

**Boys, girls and the making of violence in a Pinetown
secondary school: A case study of gender violence**



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Forlum Ngwa Immaculate
Student Number: 212558740

Supervisor: Professor Deevia Bhana

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SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

‘As the candidate’s supervisor, **I agree** to the submission of this dissertation’.

Signed

.....

Name: Professor Deevia Bhana

Date: 31st July 2015

DECLARATION

I, Forlum Ngwa Immaculate declare that:

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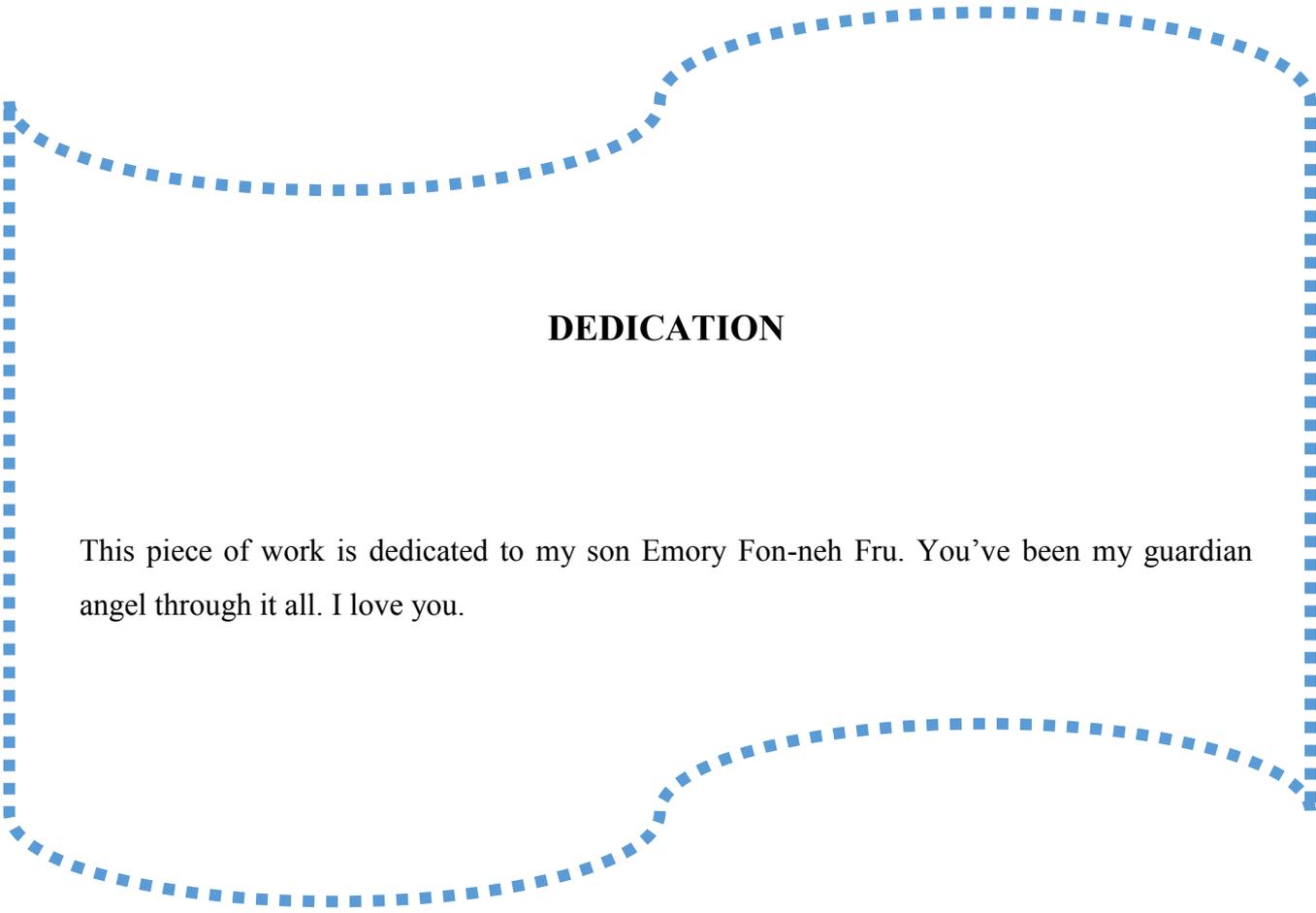
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Date.....



DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my son Emory Fon-neh Fru. You've been my guardian angel through it all. I love you.

NRF Acknowledgement

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the gendered nature of school spaces and shows how violence is produced within these spaces. The conceptualisation of space employed in this study refers to social and physical spaces. Social spaces consider school interactions such as those amongst learners, with teachers, and/or with other school authorities and how various forms of violence are produced during such interactions. On the other hand, physical spaces refer to specific places or spaces where violence is more likely to occur. The main premise of this study is that school spaces are gendered and that girls are the most vulnerable to the various forms of violence within schools spaces, both physical and social.

The study was conducted at Nje Secondary School (pseudonym). The school is located in a township in the Mariannhill area in Pinetown district, KwaZulu-Natal province. A qualitative research approach was adopted within a social constructionist paradigmatic lens. Focus groups, individual interviews and observation were used to generate data. The theoretical framing of this study draws on the main ideas used to conceptualise gender violence within school spaces.

The results of the study indicate that the school plays an important role in encouraging gender inequality through the gendering of school spaces. The gendered nature of school spaces serve as fertile ground for the manifestation of gender violence. Physical spaces such as the school playground, the hall ways, and behind the toilets and the walls of the school are prominent spaces where learners, especially boys, feel empowered to display their identities and power. Dominant ideologies of gender which uphold male domination of females influenced learners' interactions in school; physical assault, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, sexual comments and heterosexual intimate partner violence are some examples of the enactments of violence cited by most girls within the social spaces in school.

Based on those findings, the study concludes that gender violence within physical and social spaces in schools is a major social problem. Unfortunately, it is given less attention than it deserves. The implication of the study is that addressing the nature of such spaces is the basis for a long term solution to gender violence in schools. This study draws attention to and creates awareness of school spaces as important areas for interventions to reduce violence against girls.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the gendered nature of school spaces and how violence is produced as learners negotiate and mediate these spaces. This chapter sets the stage for the study by presenting the background of the study and the study context. The prevalence of gender violence in schools at both the global and regional level is highlighted, with a focus on South African society and schools as the immediate geo-political setting of this study. The rationale for the study and its aims and objectives are also discussed. Three critical questions that served as a guide to the study and a brief description of the research site are included in this chapter. The chapter concludes with an overview of the structure of the study.

1.2 Background of the study

Schools reflect wider society. The same forms of violence which women suffer throughout their lives – physical, sexual and psychological – are present in the lives of girls in and around their schools. Every day, girls face being assaulted on their way to school, pushed and hit in school grounds, teased and insulted by their classmates, and humiliated by having rumours about them circulated through whisper campaigns, mobile phones or the internet. Some are threatened with sexual assault by other students, offered higher marks by teachers in exchange for sexual favours, even raped in the staff room. Some are caned or beaten in school in the name of discipline (Amnesty International, 2008).

Gender violence in schools is a major social problem that has not received sufficient attention. The notion of schools as sites of learning and socialisation is undermined by the fact that many learners perceive school as sites of distress. Although both girls and boys are victims of the gender violence that prevails in schools, as this study and others show, girls are more vulnerable to the various forms of violence perpetrated by boys. Furthermore, interventions focus on physical hostilities, with few measures adopted to address the subtle but vicious forms of gender violence that are common within school spaces.

Against this backdrop, research on gender violence in schools has become a matter of necessity rather than choice. Researching gender violence in schools will contribute greatly to addressing the gender inequality and violence that is common in schools, thereby reconstructing the mind-set of young learners to be more gender tolerant. Given that schools are an integral part of society and that they inform each other's practices in a form of

ecological circle, awareness at school level will in turn facilitate efforts to curb gender violence in the broader society. One of the difficulties in addressing gender violence in schools and society is the inherent myths and stereotypes associated with this phenomenon. Among other constructions of society, such myths are linked to culture, customs and traditions. The view of these constructions as a 'way of life of the people' has resulted in blatant, flagrant and even subtle cases of gender violence. Researching gender violence in schools thus offers an opportunity to engage with the social and other consequences of our value systems and create platforms for change and improvement.

Gender violence was acknowledged as a problem in schools in developing countries in the mid-1990s in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic that severely affected Africa as well as the gendered nature of this epidemic (Leach, Dunne, & Salvi, 2014; Leach & Mitchell, 2006). E. Meyer (2008) notes that, gender violence was first identified as a significant violation of human rights in 1990. In South Africa, the magnitude of the problem was uncovered in 2001 after a study on the sexual exploitation of girls in schools was conducted by Human Rights Watch (Leach, 2006). Human Rights Watch maintained that the South African government was not doing enough to address the widespread gender violence in the country's schools (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

The global nature of gender violence is highlighted by United Nations World Report on Violence against Children which notes that all the countries in the world are affected and that this form of violence should thus be considered a global scourge (Pinheiro, 2006). The report further reveals that girls and women; homosexuals, lesbians and bisexuals are the most common targets. Stein (2005) notes that, between 2000 and 2004, American schools witnessed a significant increase in sexual violence, with 82% of the victims being girls. In similar vein, a study conducted in Sweden in 2005 found that girls were the most common victims of violence, mainly of a sexual nature (Witkowska & Menckel, 2005). The authors further underline the fact that the widespread prevalence of gender violence in schools is a violation of girls' right to a respectful learning environment. Research conducted by Plan International¹ across 11 countries (Cameroon, Benin, Liberia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Egypt, Paraguay, Zimbabwe and Uganda) established that girls feel unsafe in school as well as on their way to and from school (Munive, 2015). Similarly, a study conducted in three African countries (Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique) on the nature

¹ An international organisation for children's development

and challenges of girl child education, identified violence as one of the key obstacles to the realisation of girls' right to education (Parkes & Heslop, 2011).

E. Meyer (2008) argues that, even though gender violence is a worldwide problem, its manifestation depends on kinship structure, gender inequality and the level of violence in the broader society. Parkes and Heslop (2011) submit that, the power inequalities that exist at all levels of society reinforce patterns of gender discrimination, rendering most girls vulnerable to various forms of violence and abuse.

