though violence is normalized it does have effects on people.

This theory is appropriate for this particular kind of study, as it gives clues as to what causes violence and what accelerates it. In the Swayimane community some forms of violence are considered to be normal, this leads to the exaggeration of masculinity by young people and ends up as violence being taken to the street. This theory is very crucial to this study as it indicates that black culture/Zulu culture in rural areas does encourage violence.

In addition, according to the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (2011), “given our history, given our experience of violence ... we have begun to see violence as normative. We see it as acceptable to use violence ... we see it as legitimate”. It is for this reason that most of youth today are very violent because they have inherited violence from the society and families of which they are a part.

3.3 “**Differential Association**”

Another important theory of significance to this study is Sutherland’s Theory of Differential Association. Sutherland (1974) alleges that just as societal norms are learned through social interaction and observance, so too are social deviations. The theory states that criminal behaviour is learned behaviour and it is learned via social interaction with others. An individual’s direct interaction with others who engage in certain kinds of behaviour (criminal/deviant or conforming) exposes the individual to the norms, values,

and attitudes supportive of these behaviours which affects the decision of whether the individual opts to participate in a particular behaviour (Sutherland, 1974: 12).

As do most social learning theories, the Differential Association Theory, believes that the behaviours of an individual are influenced and shaped by other individuals with whom they associate. The primary reference group is that of the nuclear family that the individual lives and grows up with (Sutherland, 1974: 11). It is believed that these interactions formulate the individuals understanding of societal norms and values. It is then assumed that if the individual is capable of learning what is acceptable in society, they are also capable of learning what is considered unacceptable (Sutherland, 1974: 12).

According to the theory, “the associations that occur early (priority); last longer or occupy a disproportionate amount of one’s time (duration); happen the most frequently; and involve the intimate, closest, or most important partners/peer groups (intensity) will likely exert the greatest effect on an individual’s decision to participate in either conforming or Non-conforming behaviour” (Sutherland, 1974: 12). Leighninger *et.al* (1996), support Sutherland by stating that differential associations vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity. Referring to the contact an individual must have with proponents of criminal behaviour; this principle suggests that there is a varying, but direct relationship that affects how often, for what length of time, how important and how intense deviant behavior occurs.(Leighninger *et.al*, 1996: 4)

In addition, Akers and Jensen, (2006) also state that when criminal /violent behaviour is learned it includes techniques of committing the crime, for example, corporate crimes. What explains certain behaviours are the specific motives, drives, rationalizations and attitudes, for example, theft- or rape-taught specific attitudes. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favourable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of law (Akers & Jensen, 2006). Moreover, Leighninger *et.al* (Eds) add that because an individual associates with more members of a group who favour deviance, than with members of a group who favour societal norms, that individual is more inclined to act defiantly.

Akers and Jensen, (2006) also propose that individuals are exposed to pro-criminal and pro-social norms, values and definitions as well as patterns of reinforcement supportive of criminal or pro-social behaviour. The more an individual is differentially associated and exposed to deviant behaviour and attitudes transmitted by means of his/her primary and secondary peer groups, the greater his/her probability is for engaging in deviant or criminal behaviour. Most of the young people look up to their friends and brothers; they see them as their role models. They then imitate them; gradually following in their path and on their way they harm those who are of their age as they are also trying to show off. Thus, they end up emulating and living the lives of their role models. This can probably be explicitly explained by the theory of imitation. The theory maintains that observers tend to imitate modelled behaviour if they like or respect the model, see the model receive reinforcement, see the model give off signs of pleasure, or are in an environment where imitating the model's performance is reinforced. Furthermore, an individual's decision to engage in crime or deviance after watching a violent television show for the first time or observing his friends attack another peer for the first time provides the key social context in which imitation can occur.

The main argument of Akers and Jensen's theory is that the behaviours are learned. For example, family violence is transmitted from generation to generation, which means that people who have witnessed or suffered physical family violence when growing up have a greater likelihood of living in a violent domestic situation later on in life. There are also associations between those people who have been sexually abused, especially boys, becoming sexually abusing teenagers and adults.

Furthermore, Sutherland (1974) asserts that criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with others in a process of communication. From the moment an individual is born they are being conditioned as to the norms of society. They learn gender roles through their interactions with their parents and observations of gender specific characteristics (Sutherland 1974: 5). Interaction and observations are the same methods of communication through which criminals learn their deviance. Criminal behaviour, the Differential Association Theory argues, is more prevalent in individuals who associate

and interact with individuals who exhibit criminal mind-sets and behaviours (Sutherland 1974: 5).

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research design and the empirical techniques applied. The chapter will outline how the data was obtained, the sampling method used, as well as the data collection and analysis techniques. An ideal plan for collecting and utilizing data was important in this study in order that desired information could be obtained with sufficient precision. The sampling method used was purposive sampling and the main data collection techniques used for this research study were interviews and focus group discussion. The data analysis was done thematically using the themes emerging from the data.

4.2 Nature of the study

The study was principally qualitative and therefore focused on interviews (semi-structured) and focus group discussion of selected groups of learners in Swayimana High School. The reason for using qualitative approach was that according to Lankshear and Knobel (2004), qualitative research is concerned with the meanings and processes. Researchers in this field study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people attach to them.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004), further assert that qualitative research is concerned with the way people experience, understand, interpret and participate in their social and cultural worlds. In addition, there is an emphasis on gathering data in “real life situations or natural settings”. The context in which the research is conducted is also very important as is providing rich, detailed descriptions of people in action, specific programmes or social practices.

4.3 Profile of Swayimana

This study was conducted at Swayimane High School in Swayimana, a rural area in uMshwathi municipality. UMshwathi Municipality is located on the North East Quadrant of the uMgungundlovu District Municipality in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. It is one of the seven local municipalities in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality. It has the second largest population of the seven (after uMsunduzi). Wartburg, New Hanover, Dalton, Cool-Air and Claridge are its urban towns. With a population of 113 054 people according to the 2007 census, the uMshwathi Municipality is comprised of 11 wards representing a range of predominantly rural settlements, from municipal service centres, agricultural landscapes, industrial, semi-rural to rural residential settlements. Development intensity and need particularly, housing varies across the different settlement types in the municipality. UMshwathi Municipality accounts for approximately 1 811 km² of land area in the district and has the second largest population after uMsunduzi (uMshwathi Municipality IDP, 2008/2009).

Swayimana location is the biggest of all the locations in Umshwathi Municipality which is largely occupied by the Zulu-speaking people. The main business activity in this area is agriculture and more specifically sugar cane, timber and maize. Other agricultural activities include: poultry, pig farming, abattoirs, feedlots, mixed vegetables, avocado pears and flowers. However, it not all Swayimana residents who have access to such resource, it depends on the land one has and the manpower at one's disposal. There are also some residents who do not grow crops because of the limited land and resources. As a result, some end up stealing from others in order to survive as there are no job opportunities in the area. Even those who grow crops struggle to make money when it not ready for them to sell, as they depend on it.

One of the reasons that influenced my choice of study was the realization that most of the research in the field is not done in rural regions because rural zones are seen as safe havens, unaffected by violence. However, this is far from the truth and such assumptions contribute to a situation where the effect of violence on school learners is unknown.

The choice to sample the school was based on the observations regarding school violence.

As this was a sensitive issue, I did not want to be seen as meddling in community affairs but rather as an educator trying to inform people about the severity of violence (serious or not) and about the procedures to eradicate the problem in the area (by immediately informing the SAPS or community policing forums).

4.4 Sampling

Sampling is defined as a “process of selecting units from a population of interest so that by studying the sample the results may be fairly generalized back to the population from which they were chosen” (Venter & Strydom, 2002). Sampling is essential because it helps in making generalizations about particular populations regardless of the size.

A sample can help the researcher to save time, money and effort in producing an accurate study. The larger the population the more difficult it is to analyze the data, thus it makes sense to use a sample as it enables the researcher to utilize resources better. (Venter & Strydom, 2002). The sample size of this study was twenty (20) respondents while the data was collected using the non-probability sampling technique. The learners selected were from different grades, that is, from Gr. 11 to Gr. 12. Age of the learners was from 16 to 19 years. The sample included both male and female participants. The twenty participants were selected purposively with the help of the teachers as they were the ones who were familiar with the learners. Purposive or Judgmental sampling techniques are used in special situations; it uses the judgment of the researcher or expert to select the sample (Neuman, 2000). There are situations in which the researcher would consider using purposive or judgmental sampling methods; one is when the researcher uses it to select cases that are specifically informative (Neuman, 2000). Another situation is when the information the subject can supply is relevant to the study, for example, in this study teachers selected those learners they knew who were exposed to violence, and thus, would give relevant information.

The study utilized the “young person” centred approach, because even when applied on a small sample size it is advantageous. Firstly, the type of information that is gathered is

more in-depth, because it allows the young person to set the agenda and direct the pace of the interview. Secondly, the advantage of using a small sample is that it helps to critically compare what victims say in comparison to what others (such as parents or peers) say in the young person's life about the violent experiences.