South Africa is no exception to the abovementioned trends identified in different countries. As noted earlier, a Human Rights Watch (2001) report maintained that the South African government was not doing enough to address the gender violence that has invaded the country's schools. The report noted that, irrespective of race and economic class, South African girls are vulnerable to various forms of harassment and sexual violence at school which deprive them of their fundamental right to education. Nine years after its first report, Human Rights Watch produced another report that noted that South Africa had the highest rate of rape cases reported to the police worldwide with very low conviction rates, thereby suggesting the normalisation of such violence against women and girls (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

Various media reports in South Africa confirm the increase in gender violence in this society, especially in schools (see section 1.4). Bhana and Pillay (2011) note that the prevalence of violence in schools seriously challenges the South African government's fundamental political project to promote gender equity in education. Bhana (2014b) acknowledges the role of schools as prospective sites of social transformation and that they are influential in challenging inequality. However, she notes that this can only be achieved if there is resilient determination to make schools a safe and supportive learning space (Bhana, 2014b).

It should be noted that the gendered nature of school spaces is very significant in the manifestation of gender violence in these spaces. The relationship between school spaces and gender violence is highlighted by Dunne (2007) who notes that such spaces are dominated by men and boys in a bid to display their masculinities, thereby making them the most common perpetrators of violence.

1.3 Gender violence in South African schools

The South African government has sought to promote gender equity and combat violence in the society and schools through the enactment of different policy documents that directly or implicitly articulate the issue of gender violence and/or equality. These documents include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) section 1(a) and sections 9 and 10 of the Bill of Rights in the constitution that address equality and respect for human dignity. As the supreme law of the land, the Constitution's provisions on human dignity and equality are an indication of how seriously South Africa takes this issue. The South African Schools Act (1996) Act No. 84; Government Gazette No. 22754 regulation 4 calls for violence and drug free schools. The Department of Education (DoE) is sensitive to gender inequality and considers violent free schools as a recipe for quality education. In response to the prevalence of gender violence in schools, the DoE has adopted regulations aimed at maintaining violent free school spaces (Department of Education and LEADSA, 2013). The inclusion of a subsection on gender; the training of teachers on the necessary measures to implement to prevent sexual violence and harassment in schools; and holding youth discussions on gender violence across the country's provinces are just some of the DoE's initiatives to combat gender violence in schools (Department of Education and LEADSA, 2013). South Africa has also pledged its support for the adoption of Resolution 275 by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights which urges states to end all forms of violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Amnesty International, 2015).

However, the implementation of these widely accredited legal requirements seems to be a herculean task as male domination and other daily practices of subordination act together with political, cultural and economic factors to breed gender violence (Bhana, 2012a). The level of violence in South Africa is extraordinarily high, affecting an average of 38.6 per 100 000 people which is four times the universal average (Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012). These authors further highlight the disturbing incidence of rape with an estimated 55 000 rapes of women and girls every year (Morrell et al., 2012). This situation is perpetuated in schools as Bhana (2014a) points out that schools' policies and practice are a replica of the wider society that is plagued by social tensions around gender inequality and sexual diversity, thereby making them sites of harassment and oppression.

A report on South African school-based violence notes that approximately 30% of girls are victims of rape at school (South African Council for Educators (SACE), 2011). This

corroborates Burton (2008) earlier finding that the rate of violence in South African schools is very high, with an estimated 160 per 1 000 learners victimised as opposed to countries like the United States of America, where this rate is estimated at 57 per 1 000 learners. The consequence of increased levels of violence in South African schools is that schools have become sites where children learn fear and suspicion and develop misleading insights into identity as opposed to being a space for knowledge and other pedagogic engagement and construction (Burton, 2008). According to Prinsloo (2006) all forms of sexual harassment and violence perpetrated against girls in schools must be discouraged. He notes that the consequences can take different forms including unwanted pregnancy, emotional pressure and above all a loss of self-respect and dignity. The National School Violence study of 2012 revealed that violence was a common occurrence amongst secondary school learners, with female learners more vulnerable to various forms of violence (Burton & Leoschut, 2012). Seventy per cent of school girls reported being victims of unwanted touching, 6.8% were exposed to verbal abuse and 4.5% reported being hit, punched or slapped, with 90% of the perpetrators being male.

In line with the above, studies have revealed that an increasing number of girls are attacked in school spaces such as toilet facilities, empty classrooms, hall ways, hostels, dormitories, and other areas that are considered no go areas within the school premises (Bhana, 2009b; Human Rights Watch, 2001).

It is against the backdrop of the high level of gender violence in South African society and schools despite the many policy documents that aim to achieve a more equitable society and more gender tolerant schools, that this study investigates the gendered nature of school spaces and how violence is produced as learners negotiate and mediate these spaces. The study therefore highlights gender violence within school spaces as a social problem which requires urgent intervention. In so doing, it adds to the body of knowledge that recognises girls as the most common victims of violence perpetrated by boys (Bhana, 2012a; Parkes & Heslop, 2011; Pinheiro, 2006).

1.4 Rationale

My initial motivation for conducting a study on gender violence in and around schools was my personal experience of gender inequality and abuse in Cameroon. I was raised in a society afflicted with disrespect and abuse of women and girls both in the community and at school. Female genital mutilation, young girls being forced into marriage against their wishes, and the rape of young girls on their way to and from school are just some examples. In my village, a man in his 40s raped a 15 year old girl on her way from school and warned her not to tell her parents. Her mother only found out because she was struggling to walk and insisted that the young girl explain what was going on. The daughter then explained how she had been sexually abused by this much older man on her way from school. The perpetrator was summoned to the village council where he apologised and was told to pay a fine of 20 litres of palm wine. This paltry fine for a crime of such gravity underlines the trivialisation and normalisation of sexual abuse against women and girls in society. School girls being enticed to grant sexual favours to teachers in exchange for marks, was so common in high schools and universities such that students named the practice “Sexually Transmissible Marks.” Some girls that failed to accede to their teacher’s demands were made to repeat the year. Boys dominated the classroom space by, for example, silencing girls who attempted to respond to questions posed by the teacher through whistling or calling them names such as “*wowo*” which means ugly in Pidgin English². These are just some examples of my experiences of the prevalence of gender violence in Cameroon.

Furthermore, I lived in South Africa for three years prior to undertaking this study and was exposed to media reports that confirmed the increase in gender violence in the society and in schools. Prominent cases included the Oscar Pistorius case, where Pistorius was found guilty of culpable homicide for shooting his girlfriend; the murder of a Port Elizabeth teacher whose husband is alleged to have masterminded her killing; and a pupil who was stabbed seven times in the face with a pair of scissors at Kensington Secondary School (ENCA, 13th March 2014). Eight-year old Lebohang Makala died a week after she was allegedly kicked and beaten by three school bullies at a primary school in Soweto (ENCA, 25 Feb 2014). A grade 11 learner was stabbed by a 22-year old taxi conductor outside the school gates of Hillview Secondary School in Durban (ENCA, 25 Jan, 2014). These examples highlight the extent of violence in South African society as well as in schools.

² A form of broken English used in informal/unofficial settings former British colonial territories such as Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria.

Some scholars have attributed the prevalence of gender violence in South Africa to the legacy of apartheid which was characterised by violent domination by the apartheid regime, violent resistance from the oppressed and the preservation of patriarchal beliefs and conduct (Bhana, 2012a; Mncube & Harber, 2013), while other studies maintain that the prevalence of school violence is the outcome of the hidden curriculum that endorses gender inequality (Pinheiro, 2006; UNESCO, 2015).

The high rate of violence in South African secondary schools, inspired this study on gender violence within a South African secondary school (Burton & Leoschut, 2012). I was also motivated by various media reports, a review of the literature, eye witness accounts of violence in schools, and my personal experiences of gender violence in my local community in Cameroon. The aim was to contribute to the body of knowledge that depicts schools as unsafe spaces for learners, especially girls and to offer recommendations to make schools safe spaces for all.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

This study investigated learners' perceptions of gender violence as a problem in school. It sought to uncover the gendered nature of school spaces and how such spaces are constrained by unequal gender power relations. The study further explored how violence is produced as learners negotiate and mediate these gendered spaces, with girls being the most common victims of such violence. It revealed that all violence is gendered due to the fact that every act of violence is an outcome of power inequality.

1.6 Research Questions

The following critical questions which are in line with the study's objectives were used to guide this study:

1. What are learners' understandings of gender violence?
2. How do school spaces contribute to gender violence?
3. How do learners negotiate the gendering of school spaces?

1.7 Research Methodology

This section highlights the study's research design, and the approach and methods that were used to address the research questions outlined above. An in-depth explanation of the research methodology is presented in chapter three.

This study adopted a qualitative approach. Therefore qualitative data was generated and interpreted using social constructionism as a guiding paradigm. The qualitative design adopted aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study (Henning, 2004). This approach was appropriate as it enabled a deep understanding of the dynamics and manifestations of gender violence from the participants' perspective.

A case study approach was adopted. While there are different definitions of this kind of study (Creswell, 2012), the case used in this study refers to a specific phenomenon, namely, gender violence. The choice of a case study method was based on Nieuwenhuis' (2007) argument that it offers researchers an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon by taking its dynamics and complexities into consideration. Furthermore, this qualitative study was rooted in social constructionism which is typical of the case study research method.

1.8 Context of the study

The study was conducted in Nje Secondary School (pseudonym) located in KwaZulu-Natal, within the Mariannhill area in the Pinetown district. The school is a multiracial school with a population of 1 054 learners. The Group Areas Act of 1957 established the Nje community (pseudonym) where the school is located as a coloured township. Consequently the community is dominated by people of the coloured racial group. However, during the period of study, the school was dominated by black learners from within the community and in neighbouring communities.

The community is plagued by social challenges such as poverty, sexual violence, violence in the family, a high rate of alcohol and drug abuse, child neglect and high rate of school drop outs. The total number of reported crimes in the Mariannhill area stood at 4 524 with a total of 154 sexual crimes in 2014 (Crime Stats SA, 2014).

Figure 1.2 The Nje community and its environs



1.9 Summary of chapters

Chapter one was a briefing to the entire study. It commences with a background of the study. The background of the study provided a detailed discussion of gender violence in schools as a global social problem with particular emphasis on South African schools where the study was conducted. I drew on world reports such as UN reports and Human Rights Watch and equally international/national literature that highlight gender violence in schools as a major problem affecting the contemporary society. The gendered nature of school spaces which serve as a fertile ground for the manifestation of gender violence was also highlighted. This chapter also discussed the rationale for the study which was based on my experience of high levels of gender inequality and violence in Cameroon and in South Africa where eye witness accounts, various media reports, and a review of the literature confirmed an increase in gender violence, especially in schools with girls being most affected. The study's aims, objectives and research questions were also set out in this chapter. The chapter provided a detailed description of the research site with particular emphasis on the social challenges plaguing the community. It ended with an overview of the study.

Chapter two reviews the relevant literature on the main phenomena under study. It begins by reiterating the importance of a literature review to a dissertation. The following concepts are examined in order to establish a conceptual framework for the study: gender power; school spaces; violence and gender relations. Since gender violence is a global phenomenon, the international, sub-Saharan African and local literature on gender violence in schools is reviewed.

Chapter three presents the research design and methodological procedures employed to generate and analyse the data. Qualitative research, social constructionism and case study are analysed in this chapter as the design approaches chosen. This chapter also sets out the rationale for the qualitative approach adopted for this study. The social constructionism paradigm is discussed, as well as the reasons why this was an appropriate paradigm for this study. The chapter includes a brief description of the research site and the researcher's experiences as a foreign African conducting research in South Africa which I summarise as a hybrid of sweet and bitter experiences.

Chapter four presents an analysis of the data that was generated through focus group discussions, individual interviews and observation. In order to provide clarity on how gender violence is produced within the social and physical spaces of the school, this chapter is divided into two parts. Part one examines how unequal gender power relations, which are the source of gender violence, constrain social spaces in schools, while part two illustrates the gendered nature of physical school spaces and how these spaces facilitate the manifestation of gender violence in schools.

Chapter five serves as the conclusion of the study. It summarises the study, integrates its main findings and provides recommendations to achieve safe schools.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study. It discussed the background of the study, including an analysis of the general situation and frequency of gender violence in schools from both an international and South African perspective, with a focus on the latter. The motivation for conducting a study on gender violence in schools was set out, and the study's aims and objectives and research questions were highlighted. The research site was described and an outline of the dissertation was presented.

The following chapter presents a review of the relevant literature. It conceptualises gender violence as used in this study. This conceptual framework is important as it explains the usage of this concept throughout the study. A review of related literature on gendered school spaces and the production of violence within school spaces also forms part of the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

School spaces are gendered spaces (Prosser, 2007; Tupper, Carson, Johnson, & Mangat, 2008) that are critical arenas in the manifestation of gender violence. Keddie (2009) points out that, despite long periods of feminist transformation in schools as well as the well-intentioned harassment and bullying policies implemented in many schools, the discourse of entitlement within the physical and social spaces of schools remains highly prevalent. For instance, within the school set up, boys continue to dominate classrooms and playground spaces and their corresponding resources, including teachers' attention and time. This study explores how learners negotiate school spaces and how gender violence is enacted and negotiated within these spaces. It also engages the literature on spaces as a general concept in terms of their bearing on gender relations.

This chapter contextualises this study within the existing relevant literature. Both local and international sources are systematically reviewed, analysed and classified into prevalent themes within the focus of this study, thus establishing a niche for this study.

The chapter commences with a discussion of the conceptual framework employed to understand gender violence as used in this study. Subsequently is an expansion on the following sub-topics: Gender Violence as a global phenomenon; forms of gender violence; gender violence in schools; factors that contribute to gender violence in schools; schools and the construction of masculinities; schools and the construction of femininities; gender and spaces; gendered school spaces; and gendered violence. These sub-headings can be understood under three broad themes: learners' understanding of gender violence; exploring the gendered nature of school spaces; and the ways in which learners negotiate spaces of violence in South African schools.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Violence

A definition of violence according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) embraces the show of power. This show of power could either be a threat or real perpetrated against a person, a group or even a community which causes or could potentially cause injury, death, psychological harm or deprivation (World Health Organisation, 2002). This definition

emphasises the notion of power in order to embrace acts that originate from a relationship of power. Power as used in this sense includes actions such as threats and intimidation. Similarly, Kyei-Gyamfi (2011) posits that violence involves the application of force on one person by another or when a person uses their position of power to purposely cause injury to someone else. Therefore, violence goes beyond the action itself to include threats of violence and other acts that have the potential to cause different forms of harm as well as those that actually cause harm. The WHO's conceptualisation of violence also includes acts of neglect. This refers to aspects of violence that are passively allowed to occur on the basis of assumptions that they are legitimate (Haber, 2004; World Health Organisation, 2002), such as certain cultural beliefs and practices.

In an attempt to define violence, Hearn (1998) identifies attributes that qualify as violence. These include the use of force which may be physical or otherwise; an intention to cause harm; a situation where the victim considers the act as hurtful; or acts that are considered and recognised as violence by a third party. Hearn (1998) concurs with World Health Organisation (2002) that violence is a way of asserting power and control and argues that violence has been normalised and accepted by society as a powerful way to prove manhood. Renold and Barter (2003) argue that even though violence is condemned globally, it is regarded as appropriate when perpetrated by men and boys as it is associated with normalised forms of masculinity.

Violence has often been seen as synonymous with physical harm. However, Burman, Brown, and Bachelor (2003) caution that violence is not only linked to acts of physical harm perpetrated by an individual against another, but includes emotional or psychological distress as a result of being frightened, threatened or constantly intimidated. It should also be noted that violence as a concept or as an act is perceived differently by different people in different contexts (Haber, 2004), implying that what constitutes violence for one person may not necessarily be seen as violence by another. Similarly, young people's perceptions and understanding of violence may differ from what adults perceive or even from the official legal definition of violence. For instance, although children are able to identify acts of physical violence that they have been exposed to (Parkes, 2007a), acts such as physical punishment by parents or teachers have been normalised and children (Parkes, 2007a) consider them as legitimate forms of retributory justice. Based on the different dimensions of violence explained in this section, it is evident that violence is more than anything else, the

outcome of unequal and unjust social conditions. Such conditions in society relate to gender relations that intersect with other dimensions such as race or class (Merry, 2009).

2.2.2 Gender Power

Connell (2002) submits that power is a crucial dimension of gender that operates through institutions and involves the domination of one group by another. Viewed from a relational perspective, according to Meyer (1991), power is an aspect of a relationship that involves conflicting interests. She traces a significant link between the exercise of power and aspects such as violence, self-interest, conflict and repression. Some theorists posit that gender relations are inevitably relations of power (Davis, 1991; Komter, 1991). Kimmel (2005) underlines the role that power plays in gender relations by noting that manhood is associated with power and that this is visible in most institutions. According to Cornell (2011), gender is characterised by power relations. In order to challenge normalised gender power relations, it is important to understand the politics that surround such domination (MacNaughton, 2000). The structure of gender relations in a society, which Cornell refers to as the “gender order”, is dynamic (Connell, 2011, p. 3). Most violence and disorder is a result of a change in the gender order.

2.2.3 School spaces

Johnson (2009) identifies two components of the school space that are associated with gender violence – the social and physical space. The social space captures the nature of the interactions that happen at school (including relationships with the authorities and amongst peers) while the physical space is the space where violence occurs. (McGregor, 2004) asserts that tension exists between the physical and social spaces which explains the power relations, agency, subordination and domination between those interacting in these spaces. According to Tupper et al. (2008), the way schools are constructed, that is, the physical building including works of art, as well as the way in which specific spaces are structured are embedded with meaning. Because these spaces are not impartial, they are contested and negotiated differently by learners based on their understanding of these spaces in the construction of their identities. Prosser (2007) submits that the manner in which school spaces are contested and negotiated by learners suggests difficult and unequal relations.

Another way of explaining school spaces is to distinguish between formal and informal spaces (Dunne & Leach, 2007). These authors note that the difference lies in the fact that formal spaces such as classrooms and assembly grounds are under adult supervision, while

informal spaces consist of spaces where learners' interaction is guided by limited or no adult supervision at all, such as the playground. For the purpose of this study, space is therefore considered as a setting where interactions occur, but also as one that encourages gender power relations (Shilling, 1991).

2.2.4 Gender relations

Gender relations are a key factor of social structure and gender cannot be understood without constantly taking issues of class and race into account (Connell, 1995). According to Connell (2002), gender has to do with ways in which society deals with human body as well as the impact of such dealings on individuals and the collective. Some scholars have emphasised the role of power in gender relations. From this perspective, gender is regarded as a concept that is very relevant in understanding the discrepancies in relationships between males and females. Davis (1991) adopts a feminist perspective to argue that gender is not limited to differences that exist between individuals, social organisations or human thoughts but also addresses the way in which these relationships are based on unequal power.

Similarly, Kimmel (2004) argues that gender is not only about differences and inequality but is also about power, with power being exercised in various forms, including the power that men have over women and the power that men have over other men as well as the power that women have over other women. Kimmel (2004) adds that it is very important to note that power is what produces gender differences. It is necessary to understand this link between gender and power in order to grasp why relationships between men and women are characterised by domination and subordination. Therefore, gender inequality is an important aspect of social life; gender relations are created through daily interactions and these relations are characterised by power. Various cultures and settings have different perceptions of gender inequality (Connell, 2002; Oldersma & Davis, 1991).

2.2.5 Gender violence

While various scholars have formulated different conceptualisations of gender violence, it has been difficult to determine how gender violence is manifested and challenged in schools. This difficulty is evidenced by the paucity of literature on this specific aspect. This implies the need for an extension of the scholarship of gender violence to include the dynamic nature of gender and aspects of sexuality with a specific focus on their manifestation in school spaces (Bhana, 2013). Pinheiro (2006) submits that gender violence is the outcome of gender inequality, stereotypes and sexual harassment that are socially imposed on girls and are

sometimes encouraged by the desire to penalise girls because of their gender or sexuality or even by sexual interest. Similarly, Jakobsen (2014) posits that violence is considered gendered on the basis that it represents violence against women; thus gender is irrelevant if it is perpetrated against men.

This conceptualisation of gender violence seems to separate the gender aspect from acts of violence, making it problematic (Dunne, Humphreys, & Leach, 2006). Various studies have shown that there is an aspect of gender in every manifestation of violence, including violent acts like corporal punishment and bullying due to the fact that all these acts have their basis in unequal gender relations (Leach et al., 2014; Merry, 2009; Parkes et al., 2013). According to Paechter (1998), the construction of gender is such that there are unequal power relations, with the male having more access to enact and embody power. Moreover, even though acts of violence might be perpetrated as a result of racism or class humiliation, there is always a gendered dimension, leading to some scholars concluding that violence is inevitably gendered (Bhana, 2009b; Leach, 2006; Leach et al., 2014).

The conceptualisation of gender violence is, however, not limited to physical force but includes emotional as well as psychological dimensions like name calling, insults, and humiliation because these factors are all controlled by the boundaries of traditional heterosexual gender norms (Bhana, 2009b; Merry, 2009; E. Meyer, 2008; Pinheiro, 2006). Taking into consideration that all violence is gendered (Bhana, 2013; Dunne et al., 2006; Leach et al., 2014; Leach & Humphreys, 2007), the term, gender based violence as used in some studies and reports as a different phenomenon from violence (Department of Education and LEADSA, 2013; Leach, Mitchell, & Gouws, 2007; Pinheiro, 2006) is not adopted in this study as it suggests that some acts of violence are not gendered. This study therefore adopts the position that all violence is gendered.