4.5 Research instruments

The two research instruments that were used were employed in this study were focus group discussions and Individual interviews. The focus group allows people to give more information as they witness that they are not the only ones with violence experience. The interviews were all semi- structured and the researcher used open ended questions to allow the participants to lead the interview. The interview was young people centred and not adult centered. I chose this approach because I wanted to address children as experts and authorities on their own experiences. This is important in the sense that it allows the participants to open up to the interviewer, feel at ease and provides a platform for them to voice individual experiences and concerns. In addition, there has been little research of this nature that has been conducted. As a result of this approach, the participants and the researcher established a relatively comfortable and open relationship.

4.5.1 Administration of interview schedule

“Interviews are planned, prearranged interactions between two or more people, where one is responsible for asking questions pertaining to a particular theme or topic of formal interest and other(s) is responsible for responding to the questions” (Lankshear and Knobel 2004: 198). With tool-gathering data Carpecken (1996) advocates interviewers take the opportunity to:

- generate content about an event from insider perspective
- check the honesty, the certainty and the exact meaning of the subject's reply in a face-to-face interview.
- access a person's definitions and understandings of concepts and processes that are of interest to the researcher

- analyze both verbal and non-verbal responses.
- give immediate clarity if the interviewee was uncertain in his or her reply
- follow-up questions, which can arise, to provide detailed and/or specific answers
- tap into belief, values, worldviews and the like on the part of the interviewee.

Interviews were conducted with the 20 participants, both males and females during the month of May, 2010. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain information on the effects of violence on learner's academic performance in Swayimana. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to gain in-depth responses from the participants without intimidating them with the formal procedures.

Another intended outcome of conducting these interviews was an attempt to gain an understanding of how the learners interpret their violence experiences with regard to the meanings they attach to the terms and concepts associated with violence exposure. These interviews were conducted by the researcher.

The interview schedule was written in English (see appendix 2), however, it was administered through translation into Zulu. This guaranteed that respondents would give more information through an expression of their feelings, attitudes and understanding of the subject matter. This proved very effective as it allowed the researcher to better access the respondents' perceptions on violence and its effect in the area under study.

The time of participation was negotiated between the participant, school teachers and the researcher, which mainly ensured that the interviews were scheduled at the time convenient for learners. Thus, the interviews were mainly conducted during the non-teaching time not during the breaks since break is their time. The venues for interviews were also negotiated with the learners, although the learners preferred the classrooms as venues they are used to, rather than offices. Thus, this allowed for a comfortable and non-threatening environment.

4.6 Focus group discussion

A focus group “involves several participants in a group discussion, often with a facilitator whose goal is to keep the group discussion targeted on a specific topic” (Mackey & Gass, 2005: 356). These individuals are expected to give opinions on a particular subject matter. Focus group discussions provide qualitative data through discussions with the help of a mediator who directs and controls the discussion (Breakwell, Hammond, Fife-Schaw & Smith, 2006). The selection of participants in focus group discussions is done either randomly to ensure representation of segments of society, or non-randomly in order to elicit specific data (Morgan, 1997; Breakwell et al., 2006).

Denzin and Lincoln, (1994) summarized the more common uses of focus groups as follows:

- obtaining general background information about a topic of interest
- generating research hypotheses that can be submitted to further research and testing using more quantitative approaches
- stimulating new ideas and creative concepts
- diagnosing the potential for problems with a new programme, service or product
- generating impressions of products, programs, services, institutions, or other objects of interest
- learning how respondents talk about the phenomenon of interest which may facilitate quantitative research tools

Most focus groups consist of between 6-12 people. Merton, Fiske and Kendall (1990: 137) suggest that "the size of the group should manifestly be governed by two considerations: it should not be as large as to be unwieldy or to preclude adequate participation by most members nor should it be so small that it fails to provide substantially greater coverage than that of an interview with one individual". In this particular research, each focus group discussions were composed of five people. Two separate focus groups were conducted, one consisted of males and the other consisted of females. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994), stress that smaller groups (four to six people) are

preferable when the participants have a great deal to share about the topic or have had intense or lengthy experiences with the topic of discussion.

Merton *et al.*, (1990) believe that one group is never enough as you may be observing the dynamics of that group and little else. Some studies require that several (three to four) groups are convened. Therefore, two focus group discussions of learners were conducted purposively. The types of question asked were open-ended questions; the purpose was to allow the participants to tackle the questions from a wide range of dimensions.

4.6.1 The discussion

It is important for the researcher to build rapport in the focus group discussions. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) suggest that it is a good idea to have group members introduce themselves and tell a little about themselves. This method can help "break the ice". The recommended pattern for introducing the group discussion includes the welcome, overview of the topic, ground rules and the first question (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). This method was applied in this research and it encouraged participation from the learners since they felt like they really knew each other after introducing themselves.

4.6.2 Collection data

According to Stewart and Shamdasani (1990), tape recorders are invaluable for focus group discussions; however they are prone to pick up background noises. The microphones and recorder should be set up prior to the interview and should be visible to participants. The moderator should encourage participants to speak one at a time to avoid garbling the tape. However, Howe and Lewis (1993) suggest that members of the group need to identify themselves before they speak in a taped interview. Data for this particular research was collected through this method, but despite being told to speak one at a time participants sometimes forgot and often spoke simultaneously.

4.6.3 Data analysis

Thematic analysis is a process of analyzing data using themes emerging from the data (King, 2003). It is a method used for "identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data" (Boyatzis, 1998 as cited in Braun and Clarke, 2006: 79). It does

so by “minimally organizing and describing the data set in rich detail and may go as far as interpreting various aspects of the research topic” (Boyatzis, 1998 as cited in Braun and Clarke, 2006: 79). Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed using themes emerging from the data collected. For instance, during transcription of conversations, patterns of experiences we listed, e.g. paraphrasing common ideas. Then all data that relate to the already classified patterns was identified. The identified patterns were then expounded on and all of the talks that fitted under the specific pattern were identified and placed with the corresponding pattern. Then the next step was to combine and catalogue related patterns into sub-themes. And these themes that emerged from the participants stories were then pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience. I then kept referring back to the literature in order to link it with the findings.

4.7 Ethical considerations

Just like in any research or study, this study had many ethical considerations to make. These ethical considerations are discussed in the proceeding paragraphs.

4.7.1 What do ethical considerations entail?

According to Simons and Usher (2000), ethical issues can be viewed as imminent in any act of knowledge production. They assert that ethical issues are related to issues of rightness and justifiability, especially as they concern relations with others or consequences for others. This actually implies that the researcher should act responsibly. It includes respect for self and others; due consideration for social justice, human rights norms and expectations interaction in a manner that does not exploit or harm others; and where there is conflict between various norms or values, to seek balance between these. Essential conflicts are inherent in ethical considerations but rather than viewing these as a deterrent, the researcher should embrace such conflicts as they direct him or her towards seeking some sort of resolution in the research process.

According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999), ethics is a situated practice and ethical principles are best discussed in concrete situations as there are a multitude of factors that can make a difference in particular contexts. Broad principles or codes to guide ethical decision-making are important as they provide an essential framework and reference

point for checking integrity and consistency of our actions (others). This therefore fosters the building of trust and they also need to be interpreted and applied in context, taking into account not only the politics but the interactions of specific persons and the relationships that are present in the study.

Simons and Usher (2000) contend that the research must be rational and virtue oriented. Values should be approached critically, that is, the facts, the methodology used, the theories and procedures employed in the research process should also be approached critically. Researchers need to explicitly reveal their values, assumptions and procedures as these invariably influence the research process. An ethical approach that advocates constant questioning, with an open grasp both of self and the other, is highly desirable.

Ethically, issues needed to be taken into consideration since this particular study dealt with the learners who were under 18 years. Informed consent forms were given to parents before the research was conducted, and the informed consent from the Principal was obtained (see appendix 3, 4, 5). But most significantly, the interviews and the focus groups were conducted in the presence of the school counselor who availed herself in order to assist in case the learners experienced trauma.

4.7.2 Procedure followed

Simons and Usher (2000), see gaining access as an important first stage in planning any educational research. Gaining access was not a problem at all because I am a former student of the school under study and also a member of Swayimana community. Therefore for access I visited the school and spoke with the school principal about my research. We set and discussed aboutt how and when to start the research. The principal then granted me the acces because he knew me as well as the other teachers , namely, the school principal.. The principal and the school teachers knew me very well as I was a very active learner, and also because I am still assisting in the school. As a member of a University of KwaZulu-Natal student's dynamics, I visit high schools, give career guidance and assist students with applications. The fact that the participants were familiar with me made the establishment and maintenance of a trusting relationship easier to formulate and sustain.

Identified respondents were interviewed of their own will following an explanation of the research project and signing/reading out of the consent letter. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the area and through focus group discussions at the beginning of May to the end of May, 2010.

4.7.3 Responsiveness to other

According to Simons and Usher (2000), responsiveness refers to the researcher/participant relationship. The relationship of the researcher with all the parties associated in the research is of significance in this regard.

My role as a researcher as well as a community member enabled me to deal with sensitive issues that had arisen in the process with a greater degree of empathy than any other outsider researching in this particular school. Being part of the community and as a former learner at the school under study, I was able to identify with the concerns and challenges faced by the participants in the study. Likewise, they were able to identify with me. This reciprocal relationship allowed for easier access to participants and data. Establishing a mutual relationship of trust was consequently much easier than it would have been, had I chosen to conduct the research at any other school.