Figure 2.1. CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

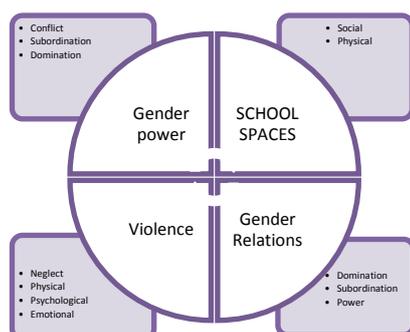


Figure 2.1 above is a visual depiction of the different concepts relating to gender violence in schools. These are displayed as gender relations; violence; power; and gendered spaces. According to the figure, gender relations are manifested in the form of domination and subordination. Violence occurs in the form of negligence, and also takes physical, psychological and emotional forms. The third aspect views gender power as an instrument that leads to domination and subjugation when it is misused and/or abused. Finally, spaces refer to the physical and social spaces that have the potential to serve as a catalyst for gender violence in schools.

2.3 Gender violence as a global phenomenon

Gender violence is a global phenomenon that takes different forms in different social settings (Bhana, 2013; Merry, 2009). Human Rights Watch (2001) cites gender violence as the chief obstacle to the right to education; it thus requires special attention. Numerous reports emanating from different parts of the world show that there is a global rise in gender-related crimes committed by young people as well as adults (Connell, 2002; Kimmel, 2004). These range from suicide bombings, to attacks on gay people, rape, school shootings and many other attacks that occur in and outside of schools. It is of concern that such reports do not emphasise that the majority of these crimes are committed by men and boys (Kimmel, 2004). They therefore fail to highlight that, these crimes are governed by the principles of masculinity and male dominance. There is evidence that even issues of sexual harassment, intimidation and assaults are classified and presented in reports without bearing the gendered perspective in mind (Dunne et al., 2006).

Moreover, intervention efforts are made even more difficult when the universal cause of men's power or domination over women is attributed to nature; that is by giving a genetic explanation for men's aggression towards women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Kimmel (2004) strongly refutes the explanation that testosterone explains male violent behaviours. He points to the fact that the perpetrators of such behaviours are often those who claim to be higher in the hierarchy; thus, violence has nothing to do with genetics, otherwise all men would be violent. Similarly, (Bhana, 2002; Haber, 2004) posit that adopting a biological explanation for men's aggression will only promote violence. If the focus is directed to gender as a behaviour that is nurtured, the different forms and manifestations of gender violence can be clarified and this will lead to recommendations to promote gender fairness (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

The United Nations report on violence against children highlights gender as one of the reasons for children's vulnerability to violence in and around schools (Pinheiro, 2006). It adds that violence is a social issue that affects the whole world without restriction as to geography, race, class, religion or culture. In similar vein, a study conducted in three African countries (Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique) identified violence as one of the key obstacles that prevents the realisation of girls' right to education (Parkes & Heslop, 2011). Parkes and Heslop (2011) submit that the power inequalities that exist at all levels of society reinforce patterns of gendered discrimination that render most girls vulnerable to various forms of violence and abuse. Therefore there is an urgent need to address the issue of violence because it is a major threat to global development and also has devastating consequences that leave the victim with both physical and emotional scars (Pinheiro, 2006).

Parkes and Heslop (2011) study paints a very bleak picture of the nature of gender violence in and around African schools. If not addressed, this will prevent the elimination of gender disparities in education. While the study found that various forms of violence were experienced by both boys and girls, girls were more vulnerable than boys as most girls reported being raped and having their breasts touched by boys and teachers and some reported having exchanged sex for goods.

In South Africa, gender violence takes even more aggressive forms. Parkes (2007b) study included children's accounts of murders, rape, and robberies mostly perpetrated by gangs. These children are exposed to violence due to their proximity to areas that are plagued by violence and they often regard themselves as victims. They live in fear of various forms of violence, especially sexual intimidation and rape. Violence is a major social issue in South African that has been identified as a priority by the government. Many of the victims and perpetrators of these violent acts are children and young people between the ages of 12 and 21 who make up a large proportion of the country's population (Leoschut & Burton, 2009). Violence is part of children's lives due to their exposure to violence at home, at school and even in the neighbourhood (Parkes, 2007b). Gender violence has been highlighted as a persistent public health as well as educational problem in South Africa (Bhana, 2013). The increased nature of and ever more aggressive ways in which gender violence is manifested in and around South African schools is an indication that more research needs to be done on how such violence is manifested, mediated, contested and reproduced in these schools (Bhana, 2013).

The case for taking gender violence seriously was strengthened by a report issued in 2004 by international watchdog group, Human Rights Watch. It identified gender violence as a major factor that contributes to the prevalence of HIV in the sense that it exposes victims of acts of violence to forced and unprotected sex (Human Rights Watch, 2004). The appalling sexual violence in contemporary South African communities and society in general highlighted by leading South African scholars (Bhana, 2009a, 2009b; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010) gives credibility to this report. According to Moffett (2006), South Africa has a higher incidence of rape of women and children than all countries in the world that are not at war. Human Rights Watch (2001) notes that South African girls encounter sexual violence and harassment on a daily basis irrespective of their race and economic class. The report therefore maintains that the South African government is not doing enough to address the social problems plaguing schools.

The situation in South Africa is made more serious and embarrassing by teachers' involvement in these crimes. The Human Rights Watch (2001) report revealed that teachers that are supposed to lead the fight against gender violence in schools are unfortunately often the perpetrators. The Centre for Applied Legal Studies (2014) maintains that there is an urgent need for the South African government to take immediate action to address the circumstances that encourage the continuation of sexual violence perpetrated by teachers against learners. The prevalence of gender violence in South Africa has led to some scholars describing it as having reached epidemic proportions (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). African women and girls, especially those in townships considered to be socially disadvantaged, live in constant fear (Bhana, 2012a). The girls that participated in Bhana (2012a) study said that they had no place to hide as they were not even safe at home due to harassment from relatives, and older men and boys, as well as in schools by teachers and older boys. While reports have been issued and campaigns have been launched (Department of Education and LEADSA, 2013; South African Council for Educators (SACE), 2011) to address gender inequality by discouraging male power over women, implementing these policies remains a challenge due to women's subordination through daily practices that produce gender violence. Therefore, gender violence continues to bind patterns of femininity and masculinity (Bhana, 2012a; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

2.4 Forms of gender violence

Parkes and Heslop (2011) argue that, while much research has been undertaken and various campaigns have been launched to create awareness of the multiple forms of violence

experienced by girls around the world, it is difficult to translate policy into practice due to a lack of clarity on what constitutes violence. Dunne et al. (2006) identify two broad forms of gender violence, namely, implicit and explicit forms. Implicit forms of violence refer to daily structures and practices in schools that reinforce gender differences and may be directly violent or may indirectly encourage violence. For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, corporal punishment is used in schools to make boys stronger, but this implicitly also enforces female submission (Dunne & Leach, 2005). Explicit forms of gender violence relate to visible sexualised encounters (Bhana, 2009b; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; E. Meyer, 2008). Both forms apply to violence enacted by students on their peers, teachers on students and also by students on teachers. Gender violence that is implicit is difficult to identify because they are considered as normal and thus form part of the social life in any institution (Dunne et al., 2006)

2.5 Gender violence in schools

After the home, schools serve as an important socialising mechanism because children spend most of their time in school (Burton, 2008). According to Reilly (2014), achieving quality education is not limited to the curriculum, learning opportunities, learning outcomes, teaching and teachers, but also depends on the circumstances under which learning takes place. This implies that effective learning and teaching requires a learning and teaching environment that is safe and free from violence. Schools can only be considered safe spaces when they are free of danger and all kinds of harm; a space where learners and staff are free to work, study and teach peacefully without fear of mockery, intimidation, harassment, humiliation or any other form of violence (Prinsloo, 2006). Leach (2003) adds that apart from knowledge on how to gain employment and other academic knowledge, the school has a responsibility to encourage learners to be socially responsible and most of all to respect one another. Parents and guardians send their children to school with the expectation of securing not only quality education and how to become responsible citizens in society but most of all to achieve these in a safe and secure environment (Zulu, Urbani, van der Merwe & van der Walt, 2004). According to Wilson (2009), gender violence in schools undermines some of the benefits of education such as academic learning and psychological empowerment. Therefore, schools will be able to bring about change in society if acts of gender inequality and violence are discouraged (Leach et al., 2014).

Contrary to the above expectations of schools, studies have shown that such expectations have not been met in South African schools; they replicate the social setting in which they are

situated with deeply-rooted gender roles and power dynamics (Bhana, 2012a; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Reilly, 2014; Swain, 2005). Bhana (2013) highlights that schools are core in creating gender relations and inequalities while Swain (2005) submits that schools are avoidably hierarchical and are responsible for creating and maintaining relationships of domination and subordination. Francis and Mills (2012) associate schooling with violence due to reports on the extremely damaging effects it has on children and even teachers in and around schools. The fact that violence is a recurring problem in schools cannot be overlooked and the start of school means students are returning to a dangerous environment (Crews, Crews & Turner, 2008). According to Harber and Sakade (2009) schools are responsible for the reproduction of violence not only by failing to tackle the prevailing violence but also by actively perpetrating violence via the activities of the educational system and also by individual teachers. For their part, Zulu et al. (2004) attribute the violence prevalent in South African schools to the historical culture of violence and unrest in South African education where children were socialised to express their frustration with the system through the use of aggression and violence. Therefore while it is evident that there is high rate of gender violence in schools, the literature tends to lay the blame on boys by presenting them as perpetrators of violence against girls (Bhana, 2012a; L. M. Brown, Chesney-Lind, & Stein, 2007; Eisenbraun, 2007; Parkes & Heslop, 2011). Unfortunately most interventions focus on physical hostilities, with little efforts towards measures adopted to address the subtle but vicious forms of gender violence that are common within school spaces. According to Prinsloo (2006) self-esteem, freedom and fairness which are all democratic values can be attained only if the rights of all learners are duly respected as stipulated by the constitutional.

Hunt (2007) study on students' violence against teachers in Australian schools notes that male students were the most common perpetrators. Even though male and female teachers reported acts of violence by male students, female teachers were most affected. Haber (2004) attributes continuous violence in schools to the school authorities' failure to intervene either because of a lack of control or because these acts are considered normal; they therefore become guilty of violence by omission. The fact that these acts of violence are accepted and allowed to prevail in schools is of great concern, because children are supposed to be safe and protected in schools (Leach et al., 2014). Although there is a substantial literature and reports on school violence, most seem to neglect the fact that gender is the core in understanding violence in schools (Bhana, 2013).

The international literature reveals that the level of gender violence in schools differs greatly across societies. In Canada, even though research has shown that gender violence in schools is not a new social problem, there is evidence that it is increasing and is therefore a cause for concern (Leoschut, 2008; E. Meyer, 2008). The situation is no different in the USA as gender differences and inequalities are evident in schools both in and outside of classrooms from elementary to high schools. This is reinforced by teachers because they perceive boys as very active, quarrelsome and capable of expressing anger. For instance, when a boy is aggressive towards a girl, nothing is done to correct them; this encourages the notions that these boys already subscribe to about male dominance and superiority in relation to women (Kimmel, 2004).

Similarly, (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013; Dunne et al., 2006) submit that continuing gender violence in schools is due to the fact that teachers and the school authorities fail to acknowledge its existence. This is not because these acts of violence go unnoticed but because such behaviours are often regarded as part of growing up. Schools remain sites where the inequality that begins at home, with boys and girls being socialised into particular roles, is reinforced by teachers as they themselves are perpetrators and victims of gender violence (Bhana, deLange, & Mitchell, 2009; Bhana & Pillay, 2011; Wolpe, Quinlan, & Martinez, 1997).

Dunne and Ananga (2013) posit that a safe learning environment leads to quality learning. Studies in Africa have found that hostile learning environments that are plagued by violence impact significantly on students; victims of violence are twice more likely to miss school than non-victims (Dunne & Ananga, 2013). In Sierra Leone, gender violence is described as a severe and persistent problem that requires immediate action (Reilly, 2014). The foundation for such behaviour is the gender inequality in Sierra Leonean society. Gender violence in schools is manifested through different mediums such as mobile phones (Allen, 2013) corporal punishment, appropriation of space, silencing girls attempting to respond to questions posed by the teacher, provoking girls, extortion and public ridicule and stealing girls' and/or younger boys' possessions (Dunne et al., 2006).

A review of the South African literature reveals that increased levels of violence in schools have transformed schools into sites where children learn to fear and distrust and develop distorted perceptions of their identity (Bhana, 2013; Burton, 2008). (Human Rights Watch, 2001; United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), 2010) highlight gender violence

in South Africa as the chief obstacle that prevents girls from attending school as these girls encounter one form of violence or another on a daily basis. Therefore, schools are not the safe shelters for learners that they are supposed to be (Pinheiro, 2006).

2.6 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND MANIFESTATIONS OF GENDER VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

According to Bhana (2014a), in South Africa, poverty, gender ideologies and cultural practices are very significant in encouraging dominant and subordinate gender relations as well as exposing teenage girls to the risk of disease. Haber (2004) convincingly argues that social structures and cultural practices that form part of everyday life play a significant role in the manifestation of violence. In contemporary society, culture and gender customs are highly characterised by inequality which leads to violence (Reilly, 2014). Similarly, Bhana (2012a) submits that gender violence is a combination of political, cultural and economic power which mingles with male power and their daily acts of subordinating women. These customs celebrate male power over women, thereby normalising the unacceptable conduct perpetrated by men and boys towards women and girls. For example, even though rape and abuse are highly unacceptable, they are still considered suitable for men and boys, while victims are stigmatised and therefore fail to report this abuse while the perpetrator gets off scot-free (Morojele, 2009). According to Bhana (2012a), South Africa has the highest rates of rape and sexual violence in the world; she attributes this to the social and cultural backgrounds of most girls that make them vulnerable to various forms of violence, especially rape and other forms of sexual violence. The literature notes that gender violence exposes children to HIV, especially in a context of poverty and academic competition (Bhana, 2009a; Haber, 2004). This section examines the factors identified in the literature that explain gender violence in schools.

Gender violence in schools can be attributed to gender violence in the neighbourhood which spills over into school spaces, especially in secondary schools. When children are exposed to environments that are fraught with crime, it is likely that they will act in the same manner (Mayer & Furlong, 2010; South African Council for Educators (SACE), 2011). A study conducted in two schools in a South African township (Mamelodi Township, in Gauteng province, South Africa). According to Mampane & Bouwer (2011) students resident in townships need additional shield and extra survival skills in order to challenge the problems and hitches they encounter in their settings This is due to the fact that townships life in South

Africa is mostly associated with poverty, crime and violence (Prinsloo, 2007). Zulu et al (2004) confirms this assertion in a study carried out in 16 high schools in the KwaMashu circuit in the North Durban region; a township in KwaZulu Natal which reveals high rates of violence and equally raises concerns regarding learners' safety within school spaces.

The use of corporal punishment is a major manifestation of gender violence in schools. There is no consensus on what corporal punishment entails in a school context. Humphreys (2008) describes corporal punishment within a school setting as “sanctioned and unsanctioned, premeditated or unpremeditated physical punishment of a student or students by a teacher or head teacher at school for disciplinary purposes” (Humphreys, 2008 p. 529). This could be due to offences such as late coming or simply take the form of angrily hitting a learner in the classroom. Kyei-Gyamfi (2011) defines corporal punishment as the imposition of physical power intended to cause distress for the purpose of discipline, correction, control, and change of behaviour and also in the belief of that one is teaching the child a lesson. While many believe that corporal punishment of any kind is harmful and abusive, promotes violence and is also an infringement of the fundamental human rights of victims (Kyei-Gyamfi, 2011), its advocates argue that corporal punishment is not solely responsible for violence and aggression (Morrell, 2001). Ironically, a study conducted in a school in Soweto found that some learners justified the use of corporal punishment as they considered it to be a legitimate means to maintain school discipline (Payet & Franchi, 2008). While the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of children has become very popular, corporal punishment still remains an integral part of school life in many countries including those where it has been outlawed (Humphreys, 2008).

In South African schools even though teachers and other school authorities are aware of alternative disciplinary measures to substitute the use of corporal punishment, they still consider such measures as ineffective and time consuming (Prinsloo, 2007). Most teachers tend to deliberately violate Section 12(1) of the South African constitution which states that; “Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right not to be tortured in any way; and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way”. According to Morrell (2001), corporal punishment is a regular practice in schools in South African townships and black learners are the most common victims. Corporal punishment therefore remains a reality in most schools owing to the fact that teachers are

unwilling to substitute it with alternative disciplinary measures to maintain school discipline (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010).

The gendered dimension of corporal punishment cannot be ignored as it is of the utmost importance in the fight against this practice in schools. Humphreys (2008) posits that corporal punishment aims to sustain school gender regimes. An ethnographic study carried out in a group of secondary schools in Botswana confirmed the gendered nature of corporal punishment both in school policies and practice (Humphreys, 2008). In sub-Saharan Africa, corporal punishment is used in schools to make boys more tough and to ensure female submission (Dunne & Leach, 2005). Dunne and Leach (2005) point to the gendered nature of corporal punishment; in most cases it is administered by male teachers against male students that are considered more disobedient than female students. Morrell's (2001) study in schools in Durban, South Africa confirmed that in most African schools, both boys and girls suffered corporal punishment. This was done in a bid to secure adults' dominance of children as well as male dominance of females. Morrell adds that the intention is to teach boys to be tough and on the other hand, to instil humility and obedience in girls. Corporal punishment was only used on boys in English speaking schools dominated by whites (Morrell, 2001). Therefore, viewing corporal punishment through a gendered lens is important in addressing the persistence of this cruel practice in schools and equally forms part of on-going efforts to attain the Millennium Development and Education for All Goals pertaining to universal primary education and gender equity (Humphreys, 2008).

Sexual harassment is a very common manifestation of gender violence against girls globally both in and out of school. This is a disturbing reality for most girls in schools (Keddie, 2009). Unfortunately this practice is an old social problem that is reinforced and normalised in many schools and that continues to threaten women and girls (Huerta, Cortina, Pang, Torges & Magley, 2006). According to Fineran and Bolen (2006), sexual harassment is a form of violence that some boys use to reinforce their dominant position within discourses of gendered power and authority (Keddie, 2009). Sexual harassment in schools has been identified as very traumatic to its victims (Fineran & Bolen, 2006). It is not only stressful but "it is often the source of chronic stress" (Huerta et al., 2006). Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to acts such as unwelcome physical contact; verbal or non-verbal conduct including touching; sexual assault; rape; sexual advances; sexual comments/jokes; indecent exposure and demands for sexual favours (Keddie, 2009; Prinsloo, 2006). It is considered the

most widespread educational threat in modern-day schools. Newspaper and other media reports reveal shocking statistics on the extent of sexual harassment in South African schools, 30% of school girls having been victims of rape (Prinsloo, 2006). However most acts of sexual harassment are overlooked and are reframed as bullying (Brown et al., 2007). These acts have been normalised and are considered part of the school culture (Meyer, 2008). Sexual harassment continues to be a major obstacle to girls' right to education due to unsupportive school policies (Muhanguzi, 2011). Like other kinds of violence, sexual harassment is not limited to physical behaviour but includes behaviour like touching, words, looks and gestures (Morojele, 2009).

Many school girls feel frustrated, distressed and exasperated by their experience of countless episodes of harassment, mainly of a sexual nature, in school (Keddie, 2009). This is encouraged by the assumption that manhood encompasses sexual power while femaleness is associated with weakness, thereby exposing girls to sexual violence (Muhanguzi, 2011). Harassment creates a sense of fear; studies have shown that high school girls are afraid of going to school due to harassment. For instance, a study carried out at a Caribbean school found that girls were more vulnerable to sexual harassment than boys (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013). Absentmindedness, nonattendance, and moving to different schools are examples of the consequences of sexual harassment in school (Keddie, 2009; Muhanguzi, 2011). According to Morojele (2009), sexual harassment is a very common aspect of the lives of girls in schools as they are often subjected to boys' calling them demeaning names. Unfortunately, some of these acts of sexual harassment have been normalised even by school girls, as they consider it a normal adolescent rite of passage (Hlavka, 2014).