4.7.4 Informed consent

According to Simons and Usher (2000), informed consent implies participants to be free of coercion or deception and having an understanding of the following: the process by which the data is to be collected; the intended outcome of the research process; the uses of the research; and as individuals or groups, having the capacity and competence to consent.

Simons and Usher (2000) view informed consent as a dialogue, where each participant in the study is informed of the purpose of the study and assured of confidence from other persons in the setting, whose private information might enable their identification, and the protection of the informants from the general public. In this study all the participants were made aware of the purpose of the study. They were also made familiar with the data collection procedure. This involved informing them of the tools and instruments to be

used in the collection of data. The participants were also requested to express their concerns and raise any questions that may emerge in the research process. In addition, I assured them of confidentiality and anonymity in the data collection process, as well as in the reporting of the research. This was done by informing them that their information will not be discussed or revealed to anyone without their permission. And they were also assured that they cannot be identified by anyone as the researcher will be using pseudo names not their real names and all the recording will be stored secretly where no one can access them.

Furthermore, the participants were encouraged to be open about withdrawing their participation if they were not comfortable with any request made on them during the process of data collection. They were also reminded them that their participation in research was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time.

4.8 Limitations of the study

Some limitations were evident during the study and these were cautiously monitored in order that validity and reliability were not compromised.

In order to investigate the effects of violence on learner's academic performance in Swayimana, I had to first obtain permission from the Swayimane School principal and also ask permission from the parents of the participants. This consequently became a time-consuming process. Although permission was granted by the principal, parents of some selected participants were not willing to give their informed consent, and as a result new participants had to be selected and lot of time was consumed during this process. This researcher also had to wander the area and walk long distances to reach some of the parents because they had to be made to understand the purpose of the research before they give their consent.

Even though most of the participants were familiar with me as a researcher who is also a community member, they were not comfortable and some were shy to share their experience(s) in the presence of others in focus group discussions. Thus, I had to select those who were shy and do individual interviews, this also consumed a lot of time.

Another limitation was that the research was delayed due to the nationwide teacher's strike that transpired this year August, 2010 when teachers, as well as learners, were not in schools. Therefore, I had to wait for the strike to finish to continue with the interviews. This took a lot of time on my side.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter offered a critical examination of the methodology used in the study. It also offered the rationale for employing qualitative mode of inquiry, the merit and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, discusses and analyzes the findings of the study conducted to investigate the effects of violence on young people's academic performance in the Swayimane area. The data is first presented, discussed and analysed using the information obtained through interviews and focus group discussions. For instance, During transcription of conversation, patterns of experiences we listed, e.g. paraphrasing common ideas. Then all data that relate to the already classified patterns was identified. The identified patterns were then expounded on and all of the talk that fitted under the specific pattern were identified and placed with the corresponding pattern. Then the next step was to combine and catalogue related patterns into sub-themes. And these themes that emerged from the participants stories were then pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience. I then kept referring back to the literature in order to link it with the findings. Names used in the discussion to aid analysis are not the real names of the interviewees.

5.2. Forms of violence witnessed/experienced by respondents

According to the findings of this study, four types of violence were identified by the learners, either experienced as direct victims or as witnesses. Of all the learners who were interviewed, nine out of 10 of the learners have been direct victims of violence while the one out of 10 of the interviewed learners was a witness to violence. Furthermore, of all those who experienced violence as direct victims, seven out of 10 interviewed learners experienced domestic violence, one out of 10 rape and another one out of 10 fighting (a fight with another person). However, one out of 10 of the interviewed learners was a witnesses to violence (robbery).

Sibusiso, a boy who experienced violence said:

Yes I have experienced violence. I had a fight with some boys who are my neighbors because they beat my younger brother for refusing

to be sent to the shop. I confronted them and they asked me what I was going to do about it. For me as a guy that is an insult and that's how the fight started.

Within the community, these respondents experienced or witnessed murder, fighting, robbery, rape and physical violence among couples. Within school grounds, the learners experienced or witnessed stabbing, fighting and bullying.

According to them, there seems to be a difference, however, in the nature of fights boys and girls get into. Female learners mostly engaged in fights because of intimate relationship issues, very unlike boys' fights. The girls fight amongst themselves over boys or are beaten up by their "boyfriends". However, they are also beaten up by their brothers and parents or guardians. It must be noted here that according to the findings of this study, female learners rarely engage in fights as perpetrators unless for the reasons of rivalry in intimate relationships. For instance, Buhle, an 18 year old girl had this to say:

...I was beaten by my boyfriend

It was revealed from focus group discussions that bullying is also very common among learners (both boys and girls) in school. For this analysis, however, bullying is classified under fighting because it is through fighting that learners are bullied. Thus learners establish ranks among themselves from the strongest to the weakest and the weaker learners are bullied.

All the learners were victims of violence either directly or as a witness. Four types of violence were identified and they include domestic violence, rape, robbery and fights. It seems that girls come out as easy targets for robbery or rape. This could be attributed to the fact that most girls are vulnerable physically because they are not strong enough to fight back to defend themselves or they are not fast enough to run away from their perpetrator. Nothando said that thugs target girls and women because they are soft and fearful. Thugs rob them of their cellphones and money.

The most common form of violence among the learners is fighting which they experience in their families among siblings, at school among learners as well as among community members. These fights can be fatal sometimes in that, as revealed by the learners, some

people use sharp instruments (like pencils and knives) to stab their opponents. It was also revealed that families encourage violence amongst boy children as a way of commanding respect as well as a form of showing masculinity. This indicates how common or rampant violence is in the Swayimane area. This situation where there is rampant violence in the Swayimane area could be attributed to the Zulu culture which promotes childhood violence in the form of “stick fighting”. The significance of stick fighting is to teach children to be independent and when they are much older, it signifies that a boy can take responsibility such as herding cattle or marrying: both of which demand that the man should be protective of his possessions or household. Stick fighting also commands respect among peers for those who are victorious. Thus violence is considered normal in most families. In this way, the findings of this study conform to the theory of a “Culture of Violence” (Wolfgang et.al 1967).

The situation of rampant violence in Swayimana can also be attributed to the long period of time spent in the fight for the liberation of South Africa from the apartheid government. According to Hunt (2003: 154) “during apartheid any act that helped render a ‘community’ ungovernable - acts that would now be considered criminal - were perceived by the community to be a form of political protest. Therefore apartheid criminalized any form of politics and the liberation struggle politicized crime”. Violence was normalized and justified especially by the apartheid government and most of the people in South Africa were actively involved in the fight for freedom. The decades of violence have impacted on the people in such a way that violence is normalized. In addition, the apartheid violence has been passed onto younger generations who probably were babies or not yet born in the apartheid era. This is explained by the Theory of Differential Association which maintains that behaviours are learned - for instance, violence can be passed on from generation to generation (Akers & Jensen., 2006). Thus, the learners of Swayimane area, like many other children in South Africa, could have learned violence from their parents, guardians, brothers, community members or even their role models (such as famous freedom fighters). As it is portrayed in their community, conflict resolution is done using violence, discipline is instilled using violence, socializing also involves violence and even the thieves use violence to scare off the people so that they can get what they want. These findings are similar to what Lyre

(2007) believes; that ‘... in cultures that are accustomed to war and repression for a long time, violence is seen as fun...’ Thus people grow up playing dangerously believing that they are having fun and consider a disastrous end to their play as “bad luck”. In addition, children may also grow up believing that violence is the only way to resolve conflict.

The other perspective to the situation in Swayimana is the influence of the media on residents and learners. The familiarity of learners with violence could be attributed, in part, to the violence they see in the media. It is possible also that some of the learners could be getting ideas from what they see on television, newspapers and magazines, and what they hear on radio. For instance, some learners who were interviewed reported that:

...some people come to school with knives and other sharp things which they use to scare off their friends and sometimes use during fights.

Medina et al., (2009) claim that exposure to violence can be related to the inability of learners to regulate anger, frustration and other negative feelings. It also causes them to fail to empathize with the feelings of others and thus may engage in violence. Krefting (2000) also believes that exposure to violence makes children learn through observation that violence is acceptable both in and outside the classroom. This, therefore, results in the failure for such children to solve disputes using dialogue because violence is seen as the only way out. This knowledge can be applied to the learners of the Swayimane community who have lived all their lives seeing violence in their homes, community and schools. The fact that fighting is very common among learners means that they could be failing to manage their anger and/or tend to take out their frustrations from home on their fellow learners.

5.3 Perpetrators of violence

According to the learners, violence in the community is perpetrated by the same community members; in other words known community members initiate violence. Within families, family members perpetrate violence and in schools, fellow learners initiate and perpetrate violence. However violence is also perpetrated by strangers (people from other communities). This study revealed that the age group between 15 and

50 were the perpetrators of violence. Of this age group, males account for most of the perpetrators of violence.

Sam, a 17-year-old female had this to say:

...I am staying with my mum and step father...when he [stepfather] is drunk he hits us for no reason.