Haber (2004) highlights that sexual violence in schools is mainly perpetrated by male teachers against girls and occasionally by female teachers against boys. While many teachers believe that it is normal to engage in sexual relationships with learners (Prinsloo, 2006) others completely deny it and claim that they are merely making conversation with their learners (Muhanguzi, 2011). Haber (2004) argues that all sexual relationships between a teacher and a learner are abusive irrespective of whether or not they are consensual due to the fact that this is a relationship of power and inequality. In addition, it is alleged that some teachers take advantage of their position of power to sexually abuse penurious learners. The unfortunate reality is that such relationships are condoned by some parents as teachers can provide money to their families (Prinsloo, 2006). It is ironic that teachers, who are supposed to be implementing the laws against gender violence and zero tolerance policies on school

violence (Francis and Mills (2012), are themselves perpetrators. In the context of poverty and academic competition, Parkes and Heslop (2011) submit that teachers abuse girls sexually in exchange for goods and higher grades and sometimes as a means to reprimand them. Sexual violence by teachers is a common practice in South African schools (Centre for Applied Legal Studies, 2014). Unfortunately, these teachers often go unpunished or receive very mild punishment. The most severe punishment a teacher who is a perpetrator of sexual harassment gets is to be relocated to another school (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Patriarchy is also a major factor that contributes to the prevalence of gender violence in and around schools. The key characteristic of a patriarchal society is hegemonic masculinity which activates and normalises men's domination of women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Therefore, the patriarchal nature of South African society, is tandem with exaggerated gender inequality, promotes violence (Jewkes and Morrell (2012) and influences learners' behaviour in schools. Boys use power over girls to achieve or to exercise power (Bhana, 2012a) as a result of the patriarchal nature of the society where men use power against women in order to establish dominance. The Centre for Applied Legal Studies (2014) attributes the high level of sexual violence in South Africa to gender inequality due to the patriarchal nature of the society which encourages male domination of females. Young adolescent boys in schools replicate the power seeking and violent habits of adult males (South African Council for Educators (SACE), 2011). Therefore it is rational to conclude that patriarchy and cultural understandings of gender and power, together with other factors, justify and normalise gender violence in South African schools (Bhana et al., 2009; Moffett, 2006).

Bhana (2014a) points out that the social structure of sexuality and gender is complex as men and women resist, challenge and accommodate the sexual notion of gender inequality which is a major catalyst in women's vulnerability to sexual risks. The school establishes learners' sexuality through various practices. While schools seem to admit to and officialise learners' sexuality, they equally send out opposing messages to learners about their sexuality (Allen, 2007). According to Connell (2000), the informal culture and content of the school curriculum that considers heterosexual constructions of masculine and feminine as normal are problematic as this exposes homosexuals to various forms of homophobic violence. In schools, boys play a major role as gender police, forcing their peers to resort to violent behaviour that is regarded as evidence of being a man (Kimmel, 2005).

Religion also exposes homosexual learners to various forms of homophobic violence in schools (Bhana, 2012b, 2014b; Msibi, 2012). Bhana's (2012b) study at South African schools concluded that these schools were extremely homophobic and that this was in large part due to learners' and teachers' religious convictions. One of the respondents, a teacher, said that, "...our country is very much driven by religion...in different churches they don't accept it just like the Roman Catholic Church...it is not acceptable..." (Bhana, 2012b, p. 313). Even though this teacher might not be violent, her religious convictions in relation to homosexuality could increase the likelihood of homophobic violence on the part of less tolerant believers who could be school teachers, learners and even administrators. By preaching intolerance towards gays and lesbians, religion thus contributes significantly in setting a parameter that guides learners' rights, actions, and their experiences at school. Therefore, Bhana (2012b) argues that religion has a dual possibility in impacting homophobic violence in schools: it can curb it through the philosophy of love and care for humanity or it can exacerbate it by denouncing it outright.

Another major contributing factor to gender violence in schools is the culture of the peer group. According to Swain (2006a), peer group life plays a vital role in the lives of children at school. Children are socialised to the culture of male domination of women (McCarry, 2010). This greatly impacts the ways in which learners behave. Boys are under constant pressure to behave according to group norms that uphold hegemonic forms of masculinities. This is done in a bid to gain popularity either through intellectual, physical, economic, or sociocultural status, but above all, boys make use of physicality and athleticism to achieve status (McCarry, 2010; Swain, 2005, 2006b). Some children use the peer group a strategy to stay safe amidst the violence in and around schools by moving in groups to prevent violent encounters, while most boys use peer groups as a defence and attack mechanism to achieve social status, especially on the playground where bravery, strength and hand fighting skills are celebrated (Parkes, 2007b).

The use of graffiti has also been identified as a major contributor to violence in schools (Crews, Crews, & Turner, 2008; Johnson, Burke, & Gielen, 2011; Stein, 2005). Defining the phenomenon of graffiti is problematic because the concept is fluid and difficult to pin down to well establish boundaries. Brightenti (2010) submits that the complexity of graffiti writing lies in the fact that it intersects and interlinks with practices such as art and design, criminal law, politics and market. In line with the above, graffiti writing therefore could be termed an interstitial practice that can be understood in terms of its aesthetic meaning (Brightenti, 2010;

Halsey and Young, 2006), as criminal activity (Halsey and Young, 2006), as well as messages of resistance and liberation and as merchandisable product. In a sense however, the power of graffiti that makes it constitute a source of violence, including violence of gendered nature, can be explained in terms of the relationship that it projects between walls, social relationships and the public domain. In such a triangular relationship, walls serving as the main domain of graffiti are often considered as objects that are subject to both tactical and deliberate uses (Brightenti, 2010)

Yogan and Johnson (2006) established the gendered nature of graffiti in a study conducted at the Porter County Jail in the US. The study revealed that in most cases men displayed their masculinities in writings and drawings with angry and bold tones. On the other hand, women's writings and drawings depicted discourses of hope and were often displayed in softer tones. A study conducted in Baltimore City high schools used concept mapping to establish the link between features of the school environment and the possibility of violence. Gang graffiti was rated highly in terms of its impact on levels of violence, and moderately for its cessation (Johnson et al., 2011). It should be noted that the graffiti itself is not violent; rather, it is the hatred that is represented in such writings that provokes and promotes violence. Hence some authors use the term, hate-related graffiti (Crews et al., 2008). While different forms of violence occur in school social and physical spaces, Stein (2005) identifies sexual harassment as a more recurrent outcome of graffiti-related violence. Therefore, it can be summed that under the guise of its aesthetic finesse, graffiti writings as a form of social relationships, is a major contributor to gender violence amongst other forms of violence in society.

2.7 Schools and the construction of masculinities

Connel (1995) submits that masculinity is used in contemporary times to mean violence, domination and an interest in sexual subjugation. He emphasises that masculinity exists in relation to time and place and that it is also liable to change. Connel (1995) highlights the existence of multiple kinds of masculinities, namely hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised, with hegemonic masculinity occupying the dominant position, and elaborates on the relationships between them. He notes that the masculine gender includes a certain feel to the skin, muscles, postures and ways of movement. Viewed from a similar perspective, Paechter (2006) contends that the construction of masculinities attributes cultural power to men over women. He argues further that hegemonic masculinity is the ideal type of

masculinity which determines what it means to be a man. Therefore hegemonic masculinity has the potential to attribute power to men over women whether or not they are classified under hegemonic masculinity (Paechter, 2006).

While the family and other institutions play a significant role in the making of masculinities, the role of the school as a key site in the construction of masculinities cannot be overlooked (Connell, 2000). The school plays a dual role in the construction of masculinities. It is an agent in the making of masculinities and also serves as a setting for the making of masculinities by learners. This is done through its structures and practices. An example is corporal punishment where boys are beaten more often than girls.

Various studies on violence reiterate the role of schools in promoting hegemonic forms of masculinity that justify gender violence (Anderson, 2009; Haber, 2004). Connell (1995) notes that institutions such as the school are highly gendered. Boys are groomed to engage in competitive sports and are thus pressurised to exhibit their strength in various ways (Connell, 2000). Parkes (2007b) notes that, when faced with a violent encounter, most boys retaliate as they consider violence to be a sign of strength and bravery, as well as a source of social status. In the same vein, disadvantaged boys might use violence as a means of gaining peer status (Staff & Kreager, 2008).

2.8 Schools and the construction of femininities

From a common sense perspective, femininity can be referred to as ways of doing girl or woman (Paechter, 2006). According to Connell (1995), in a patriarchal society, femininity means dependence and fearfulness; this definition practically disarms women and they are forced to accept their plight while men, on the other hand, use violence to sustain their dominance. Burman et al. (2003) exploratory study on girls and violence concluded that the ways in which girls individually perceive violence and how they bring such perceptions to bear on their meanings and interpretations of violence are arbitrated and shaped by elements of class, race and sexuality and also by their area of residence. Therefore, the construction of femininities is part of a broader social process that is deeply rooted in power relations combined with matters of race, class and ethnicity (Bhana & Pillay, 2011).

Forms of femininities vary in social relations and the basis for this difference is the global subordination of women to men. One form of femininity complies with men's subordination, thereby accommodating their interests and desires. Connell (1987) refers to this as

emphasised femininity. Burman et al. (2003) posit that, unlike hegemonic masculinity, hegemonic femininity is submissive, nonaggressive and peaceful and girls that go against this dominant code are considered a threat to social norms. On the other hand, other forms of femininity are characterised by resistance and non-compliance, while some are a combination of compliance, resistance and co-operation (Hlavka, 2014).

It is often assumed that single sex schools liberate girls from boys' aggression (Bhana & Pillay, 2011). This is based on the premise that men and boys are the main perpetrators and protagonists of violence (Bhana, 2012a; Eisenbraun, 2007; Parkes & Heslop, 2011), leaving girls and women as innocent victims. However, research has shown that girls are not simply passive victims of violence (Bhana & Pillay, 2011; Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2008). The literature reveals that girls also use different forms of violence to consolidate their femininities (Bhana, 2008, 2013; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Merry, 2009; Wolpe et al., 1997). Bhana (2008) challenges traditional versions of femininities and argues that violence is not a solely masculine phenomenon. In a context of social and economic inequalities, girls use violence in order to secure resources and claim power. According to Bhana (2008), the everyday life of many school girls is characterised by violence as they escape it, negotiate it and equally partake in it.

Moreover, the school authorities continuously attribute masculinities to violence, thereby underestimating girls' participation in violence (Renold & Barter, 2003). A review of testimonies by 15 – 17 year old girls in a study conducted at a single sex school in Durban, contests ideas of inert femininities by revealing an atmosphere that is characterised by conflict and violent challenges in school (Bhana & Pillay, 2011). The study illustrates how girls use their bodies to construct and exhibit hierarchies of power. Some girls also exhibit features of tough femininities in order to resist harassment by boys. This is due to the fact that teachers do not intervene when harassment is reported (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013).

2.9 Gender and spaces

The significance of spatiality in the production and reproduction of social and gender relations has been validated by different scholars (Doan, 2010; Fincher, 2007; Löw, 2006; McGrellis, 2005). These scholars regarded the concepts of gender and spaces as social constructions. In recent times, however, gender and space have been researched as relational concepts, meaning a production process based on relation and demarcation (Löw, 2006). Doan (2010) describes four broad categories of spaces in which gender domination is

manifested to those whose gender fails to match the gender dichotomous box – a phenomenon that Löw (2006, p. 129) refers to as the “genderization of spaces”. These spaces include: Public spaces (e.g., an elevator); quasi-public spaces (e.g., public rest rooms and classrooms); semi-private spaces (e.g., malls; auditoriums and churches); and the private space (e.g., the home). Doan (2010) ethnographic study succinctly depicts how the tyranny of gender exerts a persuasive influence on the way she experiences these different locations as a transgendered person. The discursive complexity of her gender experiences leads her to argue that gender has a significant impact on how people perceive spaces and also which categories of activities are tolerable or suitable within these different spaces which are potentially spaces of hostility and/or transformation. McGrillis (2005, p. 515) concurs that the territorial boundaries that people are sometimes forced to adhere to through socio-cultural or other forms of construction, “create pure and bitter spaces which serve to reinforce their own sense of cultural and ethnic difference”.

The role of power relations in relation to gender and space is also significant. Löw (2006) argues that, despite variance in spaces in different countries, relationships of power guarantee that such spaces are endlessly bound within a stable context of reference and relation. This implies that “power relations form a central component of the constitution of gendered spaces” (Löw, 2006, p. 129).

2.10 Gendered school spaces and gender violence

In schools, space is an important factor that greatly contributes to the construction of various forms of masculinities and femininities (Paechter, 2006). O'Donaghue (2007) posits that school spaces are embedded with conflicting and hostile meanings. According to Renold (2004), schools provide specific spaces for boys only, for instance by dividing the school field, and allocate more space for activities like football that is associated with boys. Connel (1995) notes that sport is the epitome of masculinity. While the school positions learners in various ways in the school, learners themselves use the physical and social spaces of the school to construct their identities as well as those of other learners according to visible and invisible rules and norms about what sort of person is normal in a specific context (Paechter, 2006).

Studies have identified a variety of places as prominent spaces in schools for the manifestation of violence. These include classrooms, hall ways, playgrounds, and restrooms (Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999; Bhana, 2012a; Dunne, 2007; Human Rights Watch, 2001). In

relation to physical spaces, O'Donaghue (2006), suggests that the organisation and maintenance of school spaces such as corridors and entrance halls are shaped by dominant notions of masculinities and that learners mediate these spaces according to their notions of masculine identity. These physical spaces play a significant role in social interactions and gender stereotyping as they reveal notions of the “self” and “other” (O'Donaghue, 2007, p. 63). Human Rights Watch (2001) reported incidents of girls being raped in empty classrooms, toilets, dormitories and school hostels. In South Africa, rape and sexual violation of girls in facilities such as school toilets, empty classrooms, hall ways, dormitories, and other areas that are considered no go areas on the school grounds are an indication that particular spaces serve as catalyst for the manifestation of such crimes (Bhana, 2012a). Many studies and reports have suggested that the reason an increasing number of girls are attacked in these school spaces is because these areas are frequented by boys with insufficient or no adult supervision (Astor et al., 1999; Bhana, 2009b; Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Learners' displays of gender violence extend to formal spaces of the schools like classrooms where boys often dominate the verbal space (Dunne & Leach, 2007), tuck shops, as illustrated in (Bhana & Pillay, 2011), whereby some girls are pushed out of the line and on the playground by other girls who are violent and claim ownership of specific spaces.

According to Dunne (2007), physical and the social spaces are dominated by boys and men in order to affirm their masculinities and superior position in the gender hierarchy. Dunne (2007) argues that, boys' domination of the physical spaces of the school are evident in the physical spatial arrangements in the classroom. Such arrangements are determined by boys that ensure that girls sit at the front whilst they occupy the back seats so as to maintain control and domination and a way of intimidating girls. Dunne (2007) observes that, in order to avoid this classroom domination, some girls work harder academically in order to earn a place at the back of the class with the boys. Unequal power relations extend beyond the classroom to other physical spaces of the school such as playgrounds, car parks, hall ways, and corridors, with girls occupying the peripheries while boys occupy more space (Dunne, 2007).

Dunne and Leach (2007) elaborate on how the formal and informal spaces of the school are gendered. According to Prosser (2007), even though some school spaces are considered to be non-teaching spaces, many lessons are learnt in these spaces due to the fact that children feel more confident and empowered in such spaces and that this is where they negotiate their

identities through social interaction (Tupper et al., 2008). Although children spend most of their school hours in classrooms, part of their time is spent in spaces outside of the classroom such as the playgrounds and hall ways where they construct their identities (Tupper et al., 2008). O'Donoghue (2007) submits that such spaces are very significant in shaping the ways in which boys behave. Therefore these spaces are not merely settings, but provide a fertile ground for the performance and negotiation of masculinities.

Dunne and Leach (2007) posit that school spaces are governed by formal and informal rules and regulations that enforce heterosexuality that is characterised by male dominance and is sustained through forms of separation and differences based on age, authority and gender. Studies have shown that a school's formal rules and regulations enable boys to dominate the physical spaces of the school such as the playground, the assembly ground and even classrooms (Dunne & Leach, 2007; Renold, 2004; Tupper et al., 2008). Paechter and Clark (2007) identify the school playground as a prominent space for the construction of masculinities and femininities. Swain (2005) argues that even though a society's sociocultural and politico-economic environment as well as its past history has an impact on the school, individuals, the school's rules and regulations and the manner in which the school manages its resources and space greatly influence the everyday lives of boys and girls in the institution. Case studies by Dunne and Leach (2007) in Ghana and Botswana revealed that school spaces are mainly male dominated and that the connection between gender and power relations in such a space creates conflict between female teachers and male students. They provide examples of how male students dominated and guarded the informal spaces of the school and how girls who attempted to contest these spatial boundaries were confronted by different forms of violence. According to Burman et al. (2003), certain spaces are associated with violence thereby limiting women and girls' movement while forcing them into the restricted use of space. They are forced to move in groups for fear of violence.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the local and international scholarly literature on gender violence in schools. It also set out a conceptual framework for understanding gender violence. This framework highlights the following aspects and the relationships between them as important in understanding gender violence: Power; gender relations; school spaces; and the kinds of violence that result from all these factors. The literature notes that gender violence is a global phenomenon; however, it is more serious in certain regions such as Africa and South Africa

in particular, than in others. While many factors have been identified that cause gender violence in schools, unequal power relations and the peculiarity of certain school spaces appear to be the most common causes of most forms of such violence. Thus, this study offered an opportunity to understand the extent to which the conclusions of this literature review are applicable to the study context. The next chapter unpacks the research design, methodology and methods used to analyse data generated for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter was a literature review on the main concepts covered by this study which investigates the gendered nature of school spaces and how gender violence is enacted and negotiated within these spaces. This was important in order to identify possible gaps in the literature and hence provide a niche for this study. This chapter covers the research design and methodology, including the research approach, research paradigm, sampling, data collection and analysis strategies, ethical considerations, validity and reliability, and the limitations of the study.

3.2 Research design

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), a research design refers to a plan which is based on fundamental assumptions to identify the participants and data collection methods and how to analyse the data. Cresswell (2007) refers to a research design as a broad framework that is made up of different essential elements of the study, from the major philosophical ideas through to data collection and data analysis procedures. Durrheim (2002) and Sarantakos (2005) suggest that the research design is a plan that connects the critical questions and the execution or application of the study. They recommend that a research design should be capable of providing a strategy or road map for how the study will be conducted in order to answer the research questions. Durrheim (2002) maintains that this plan should involve various decisions on the procedures for data collection and analysis in order to ensure that these questions are addressed.

From the above it can therefore be deduced that research design is a combination of the entire procedure that will be undertaken in a research process from the data collection to data interpretation as well as the paradigms used in order to answer the research questions. This plan forms the basis on which empirical evidence is generated in order to respond to the study's critical questions as well as for the execution or implementation of the research.

3.2.1 Qualitative research

Scholars note that qualitative research is appropriate when one seeks to acquire in-depth understanding of meanings, actions, obscure as well as observable phenomena, attitudes and conduct (Cresswell, 2012; Stake, 2010). This implies that a qualitative study should produce findings that are not reached by means of quantification as with quantitative research. Considering the questions that underpin this study, a qualitative approach is ultimately the most appropriate since it allows for an understanding of how the gendered nature of school spaces serve as a fertile ground for the manifestation of gender violence. Nieuwenhuis (2007) submits that qualitative research focuses on comprehending the processes as well as the socio-cultural background that informs peoples' behaviours. Qualitative researchers are interested in the complexity of people's everyday interactions and solicit participants' subjective perceptions (Davies, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Stake, 2010). Therefore, in qualitative research, the intention is to unravel the ways in which human beings conceptualise their world (Flick, 2007). Nieuwenhuis (2007) also explains that a qualitative study focuses on people and systems by interacting with the participants and observing them in their natural setting. The aforementioned attributes account for the realistic and natural character of qualitative studies. As such, a qualitative study focuses on the quality and depth of the data. In contrast, a quantitative study is interested in breadth and quantity (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

While it has been argued that both qualitative and quantitative approaches are appropriate in researching social reality, they arrive at different conclusions (Davies, 2007). Stake (2010) points out that the difference between qualitative and quantitative research approaches lies in their emphasis rather than a distinct boundary. Furthermore, the methods used in qualitative research have the ability to describe as well as interpret people's frame of mind and how they understand things as human beings (Blanche, Kelly, & Durrheim, 2006).

It is against this backdrop that a qualitative approach was adopted for this study. This approach was apposite as it helped reveal and provided an in-depth understanding of the nature of gender violence in schools and how gendered school spaces serve as a catalyst in the manifestation of gender violence in a secondary school in Pinetown. The qualitative approach was appropriate to capture learners' opinions of the nature of gender violence in their school. Moreover, the intention was not to generalise the findings beyond the context. This is another crucial characteristic of qualitative research; it is acknowledged that each place and time is unique, which works against generalisation (Stake, 2010).

3.2.2 Social constructionism

A research paradigm consists of the interrelated assumptions of three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology (Blanche et al., 2006). These assumptions provide a rationale for a study by serving as perspectives that commit the researcher to particular methods of collecting data, observation and interpretation. They are therefore of unequivocal value in a research design because of the extent of their impact on both the nature of the research question(s) and the ways and procedures in which these are considered (Blanche et al., 2006).

This study employed a qualitative approach using a social constructionist paradigmatic lens. In most cases, social constructionism is combined with interpretivist methods and is a typical approach to a qualitative study (Creswell, 2009). This suggests that gender violence is best understood within the social and perhaps economic context with an emphasis on ideology and power. The literature review demonstrated that gender violence means different things to different people at different times. These varied understandings of gender violence are informed by the diverse social settings in which the concept is used. According to Blanche et al. (2006), social constructionists seek to understand how the understanding and experiences of individuals or groups are derived from larger discourses and that meanings are highly flexible across the context of human understanding. This understanding of social constructionism is shared by Holstein and Gubrium (2011), who describe human realities as actively constructed in and through forms of social action. Unlike the interpretive approach that considers people to be the source of their views and their frame of mind as well as their experiences, social constructionists consider such views, thoughts and experiences to be the outcome of a pre-existing system of meaning at a social rather than individual level (Blanche et al., 2006). While social constructionism takes language seriously, it is not solely about language but seeks to interpret the social world as a kind of language (Blanche et al., 2006).