Paul, a learner in the Swayimane area had this to say about violence:

My brother is very violent especially when he is drunk. He beats everyone in the house particularly my sisters saying that they are old enough and hence should leave the house because they are even lazy to cook.

Another 18-year-old girl, Angela said:

...I was beaten by my boyfriend.

Ruth also had an experience of violence, this is what she said:

I was raped.....he is a neighbour...both males and females are perpetrators, it's just that people are not aware of females' deviance. I am saying this because the girls, who are my friends, actually arranged for me to be raped because they did not like the fact that I was still a virgin and they were not.

Learners are also victims of violence against elderly people within the community and sometimes the perpetrators are strangers. For instance, Thobeka, an 18-year-old learner experienced violence at school with the perpetrators being strangers. This is what she said:

....a group of tsotsis [thugs] came to school looking for my sister but they couldn't distinguish her from me so they started chasing us on the school premises until the police came.

It has been established that the perpetrators of violence are either strangers or known people. Among the known perpetrators of violence are parents or guardians, brothers, fellow community members like neighbours, friends and even other learners. Strangers find their way into school grounds and attack learners. Learners also perpetrate violence in the form of fights which at times become deadly due to the weapons used in fighting.

Men are mostly the perpetrators of violence and this finding is consistent with the findings of Abrahams et al., (2009) whose research revealed that men were the main perpetrators of violence.

5.4 Reporting of violence

According to the findings of this study, four out of 10 interviewed learners never reported their experiences of violence, two out of 10 reported to their school teachers while another 2 out of 10 learners reported to the police. However, only one out of 10 learners interviewed reported to their parents while another one out of 10 learners interviewed reported to their brothers and fathers.

Reporting of violence to authorities whether at home or school depends on the seriousness of the injuries caused. For instance, Njabulo, a male 11th grader said:

Honestly, I usually do not report, I only talk about it when I am with my friends and if I can fight I fight along with my friends. Reporting is considered to be for cowards. Even other guys only report when something is stolen or someone is threatening you with a gun and you report to the police.

For male learners fights are seen as normal and part of their growing up process and therefore they would not report their fights to the authorities at school or to their parents. This finding is similar to what Wolfgang *et al.*, (1967) meant when they said “violence is considered as a means of socializing young people” and therefore the learners do not complain or report as they may be seen as disrespectful. However male learners report violence only when they have been badly injured or if someone used a weapon on them. Learners as a whole do take the initiative to report violence to the police, teachers or their parents. For instance, Blose, a Gr. 11 learner, who was mugged by a few men, reported his case to the police.

Most domestic violence goes unreported due to the attitude of the police towards domestic violence. The police consider domestic violence as “family disputes” which should be dealt with at home. In addition, domestic violence is usually difficult to report because the victims end up withdrawing the charges after reporting to the police. For

instance, Sam a Gr. 11 learner, who is usually beaten up together with everyone in the house by the step father, had the following to say:

I used to call the police at home but I do not anymore because my mother always drops the charges and sometimes she denies such a thing (violence) occurred at home. Then I end up looking like a fool for calling the police.

Such reactions to police reports by victims could be the contributory factor to the attitude of the police towards domestic violence.

Some people, however, do not report violence because of the nature of dispute in which they are involved. For instance, Buhle, an 18-year-old female learner who was beaten up by her boyfriend had this to say:

...I have never reported any of this because of the fact that I have an affair and it is not acceptable both in school and at home.

Due to the nature of “female learner-violence”, female learners do not report to their parents, teachers or police unless they have been injured so badly that they cannot hide it. However, boys fight about anything and are the perpetrators of violence. They engage in fights, and sometimes they join fights to help their friends while at other times they fight on their own with other boys. This kind of violence is not reported as well, unless the injuries caused are serious.

Another perspective of violence reporting is that experienced by Ruth, a Gr.e 12 female learner who was raped by a neighbour. When asked whether she reported it to anyone she said:

My mother heard that I was raped but not from me, whoever told her said I ‘slept’ with a guy and so she was not supportive. She did not ask me but she just yelled at me and called me names. ... I kept it to myself because I believed that since my own mother who carried me in her womb for 9 months never believed me so no one else will ever believe me.

Some learners do not report violence simply because the people they believed care enough to believe them simply do not show any concern, care or worry. Therefore, they rationalize that since their parents or relatives cannot believe them how can a stranger

believe their story? Thus, reporting of violent experiences is not guaranteed by the learners, but it all depends on the circumstances surrounding the violence. Such circumstances include whether you are male or female, the nature of the violence as well as the severity of the violence. However, females are more likely to report violence than males learners are.

5.5 Reasons for awareness of violence

According to the findings of this study, there are various reasons why learners were aware of violence, one of which was that the learners were victims of violence. The other reasons were that they were prefects at school and therefore victims of violence confided in them or that they have at least heard repeated stories of violence in their community. In addition to the reasons given, crime in South Africa is very rampant as statistics given by some researchers show. In terms of domestic violence, 40% of men interviewed in a study conducted by Hunt (undated) said that they had been physically violent to their partners, while 40% to 50% of women interviewed said they had been victims. Furthermore, 28% of men interviewed said that they have been perpetrators of rape. More than a third of girls in South Africa have experienced sexual violence before the age of 18 (Jewkes et al., 2009). Violence in South Africa happens everywhere, as demonstrated by the statistics, and this is yet another factor contributing to the awareness of crime by the learners interviewed.

Generally, if people have not been victims of violence in South Africa, they have at least heard the repeated stories of violence either by word of mouth or through the media (newspapers, television and radio). For instance, Kelvin, a Gr. 12 learner said that he hears from the radio that violence is everywhere and this is evidence that even the Swayimane community members have access to media.

5.6 Impact of violence on learners

The feelings of the learners after experiencing violence include: fear of going to school because they felt that they may become victims again; loss of interest in school because they felt like they could die at a young age; feeling unwanted and vulnerable; feeling terrible that the victim cannot leave the perpetrator due to their financial dependency on

the perpetrator; feeling unsafe in the community; feeling afraid because the person they thought would be there to defend them was beaten in their presence; feeling inferior; feeling confused and empty; feeling stupid for being a perpetrator of violence; and, feeling useless.

Ruth, a girl who was raped by her neighbour had this to say about her feelings after the violence took place:

...I felt empty, confused and lost, actually I was traumatized.

Another girl, Susan who experienced domestic violence said:

[I felt] inferior, like I am meant to experience what had happened.

Blose, a boy who was robbed by a few men said:

At first I felt like the world despised me and felt vulnerable as well but as time went by I recovered.

Mary was also a victim of violence each time her boyfriend beat her up. She had this to say:

This made me lose my self-esteem. Sometimes I used to blame myself....maybe I deserved it because I had wronged him.....because of this I do not trust boys and I really do not like them anymore, even socializing with them is a bit of an issue.

Sam, a 17-year-old 11th grader who lives with an aggressive stepfather sounded distressed as he said this:

I feel helpless because it happens quite often. I feel like I am letting my siblings down as I am older than they are and obviously they look up to me. Sometimes I think I should just kill myself so that I can rest forever and at times I feel like I can just kill him (stepfather).

An interesting response came from Njabulo who got into a fight between his friend and other community members. He said:

At first I felt good that I helped him [my friend] until I found out that he was the one who was in the wrong....then I became scared that these guys will come after me.

The feelings of the learners were mainly negative while a few of them had positive feelings. The negative or bad feelings experienced by the victims of violence are a normal reaction to a bad encounter. The learners who experienced negative feelings were involved in experiences that violated their freedom.

The positive feelings experienced by some learners could be associated to the outcome of the violence engaged. Thus, all the learners who felt good after experiencing violence were involved in a fight of which they emerged victorious and thus may have earned some respect from those people who were beaten.

5.6.1 The impact findings

According to the findings of this study, seven out of 10 interviewed learners were victims of violence at school, one out of 10 were witnesses to violence and two out of 10 had not experienced violence at school. The findings also reveal that eight out of 10 interviewed learners have been absent from school due to the fear of violence while only two out of 10 had not been absent from school. Further, five out of 10 interviewed learners have missed a test due to the fear of violence. However, none of the learners had missed an exam due to violence.

The study revealed that nine out of 10 interviewed learners were negatively affected in their academic performance by violence. The learners were affected in the following ways: lack of concentration in class, behavior change (became promiscuous, violent and stubborn). However, one out of 10 interviewed learners was not affected anyhow in their academic performance. The learners who were not affected by violence gave the following reasons for their behavior: they became too used to violence and therefore were not affected anyhow (some of these became perpetrators of violence).

According to Medina *et al.*, (2009) violence affects young people in various ways some of which are social, behavioural, psychological and academic. Similarly, the learners from the Swayimane community are faced with violence everywhere: at home, at school and even on the road. Whenever violence occurs it leaves a scar on the learner's mind. Some learners lose concentration in class because they are constantly thinking about what

happened to them especially when they have not reported the violence to any authority. For instance, Ruth, a girl who was raped said that:

...I could not perform well in school as before the rape because I was focused on what happened to me and trying to get revenge.

Kelvin, a grade 12 learner said:

Personally, violence discourages me to go to school, sometimes I feel like there is no point in studying because it seems like I will die young. Sometimes I think maybe I should leave this place and go somewhere, but it's pointless because violence is everywhere according to the news I hear on radio.

Another Gr. 12 learner, Jackson, had this to say:

I was affected mostly after the fight... because I could not concentrate at school since I knew very well that those guys were waiting for me after school. I used to lose concentration after lunch because I knew that we were about to go home. I did not even hear when the teacher was telling us that we were going to write a test on the following day. I wrote the test without studying then I failed it and this happened twice.

Thobeka also had this to say:

My grades are really not good as I do not have enough time to study because I am staying with a violent uncle. The problem is that you never know when he will start beating you and for what reason. If I try to study or to do my homework, the moment I hear his voice I just lose concentration because he is always shouting at someone. Due to this I do not really perform very well.

Last, but not least, Ruth said the following regarding the impact of violence:

Honestly, when someone is exposed to violence he or she loses concentration in school and fails most of the times. Teachers noticed me because I was very bright. But my friend who was not bright - she was average - the teacher never noticed her. She kept failing; sometimes she did not come to school. Finally she ended up dropping out of school and the teacher did not even know that.

These findings show clearly that the learners are affected academically by violence whether as direct victims or as witnesses. Therefore, it is true that violence affects the

academic performance of learners as it impacts on the learners' ability to concentrate which is a fundamental aspect to success in school (Medina *et al.*, 2009).

Violence also affects the behaviour of learners and this finding was echoed by Blose when he said:

In most cases those who experience violence their behaviour changes, like one boy in my class; he was a very active and an obedient guy. After he was mugged several times he changed and now he is very stubborn, and worse still is that he usually forgets what we learnt and when he sees that we notice it, he wants to fight with us.

Sheri, a Gr. 11 female learner, who was a witness to crime, said:

Violence affects the mind, some people tend to change their behaviour from someone who was quiet and nice suddenly becomes rude and stubborn. Sometimes they just leave the classroom before the period ends.

Other people act strange; they stop talking to other people and never participate in anything in class and in school. I noticed this behavior change on two of my classmates last year. We did not know what was wrong until one girl told her friend that she was raped.

The impact of violence on the behaviour of learners revealed by this study is supported by Medina *et al.*, (2009) who state that anger and aggression, which usually leads to behavioural and discipline problems, are a result of an experience of violence. The behavioural impact of violence on learners cannot be understated because it is evident from this study that some victims undergo a behavioural change. As can be seen from the account given by Ruth, learners tend to withdraw from their normal activities and some may even become very quiet which maybe a symptom of depression. This kind of behaviour seriously affects their concentration in class and also affects their performance in academic activities (Medina *et al.*, 2009).

Another effect of exposure to violence is that some learners who were once well-behaved become very "wild". For instance, Ruth said the following about her friend who was also raped:

...my friend...she was raped too. I felt bad because she started to 'sleep around' because she said her most precious thing had been taken away, why can't she just give what was left away.

The behaviour change in this case is due to the loss of self-esteem to an extent that the victim feels worthless. This behaviour change is usually linked to depression and negative self-concept (Medina *et al.*, 2009). Another example of behaviour change is that of Thobeka who said she became violent after her experience with the tsotsis [thugs] - she would pick on those who laughed at her and dealt with them after the teacher left. In this instance, violence made the victim to resort to violence in conflict resolution. According to Shakoor and Chalmers (1991), violent behaviour is one of the effects of exposure to violence which leads to frustration, substance abuse and emotional disturbance.

Overall, any action as a result of violence on the learners could be due to the combined effect of many factors. The learners could be suffering from PTSD, a psychological effect of violence but the nature of this study does not allow for determination of such effects on learners. However, the symptoms of PTSD were there in some of the learners who said they could not concentrate in class. Emotional effects were also identified in the learner who said he felt like he would die young and sometimes felt like running away to another place where there was no violence. This kind of response to violence is said to be an "interpretation of violence to mean not only that the world is not safe but also that the learner is unworthy of being kept safe" (Medina *et al.*, 2009).

5.7 Attitude of parents and guardians towards violence

This study revealed that there is a difference in the attitudes of female and male parents or guardians towards violence. Women tend to be more concerned and against violence. For instance, Vusi, a learner and community member living with his mother had this to say:

My father lives very far away because of his work and therefore I live with my mother. When I get involved in a fight, my mother panics and she tells me to report to the police station. But once my uncle arrives and hears about it, he becomes angry if I say I ran away from a fight, saying that I am a coward and that I have to fight those

boys when I meet them again. Sometimes he takes me with him to go and look for them so that we fight.

Mothers naturally are nurturing and caring and therefore in most cases would not want to see their children hurt. Thus they tend to discourage violence.

Fathers (male guardians) appear to be more tolerant towards violence. For instance, Sifiso had this to say:

My father's attitude depends on how serious the fight or issue is. Most of the time, if the fight was between boys and no one got hurt, he does not take it serious because he says that it is part of growing up. But if I got injured by an adult then my father takes it serious because he feels that he has been insulted. My mother takes it serious no matter how small the issue is.

From the perspective of culture, the Zulu culture (which is the culture in Swayimane community) encourages boys to fight as a way of defending themselves and their friends and family. This aspect of the Zulu culture is evident in what is termed "stick fighting" and is practised by young boys who gain status through victory in such fighting. This finding complies with the Culture of Violence Theory which states that violence in some societies is used during childhood socialization as a means of securing youngsters' obedience and conformity both in the family and community (Wolfgang *et.al*, 1967). Furthermore, such violence is considered normal and part of masculinity.

Despite the fact that the Zulu culture encourages violence, there are parents who do not tolerate violence and thus do not encourage it. This was echoed by Mike, a learner and member of the Swayimane community, who said:

At home they do not like violence. When they hear that I took part in a friend's fight, they get very angry with me saying that I cannot be living life like in the 'olden days' when people would only fight using fists. Today people use knives and other sharp things which if used on me can lead to my death at a young age.

Another learner, Mary, had this to say:

My parents do not approve of violence, they actually hate violence. Even at home they do not want us to fight each other.

In like manner, there are situations when both parents take a casual approach towards violence, that is, they only react when the violence is too serious and may cause injury or death. For instance, Nothando had this to say about her parents' attitude:

My parents only act if I get injured and only after they know why I was involved in violence. They also take violence seriously if someone abused me especially if that person was an adult. In such a situation my mother sees it crucial for her to report to the police.

Parents also have different attitudes towards violence committed on females from that committed on male children. Julie another learner from the Swayimane community had this to say about her parents' attitude towards violence:

I am not sure about my parents' attitude because when I report that I have been violated they become angry and sometimes they look for those people. But if my brother reports violence to my parents, they ask him questions like; 'how old are those boys and did you fight or run away?' they do not take it serious as in my case.

This finding also complies with the Theory of the Culture of Violence where society views violence as a means of securing youngsters' or peers' obedience. However, in the case of Swayimane, the theory only applies to male children where it is regarded as normal for boy children to engage in fights amongst themselves.

5.8 Dealing with violence at school

This study revealed that nine out of 10 interviewed learners were not aware of the existence of any policy at their school aimed at dealing with violence. Only one out of 10 interviewed was aware of the School policy on violence.

Most of the learners interviewed were not aware if there was any school policy on crime. This could be because probably the learners did not understand what a policy is. However the learners were aware of the school rules which are meant to deal with crime. The school rules however emanate from the school policy on violence.

It was revealed in this study that half of the learners felt that school rules were quite effective in dealing with violence. However, three out of 10 interviewed learners felt that

the school rules were very effective in curbing violence. Two out of 10 interviewed learners felt that the school rules were not effective.

There are school rules that were formulated to deal with violence. For instance, Learners are not allowed to go onto the school grounds with any form of weapons and this includes sharp instruments like knives and guns. The school has given the task of ensuring that no learner carries any weapon to school to security guards strategically positioned at the entrance of the school. Of all the learners interviewed, eight out of 10 felt that the school rules were effective in dealing with crime. Njabulo, a Gr. 11 learner, had this to say about the effectiveness of the school rules:

Yes school rules are very effective because even those who bring their knives are punished.

Sibusiso said the following regarding the effectiveness of crime:

...it is very hard to carry a knife because you know you are not allowed even though some of us do carry them. But when you are caught three things can happen to you. The first one is that the teachers will take the weapon away from you and punish you for that. Secondly, school authorities can send you home to call your parents. Thirdly, school authorities can inform the police about you because the police station is really not far from school.

Sam also said the following regarding the same matter:

They are effective because only few learners bring weapons and those who bring weapons it is because of the fights they experience on their way to and from school.

Most of the learners felt that the school rules were effective because of the security guards who operate at the school gate. They also said that the school rules were effective because those are caught with weapons are punished.

Despite the existence of these school rules and the security guards, some learners still manage to smuggle knives into the school. This is the reason that was given by the 20% of learners interviewed who said that the school rules were not effective. Ruth, a Gr. 12 learner aged 18 had this to say:

I can say - not very effective because people manage to bring weapons inside the school.

Gerald also said that:

I do not know if I can say that they are effective since people do bring the weapons and also people from outside the school (people who are not learners there) always find their way into the school.

Nothando did not think that the school rules were effective, this is what she said:

Criminals always have a way so I think there is a problem.

Julie also said that school rules were not effective in the following way:

We have a security guard but we are not searched when entering. So, some of the learners do carry weapons.

The learners questioned the effectiveness of school rules due to the fact that weapons and strangers (who are perpetrators of violence) manage to enter the school grounds. The reasoning of the learners is valid because they consider effectiveness to be the total eradication of weapons and violence from schools. Thus, if the learners manage to get into school past the security guard with a weapon, then one would question the purpose of a security guard at the gate if it is not to search for weapons and maintain order.

5.9 Counseling services

According to the findings of this study, nine out of 10 interviewed learners were not sure whether the school offered any counseling services while one out of 10 were positive that there were no counseling services offered in school.

All the learners interviewed were either not sure or they were positive of the absence of counseling services at school. Those who were not sure whether there were counseling services on school said that they had not heard about them. So whenever a learner is exposed to violence, they have to deal with the after-effects either alone or with their peers. They do this without any formal guidance of how to deal with the after-effects of violence.

Despite all the many encounters of learners with violence some of which are tragic, there are no counseling services offered at school or even in the community. So many learners have no one to confide in and thus end up keeping everything to themselves which makes them lose concentration in class. There is a need to address this very important aspect if children are to be given an opportunity to mould their future academically. As discussed earlier, there are students who fail to go to school because of the fear of violence. Some learners simply drop out of school without notice all because they cannot cope with school after a violent encounter.

5.10 Suggestions of what should be done about violence

The learners were asked to give suggestions about what they thought should be done in dealing with violence. The following suggestions were given:

- Find strategies of dealing with violence when faced with it and disseminating this information to all the learners.
- Provide counselors who can be trusted by the learners so that they can have somewhere to go to share their experiences of violence - some learners cannot talk to their family members especially those who were raped; therefore it would be beneficial to such learners to have counselors at the school as well as in the community.
- Establish programmes in school aimed at helping learners deal with violence.
- The school authorities should increase and tighten security measures in school. Schools should have secure fencing to prevent access by outsiders.
- Parents should be more concerned about their children and should not ignore their children when they report violence.
- The police should take the young people seriously when they report domestic violence.
- There should be community campaigns to raise awareness about violence where the community members are actively involved.

The learners were aware that they were not coping with the violence and this is evident from the suggestions given. They need counselors, they need supportive parents, they need a supportive police force, they need secure schools and they need a secure community.

5.11 Conclusion

The data in this chapter was presented, discussed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Themes were created using the major topics standing out in the data. By doing so, the effects of violence on the learners who were victims either directly or as witnesses were explored. The effects of violence were found to be mainly emotional, behavioural and psychological. All were seen to affect the learners' performance in the long run. In addition, the findings show that the learners cope with violence in school or community by carrying around weapons at school and in the community. They also try to defend themselves in groups but when alone there is not much they can do. However, there is not much done in the community or at school to help the learners deal with violence. Finally, the learners were given an opportunity to give suggestions of what they thought should be done to address violence in the community and at school. All these findings are presented in summarized manner in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study was conducted to investigate the effects of violence on young people's academic performance in the Swayimane area. This chapter presents the conclusion of the study together with the appropriate recommendations.

6.2 General Conclusions

The general conclusions to be discussed in this chapter were made considering the following objectives of this study:

- to explore the effect of violence on young people who are witnesses of violence and people who have been direct victims of it
- to investigate the coping strategies of violence developed by young people who experience it
- to ascertain how communities assist in dealing with violence in Swayimane area
- to assess possible remedies that can help reduce the effect of violence on the lives of young people which will give the participants the chance to give their recommendations.

6.2.1 Effects of violence on learners who were direct victims/witnesses to violence

The study found that the learners were affected by the violence psychologically, emotionally, behavior-wise - all of which affected the learners academically. The learners were not able to concentrate in class fully because they were constantly thinking about what happened to them or fearing what would happen to them on their way back from school. Some learners experienced a behaviour change by withdrawing while others simply became violent, promiscuous or irrational. Exposure to violence or being a victim proved to be an experience that left most learners vulnerable and feeling unsafe within

the schools they go to, in the community and neighbourhoods they live and even in the company of certain people.

6.2.2 Coping strategies to violence by learners

To a certain extent, the learners did show their coping strategies although they all seemed confused about how to deal with violence. One thing that is certain though, is that the findings show that the learners cope with violence in school or their community by carrying around weapons at school and in the community and by doing so, they use violence as a coping strategy. They also try to defend themselves in groups but when alone there is not much they can do. Some learners, however, isolate themselves and withdraw from their environment while others become stubborn, violent and promiscuous. Thus, they use “behavioral distraction and attention disengagement” as another coping strategy.

Despite the high rate of violence in the Swayimane area, there is not much done in the community or at school to help the learners deal with it - apart from the school rules.

6.2.3 Community assistance in dealing with violence

It is interesting that this study found that there is an on-going culture of violence in the Swayimane area. Boys are encouraged to fight, to defend themselves when attacked and not to run away when faced with violence. This culture is part of the Zulu culture which encourages boys to fight as a way of learning to be responsible and also to command respect among peers. In this way, the culture as a whole that is practised in the Swayimane area does not help at all in dealing with violence - actually it perpetuates violence. The police and the school authorities try to help in dealing with violence in that they control learners who are caught in possession of weapons. This, however, is not effective because only those who are caught can be dealt with while many other learners roam the school with weapons which they use during fights. In the end, while school rules might contribute to the fight against violence by prohibiting the use of weapons in school, this is not effective because learners still manage to smuggle in weapons everyday.

6.2.4 Remedies that can be used in the fight against violence

The learners gave their suggestions of what they felt were appropriate measures of dealing with violence. Such measures included: sensitization of the community members to violence in the community and in schools; change of attitude towards violence by parents whereby reports of violence made by their children should be taken seriously; introduction of programmes in school which help learners to deal with violence; introduction of counseling services in the community and school; and, security should be tightened in and around the school.

Beside the suggestions made by the learners, the researcher also made recommendations which are outlined in the next section.

6.3 Recommendations

After considering the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made:

- There is an unquestionable need for counselors due to the rampant violence in the Swayimane area. The school should provide counseling services because learners expressed a need for people who can be trusted. As some learners cannot talk to their family members - especially those who were raped - it would be beneficial for such learners to have somewhere to go to share their experiences of violence at the school as well as in the community.
- The fact that there are security guards at the school gates but learners still manage to enter the grounds with weapons leaves much to be desired. There is definitely a need to tighten security at the school gates as well as within school grounds. In addition, the School should have secure fencing to prevent access by outsiders who are also perpetrators of violence.
- There is a need for coping strategies or skills to be taught to deal with the effects of violence. In this regard, the learners suggested that the school authorities should devise or formulate more effective ways of dealing with violence and then teach this to learners. This can be done through programmes aimed at helping learners to deal with violence

and its effects. Such strategies would equip them personally to use those skills or strategies for the benefit of their friends and themselves.

- There is need for a change in parental attitudes to promote more concern about the experiences of their children on a daily basis. As is evident from the account of Ruth (a girl who was raped), parents seem not to pay much attention to the problems of their children. It is surprising that in a place where violence is rampant parents still find it hard to believe their children when they report violence. Sensitization among community members is needed and programmes that can help parents become more sensitive to the welfare of their children should be introduced. Such programmes should be designed in a way that they involve the participation of all community members including the police who also need to change their attitude towards domestic violence.

6.4 Conclusion

Exposure to violence is not only limited to homes and neighbourhoods. The school, which is usually viewed as safe place by parents, is not always constructed as such by the children who attend the school due to the fact that bullying takes place and children are stabbed on the school grounds. It seems that learners carry the violence of the community over to the school grounds, which then creates an environment of fear and paranoia.

It is alarming that in a country, so highly ranked worldwide in terms of crime and violence, that its traditions and customs perpetrate violence. In this sense, it almost appears that government policies work antagonistically towards communities because the community practices are not in step with those government policies. There is a need to conduct research on the question: to what extent are government's attempts being frustrated by customs and traditions of its people? And what are the legal implications of this?

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APPENDICES: ENGLISH AND ZULU VERSIONS

APPENDIX I:

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Community: _____

Date: _____

Name of Moderator: _____

Name of Note Taker: _____

Gender of Group: (circle one): All Female All Male

Start time: _____ End time: _____

Persons in group at start _____

Persons in group at end _____

I certify that I have read and discussed the consent procedures on the following page with the group and continued only on consent by all members.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Welcome and thank you for coming to this focus group discussion. My name is _____ and I am from _____. Assisting me is _____ who will be taking notes on the discussion. I am a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. I am collecting primary data for my Masters research on 'The effects of violence on young people's academic performance in the Swayimane area'.

For the next two to three hours, the group will talk about the effect of violence on young people's academic performance. If it is difficult for you to discuss this topic with us you have the right not to participate or to skip any issues that you do not want to discuss without any negative consequences.

Before we begin, let me share some ground rules.

- All information shared here is confidential. Please do not share any of the information you hear today from each other with anyone outside this group.
- When you are talking about specific incidence or people in your community or school, it is important that you do not say their name. We want to be very careful to protect their identity and your identity. We will use each other's first names during the session, but no names will be used in any of the reports we write using the information you share with us. No one will be able to link your name back to what you said.
- It is best if we have only one person speaking at a time. Try to speak up so that you are heard and we do not miss any of your comments.
- When responding to questions please leave enough time for the other group members to also share their thoughts. Please feel free to speak openly.
- There is no right or wrong responses.

Does anyone have any questions?

If you think of any questions in the future, feel free to contact the Primary Investigator, _____, whose contact information is on this sheet.

Do you agree to participate in the discussion? If not then please feel free to leave.

Let's begin by learning a little bit about each other by going around the room. Tell us your first name

- What is your understanding of violence?
- Have you ever been exposed to violence/how?
- What is the attitude of your parents towards violence?
- What forms of violence exist in the family or community?

- What impact do you think violence has on your school performance?
- Have you ever witnessed any form of violence on the school premises? If yes how has this affected you?
- Who do you report to if you have been violated or witness violence?
- How effective are the school rules in protecting you as a learner, eg. No weapon entry?
- Is there any counseling services for violence exposed children and how effective is it.? Describe these
- What do you think needs to be done to reduce the effect of violence on learner's academic performance?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE: N ZULU

Umphakathi: _____

Usuku: _____

Igama logadayo: _____

Igama lomthathi wamanothi _____

Ubulili beqembu

Isikhathi sokuqala: _____ Sokuqeda: _____

Abantu eqenji lokuqala ____

Eqenjini lesibili ____

Ngiyavuma ngifundile icwadi yesivumelwano nedlela yokwenza neqembu ngavumelana nabanye .

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Nginyanamukela ngiphinde nginibonge ngokufika Igamalami u Sazelo Mkhize, umfundi owenza I Masters Kwi Department yakwa Criminology e University of KwaZulu-Natal, ngenza uwcaningo ngomthelela wo dlame onkanye ukuhlukumezeka kwamashe emfundweni yabo'.

Ngaphambikokubasiqale nayi imithetho.

- Imininingwano ephuma lana iyifihlo.ngicela ningayitsheli omunye umuntu.
- Uma ukkuluma ngabantu ungawasho amagana abo.
- Ngicela kukhulume umuntu oyenddwa ngesikhathi ekhulumele phezulu..
- Uyikho impendulo e rongi ne right.

Ukhona onombuzo

Umakukhona umbuzo ofikayo ubuze

Asiqaleni ukufundana

- Ukuqonda kanjani ubungebengu nokuhlokumezeka
- Usukewabhekana nodlame
- Bakubuka kanjani abazali bakho udlame noma ubugebengu
- Iyiphi inhlobo yobugengu nokuhlukumezeka okukhona emdenini noma emphakathini
- Isibenza kangakanani imithetho yesikole ekinivikeleni njengabafundi, njegophatha izikhali
- Kunamuphi umthele la ekufundeni kwakho okuhlukumezeka? chaza
- Kukhona ukuhlukumezeka osuke wakubona kwezeka esikoleni
- Utshela bani uba uhlukumezekile la esikoleni
- Ingabe ukhona umsebenzi wama khansela?chaza unjani
- Uchabangaukuthi kumele kwenziwe njani ukuze kuchipha ukuphazamiseka kwenu.

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

Introduction

My name is Sazelo Michael Mkhize, a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Durban South Africa and I am doing my Masters in Criminology.

I am gathering information for my studies on 'The effects of community violence on learners in a rural context.

Questions

Age

Grade

Gender

2. Have you ever been exposed to violence/how?
3. What is the attitude of your parents towards violence?
4. What forms of violence exist in the family or community?
5. What impact does violence have on your school performance?
6. Have you ever witnessed any form of violence on the school premises?
7. Who do you report to if you have been violated or witness violence
8. How effective are the school rules in protecting you as a learner, e.g. no weapon entry
9. Is there any counseling services for violence exposed children and how effective is it.
10. What do you think need to be done to reduce the effect of violence on learner's academic performance?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE N ZULU

Introduction

Igamalami u Sazelo Mkhize, umfundi owenza I Masters Kwi Department yakwa Criminology e University of KwaZulu-Natal, ngenza uwcaningo ngomthelela wo dlame onkanye ukuhlukumezeka kwamashe emfundweni

Imibuzo

- a. Wazalelwaphi?
- b. Usukewabhekana nodlame
- c. Bakubuka kanjani abazali bakho udlame noma ubugebengu
- d. Iyiphi inhlobo yobugengu nokuhlukumezeka okukhona emdenini noma emphakathini
- e. Isibenza kangakanani imithetho yesikole ekinivikeleni njengabafundi, njegophatha izikhali
- f. Kunamuphi umthele la ekufundeni kwakho okuhlukumezeka? chaza
- g. Kukhona ukuhlukumezeka osuke wakubona kwezeka esikoleni
- h. Utshela bani uba uhlukumezekile la esikoleni
- i. Ingabe ukhona umsebenzi wama khansela?chaza unjani
- j. Uchabangaukuthi kumele kwenziw njani ukuze kuchipha ukuphazamiseka kwenu.

APPENDIX III:

Informed Consent form for Participants

Title of Study:

The effects of community violence on learners in a rural context

Researcher: Sazelo Mkhize

Supervisor: Dr Gopal

Faculty: Humanities, Development and Social Studies

School: Sociology and Social Studies

Phone: 031 260 2302/2440

Fax : 031 260 2347

Introduction

I am Sazelo Mkhize, a Masters student from the Department of Criminology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, doing research on the effect of violence on young learners' academic performance. I am interested in recording their opinions, on how violence in the community has affected their academic performance.. I have chosen this area to do this research because of my own experiences and its effects on me as a learner in this area.

Procedures

To help me understand the lives as of these young learners who are affected by violence, I will spend at least three weeks in the field collecting information. This will give me an opportunity to engage with the respondents and develop rapport with them. I will conduct in-depth interviews outside of school hours, which should take about an hour at a time depending on the data that is produced.. During school hours I will have

the focus groups that will last for the duration of 1.5 hours. If I need to explore further ideas I will request additional time from the respondents. After the completion of my project I will share the results with the respondents and their community.

Right of refusal to participate and withdraw

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study if you feel uncomfortable.,

Confidentiality

All tape recordings of the interviews will be stored in a safe place at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and disposed of once the thesis is completed. No one else will have access to these recordings except my supervisor and I. I will give each respondent pseudonym at the inception of the research which will be used when I write up my thesis. Each participant will have right of confidentiality and will remain anonymous at the completion of the research. In my completed thesis, I will continue to use their pseudonym

Authorisation

I have read and understood this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I have been informed that there will be no risks and I am aware that there will be no benefits for me, my parents/guardians or my school for participating in this research. I have also been provided with the researcher's contact details and those of their supervisor who can be easily contacted.

Participants Name:

Signature

Date

Researcher's Name

Signature

Date

APPENDIX IV: Informed Consent form For Parents/Guardian

Title of Study:

The effects of community violence on learners in a rural context.

Researcher: Sazelo Mkhize

Supervisor: Dr Gopal

Faculty: Humanities, Development and Social Studies

School: Sociology and Social Studies

Phone: 031 260 2302/2440

Fax : 031 260 2347

Introduction

I am Sazelo Mkhize, a Masters student from the Department of Criminology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, doing research on the effect of violence on young learners' academic performance. Whenever undertaking a research study that involves children consent from parents or guardians must be obtain. I would like to ask you for permission for your child to participate in this particular research. However you can raise any concerns and questions about the research which I will address them before you give your permission.

Procedure

Your child will be in a discussion group with 4 to 5 other young learners' and may also be selected for in-depth interviews. I will ask a few questions related to the abovementioned topic. The interviews will be tape recorded and will be kept in strict confidence by my supervisor and no one else will have access to these tapes except me and my supervisor and I

There is no risk involved in participating also there will not be any direct benefits for their participation. The result will enable us to understand their experience and maybe the reasons for under performance. Your child's participation is voluntary and they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without the fear of any negative or undesirable consequences to you or them. However if the child shows any signs of distress I will refer them to the counselor available.

Authorisation

I have read and understood this consent form. I have been made aware that there will be no risks and or benefits for either my child or me. I have also been provided with the researcher's contact details and those of the supervisor who can be easily contacted during office hours.

_____	_____	_____
Parent/guardian's Name:	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Researcher's Name	Signature	Date

APPENDIX V: Informed Consent form For Principal

Title of Study:

The effect of community violence on learners in a rural context

Researcher: Sazelo Mkhize

Supervisor: Dr Gopal

Faculty: Humanities, Development and Social Studies

School: Sociology and Social Studies

Phone: 031 260 2302/2440

Fax : 031 260 2347

Introduction

I am Sazelo Mkhize, a Masters student from the Department of Criminology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, doing research on the effect of violence on young learners' academic performance. When undertaking a research study that involves children consent has to be obtained from parents or guardians as well as from the school principal. I will be interviewing a number of young learners asking them questions related to the above topic. Your school was selected amongst other schools in Swayimane. You can raise any concerns and questions about the research before you agree and I will address them.

Procedure

Learners will be in a focus group discussion of about 4 to 5 respondents and may also be selected for in-depth interviews. I will ask a few questions related to the above mentioned topic. The interviews will be recorded and these tapes will be kept under lock and key and no one else will have access to these tapes except my supervisor and I.

There is no risk or benefit involved in participating. However, the result will enable us to understand their experience and probably the reasons for under performance. Your learners' participation is voluntary and they are free to withdraw from the interview at any time without the fear of any negative or undesirable consequences to them. However if the child may show signs of distress I will refer them to the counselor available.

Authorisation

I have read and understood this consent form. I have been made aware that there will be no risks or benefits for the learners, their parents and I except for the research report which will be availed to us. I have had an opportunity of asking questions about the study and all of them have been answered to my satisfaction. I have however been provided with the researcher's contact details and those of their supervisor who can be easily contacted.

_____	_____	_____
Principal's Name:	Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Researcher's Name	Signature	Date

APPENDIX V: Informed Consent form For the School Counselor

Title of Study:

The effects of community violence on learners in a rural context

Researcher: Sazelo Mkhize

Faculty: Humanities, Development and Social Studies

School: Sociology and Social Studies

Phone: 031 260 2302/2440

Fax : 031 260 234

Introduction

I am Sazelo Mkhize, a Masters student from the Department of Criminology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, doing research on the effect of community violence on young people's academic performance. When undertaking a research study that involves children consent has to be obtained from parents or guardians first. I would also like to request your presence during the interview session so that you can assist me in the event that I encounter learners who are psychologically traumatized. However you can raise any concerns and questions about the research before you agree, which I will address.

Procedure

Learners will be in a discussion group of 4 to 5 and may also be selected for in-depth interviews with me as the interviewer in both settings. I will ask a few questions related to the above mentioned topic. The interviews will be recorded and will be kept in strict confidence by my supervisor and no one else will have access to these tapes except my supervisor and me.

There will not be any direct benefits for learners and you. The results will enable us to understand their experience and maybe the reasons for under performance. Their participation is voluntary and they are free to withdraw from the interview at any time without the fear of any negative or undesirable consequences to you. However if the child shows signs of distress I will refer them to you.

Authorization

I have read and understood this consent form. I have been made aware that there will be no benefits for either the learners or me. I have also been provided with the researcher's contact details and those of the supervisor who can be easily contacted during office hours.

Counselor's Name:

Signature

Date

Researcher's Name

Signature

Date

ICWDADI YESIVUMELWANO KAMFUNDI

Title of Study:

The effects of community violence on the learners in a rural context

Researcher: Sazelo Mkhize

Supervisor: Dr Gopal

Co Supervisor: Prof Singh

Faculty: Humanities, Development and Social Studies

School: Sociology and Social Studies

Phone: 031 260 2302/2440

Fax : 031 260 2347

Isingeniso

Igamalami u Sazelo Mkhize, umfundi owenza I Masters Kwi Department yakwa Criminology e University of KwaZulu-Natal, ngenza uwcaningo ngomthelela wodlame onkanye ukuhlukumezeka kwamashe emfundweni yabo. Ngothanda ukuzwa umbono wakho ekutheni uphazamiseka kanjani ezifundweni zakho, Ngikhethe lendawo ngoba ingezinye zezindawo ezinganakiwe njengoba isimakhaya

Indlela yokwenza

Ukuze ngiqonde izimpilo zenu njengabantu abasha abahlukubezekile, ngizithicha isikhathio esingangamasonto amathathi ngivakashela isikole. Lokhu kuzonginika ithuba lokuthi nginazi kanqcono. Ngalesisikhathi ngizothanda ukukhuluma nani ngamunye ngamunye ngiphinde ngikhukume nani senihlangene. Lokhu kungenzeka ngesikhathi sesikole noma sesiphumile. Ngichitha isikhathi esingange hora nokungamanxa kwalo ngikhuluma nani. Ngiqonde ukukhuluma nomuntu ngamunye kanke kodwake

kungenzeka uphinde ubizwe umakukhona ukufuna ukuladelwa. Ngizothando ukuqopha lekulumo kodwa uma kungenankinga.

Ilungelo loku vuma nokwala

Unelungelo lokukhetha ukuba yingxeye ne lungelo lokwala. Unelungelo lokwala ngaphami kokuba kuqalwe nanoma sekuqaliwe

Ukufuhlwa kwebininingwano

Konke okuqoshiwe kugcinwa endaweni ephaphile e nwuvesi yakwa Zulu Natal kuphinde kulahlwe uma usuphelile umsebenzi wakho. Ngizonikeza nagmunye ngamunye ingame elizosetshenziswa ekuphalweni kwalomsebenzi. Lokho kwenzelwa ukuthu kungabibikho owaziyo ukuthi kwashiwo ngubani

Ukuvumela

Ngifundile ngaqondisisa lencwadi yesivumelwano, ngiyazikhethela ukuba yigxenyeye yalomsebenzi. Ngiyaqondisisa ukuthi okukho engizokuthola ngokuba yigxenyeye yalomsebenzi ngiyaqonda nokuthi akukho bungozi engizobhekana nabo ngokuba yigxenyeye yalomsebenzi.

_____	_____	_____
Participants Name:	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Researcher's Name	Signature	Date

ICWDADI YESIVUMELWANO YOMZALI

Title of Study:

The effect of community violence on learners in a rural context

Researcher: Sazelo Mkhize

Supervisor: Dr Gopal

Co Supervisor: Prof Singh

Faculty: Humanities, Development and Social Studies

School: Sociology and Social Studies

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Isingeniso

Igamalami u Sazelo Mkhize, umfundi owenza I Masters Kwi Department yakwa Criminology e University of KwaZulu-Natal, ngenza ucwaningo ngomthelela wodlame onkanye ukuhlukumezeka kwamashe emfundweni yabo. Ngaso sonke isikhathi umakwenziwa ugcwaningo uluphatha izingane, kuyaye kufunele sicele umvume kubazali noma kubagadi kuqala. Njengoba ingane yakho ikhethi kulolu cwaningo ngixothanda ukucela imvumo yakho. Ungabuza noma imiphi imimuza ngaphambi kokuba uvume ngiziyiphngula.

Indlela yokwenza

Ingane yakho izoba eqenjini nabanye abafundi mhlamumbe abane kuya kwabahlanu ingaphinda ikhethwe futhi ukuba ibuzwe iyodwa nami njengomcwaningi. Ngizobabuza imi buza bayelana nesihloko esibhalwe ngaphezulu. Inkuluma izoqoshwa ibekwe endaweni efihlekile lapho kuzoba ungaphethe nami kuphela okwazi ukufinyelela.

Akukho okuzotholwa ekubeni yigxenye futhi akukho bungozi ekubeni igxengenye yalolu cwaningo. Kodwa umphumela uzosisiza ukubasiqonde ukuthi ababhekana nacho noma ezizathu ekungaphumelelini kwabo. Umtwana wakho unelungelo lokuzikhethela ukubayigxenye yaloluncwaningo akaphoqiwe. Uma kwenzeka umtwana etshengisa iziphawu zokuhlukubezeka ngizomu dlulisela kwi kansela elizobelikhona.

Imvomo

Ngifundile ngaqondisisa lencwadi yesivumelwano. Ngियाqondisisa ukuthi okukho engizokuthola ngokuba ngivumele ingane ukuthi ibe yigxenye yalolucwaingo. Ngियाqonda nokuthi akukho bungozi engizobhekana nabo ngokuba yigxenye yalomsebzi

Parent/guardian's Name:

Signature

Date

Researcher's Name

Signature

Dat

ICWDADI YESIVUMELWANO KA THISHA OMKHULU

Title of Study:

The effect of community violence on learners in a rural context

Researcher: Sazelo Mkhize

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Co Supervisor: Prof Singh

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Indlela yokwenza

Izingane zizoba eqenjini nabanye abafundi mhlamumbe abane kuya kwabahlanu bengaphinda bekhethwe futhi ngamunye ngamunye nomucwanongi. Ngizobabuza imi buza bayelana nesihloko esibhalwe ngaphezulu. Inkuluma izoqoshwa ibekwe endaweni efihlekile lapho kuzoba ungaphethe nami kuphela okwazi ukufinyelela.

Akukho okuzotholwa ekubeni yigxenye futhi akukho bungozi ekubeni igxengeny eyalolu cwaningo. Kodwa umphumela uzosisiza ukubasiqonde ukuthi ababhekana nacho noma ezizathu ekungaphumelelini kwabo. Umtwana wakho unelungelo lokuzikhethela ukubayigxenye yaloluncwaningo akaphoqiwe. Uma kwenzeka umtwana etshengisa iziphawu zokuhlukubezeka ngizomu dlulisela kwi kansela elizobelikhona.

Imvumo

Ngifundile ngaqondisisa lencwadi yesivumelwano. Ngियाqondisisa ukuthi okukho engizokuthola ngokuba ngivumele izingane ukuthi zibe yigxenye yalolucwaningo. Ngियाqonda nokuthi akukho bungozi engizobhekana nabo ngokuba yigxenye yalomsebnzil

Principal's Name:

Signature

Date

Researcher's Name

Signature

Date