The rationale for adopting this paradigm stemmed from the aim of this study that seeks to examine how learners' understanding and views of violence are embedded in discourses of gender and power and are also constructed by these social phenomena, amongst others (Blanche et al., 2006).

3.3 Methodology

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), the planning of any research activity must distinguish between the methodology and the specific instruments used for data collection. This section explains the choice of the case study methodology adopted and the different qualitative methods employed to collect the data.

3.3.1 Case study

From the perspective of that which was previously discussed concerning the features of qualitative research, it is worth mentioning that a case study approach was also adopted as part of the research design for this study. According to Cresswell (2012), there has been much debate on the definition of a case study. While some scholars highlight the case as an object of study, others view it as a process of inquiry. Due to these controversies, (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005) submit that it is important to clearly define the subject of the case study. Nieuwenhuis (2007) argues that case study research offers researchers the opportunity to gain greater understanding of a phenomenon by considering the complexities and dynamics of a particular case. The aim of this study was to obtain a detailed knowledge of the dynamics and manifestations of gender violence from the perspective of learners at a secondary school in Pinetown.

According to Welman et al. (2005), a case study aims to understand the uniqueness of a particular case which may involve an individual, group or institution. Henning (2004) submits that a major characteristic of a case study is that it is both a bounded system and a clear unit of analysis that enables it to truly capture the case in some depth. This is further clarified by Nieuwenhuis (2007) who notes that a bounded system signifies that most cases have a boundary identifying what the case is and is not. Thomas (2011) posits that a case study centres on one thing viewed in detailed from many perspectives. However, he extends the definition of the subject of a case study to include an event, a period in time or a phenomenon. Henning (2004) describes a case study as a layout whose features focus on a phenomenon and whose boundaries can be recognised. However, she however cautions that the boundedness of case studies should not only be defined in relation to the unit of analysis of the topic as they can also be defined by their methodology. Nieuwenhuis concurs and argues that even though the unit of analysis is a critical factor in case study research, this form of research is also used to describe a research method (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). He adds

that the case study method has been used across a variety of disciplines to answer how and why research questions.

According to Cohen et al. (2011), a case study methodology is relevant for a qualitative study because it has the ability to establish cause and effect in a real context and therefore requires in-depth understanding in order to do justice to the case in question. Another major characteristic of a case study is that it endeavours to fully understand the ways in which the participants in a particular study connect and interrelate in particular circumstances and what meanings they attribute to the phenomenon under study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Another strength of the case study approach (Nieuwenhuis (2007) lies in its ability to use several data collections methods such as interviews, observation, and documentation review.

The above discussion on the nature of a case study justifies the use of this approach in the current study. This study was a qualitative one that was based on social constructivism; these have been defined as typical characteristics of case study research. Further justification lies in the fact that the study adhered to the bounded system that informs such an approach. The aim of this study was to obtain in-depth insight into the manifestations and the manner in which gendered school spaces serve as fertile ground for gender violence. Therefore, a case study assisted in delineating the focus and context of this study which was a secondary school in Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This implies that by virtue of being a case study, the outcome of this study cannot necessarily be generalised to other contexts but should primarily be understood in the context where it was carried out.

3.4 Context of the study

This study was conducted at Nje Secondary School (pseudonym), a public school located in the Mariannahill area of Pinetown district. This community is located approximately ten kilometres from the Pinetown centre. Below is a map of Pinetown district.

FIGURE 3.1. A map of the Pinetown district depicting the mariannahill area



<https://www.opengreenmap.org/greenmap>.

The community around Nje Secondary school is largely made up of people of the coloured racial group. However, the school is dominated by African learners that live within and around that community. Some learners come from as far as Pinetown. This is a close-knit community. One of the participants observed, “with the coloureds, touch one touch all because they think this is their territory and we are invading their space”. There is a community library very close to the school which serve learners from Nje Secondary and other schools within the Mariannahill area. It also serves as hide-out for children who do not want to be at home or at school. The library is a convenient meeting place for lovers as well as for the consumption and abuse of drugs. There is also a playground close to the school which the students referred to as the “upper grounds” because it is up the hill from the school.

The boys and girls toilet are separate. The girls’ toilet is built a little further away from the administrative building very close to the playground meanwhile the boys’ toilet is closer to the administrative building. The location of the girls’ toilet suggests an unsafe space especially for girls. The space behind the girls’ toilet was mostly dominated by boys as a hideout for smoking, gambling and absconding and so girls’ freedom of movement around this area is restricted. This space has been named by the learners as the smoking area.

There is a very high rate of alcohol and drug abuse in the community around Nje Secondary School. This perhaps accounts for the high rate of violence and crime in the area. A total of 4 524 crimes were reported in the Mariannhill area in 2014, including 154 sexual crimes and 941 drug-related crimes (Crime Stats SA, 2014). A passenger with whom I shared a taxi said that there is a need for more churches in the community as only God can intervene to reduce the high rate of violence and crime.

The school displayed a clear board of their vision and mission. The vision of school is to develop highly educated learners who are skilled and able to compete globally. The mission statement states that Nje Secondary seeks to provide quality education through effective teaching and learning and parental and community involvement, in a safe and secure environment.

The school is a no-fee school with a population of 1 054 learners and 40 teachers. There is also a feeding scheme that is part of a DoE initiative to provide meals to learners through the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) in order to enable them to function better in class. However, some learners chose to go without food at school as they complained that it did not taste good. The principal and deputy principal are both men. However, the learners said that they respected the deputy principal more than the principal because the former is “huge and when he speaks, the walls of the school tremble”. There is also a secretary. The school has a hall where all school functions and church services take place and it is also used for examinations. Some of the focus group discussions for this study took place in the hall. There is a kitchen where food for the feeding scheme is prepared.

There is one sports ground in the school which is used for football and netball. Some of the learners complained that school was boring as there were no fun activities. The school is fenced all round and has two security guards; one male and one female whose job is to open and close the gate for staff, learners and visitors as well as stop the students from going out during school hours. However, learners are able to jump over the fence. It is clear that Nje Secondary is not strict in keeping learners in class as they can be seen loitering outside at all times of the day.

Most learners in the school come from poor socio-economic backgrounds. This is reflected in their torn uniforms, school bags and shoes. Some walk very long distances to school. One

learner had a rash on his body and when I asked the cause, he said he was allergic to fish but had no choice because that was what the school feeding scheme offered.

3.5 Gaining access

Maxwell (2012) notes the need to establish a relationship with the gate keepers of the research site in order to facilitate the data collection process. I gained access to the school through the principal. When I approached the principal and requested him to sign the gate keeper's letter, he was welcoming and very willing to allow me carry out my study at the school. I briefly explained the purpose of the study and he read and signed the consent letter. We talked about other things in order to become familiar and at ease with each other. He was delighted to know I came from Cameroon and told me about a Nigerian teacher at the school. The first day I went to the school to commence data collection the principal was in a meeting and I was asked to come back the following day. The next day, the principal introduced me to the Grade 10 teacher who would assist with recruiting the study participants. This teacher was also welcoming and helpful. In the course of data collection, I developed a very friendly but professional relationship with some teachers, security guards and most of the learners.

3.6 Sampling

Considering the fact that this is an empirical study, the appropriate sampling methods and choice of sample were carefully and critically taken into consideration not only to enhance the quality of the study by also to increase the validity and credibility of the research findings. Nieuwenhuis (2007) describes sampling as the procedure used to select part of the population for study purposes. Maxwell (2012) extends this definition to include the selection of sites and the research participants. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) stress that the sampling strategy is important in determining the quality of a piece of work by linking it with the appropriate research methodology and methods.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) suggest two major types of sampling used in research namely; random and non-random sampling. The difference between these two forms of sampling lies in the argument that when the purpose of the research is to generalise from a specific sample to a population, it is preferable to use random sampling methods. This is owing to the fact that random sampling methods produce samples that are representative. This implies that the basis of random sampling rests with the intention of the researcher to generalise directly to a sample population which should be based on the researcher's research result (Punch, 2009). Another visible characteristic of this kind of sample is that every

member of the study population has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample. Experimental and survey researchers widely use this method of sampling because the aim of such research is to draw conclusions about the wider population from the survey (Cohen et al., 2011).

Cohen et al. (2011) further explain another major type of sampling used in research which is the non-random sampling. This is the opposite of random sampling explained above and the aim should be to study phenomena and interpret results in their specific contexts. This implies that the primary concern of a researcher using this sampling method is not to generalise research outcomes to the entire population but to provide detailed descriptions and analyses within the confines of the selected unit of analysis known as the sample. It is also important to note that although we have seen that samples in non-random sampling research are not representative and therefore the findings cannot be generalised to a wider population, Henning suggest that readers “maybe able to extract from a well written report those elements of the finding that they find to be transferable and that may be extended to other settings” (Henning, 2004, p.11). However, this might greatly depend on the researcher’s ability to extrapolate a convincing argument from the text to ensure the validity of the findings.

This study adopted a purposive sampling technique where participants are selected on the basis of the researcher’s “judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 156). This is in agreement with Sarantakos (2005, p.164) who asserts that with purposive sampling, researchers “purposely choose subjects who in their opinion are relevant to the project”. He noted further, that for this reason purposive sampling has also been referred to as judgemental sampling due to the fact that the judgement of the researcher is vital in making decisions on the suitability of a particular sample to a project. Purposive sampling was not limited to the choice of participants but included the choice of the study site (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). To some extent, this study employed a convenience sampling method. Given that convenience sampling involves “selecting haphazardly those cases that are easiest to obtain” (Welman et al, 2005, p.69), this study used convenient sampling as the study site was chosen due to its convenience and easy access. According to Leach (2006), older students are the main sources of violence in schools and most media reports of violence involve high school learners. I concur with Anderson (2009) observation that, by the time they reach Grade 10, most learners, especially boys, try to prove that they are tough and popular; hence, I selected Grade 10 learners to participate in this study. The total number of participants was 49; 16

boys and 33 girls. While I initially intended to select 30 participants, because this is a very big school with five Grade 10 classes and approximately 40 learners in each class, many learners expressed their willingness to participate and I distributed 70 letters of consent. Only 49 were returned, possibly because the learners were preparing for examinations or because they lost interest in the study.

3.7 Data collection

According to Stake (2010), a qualitative researcher tries to find data that embodies personal experiences of particular situations. Thus, they make use of any data that paints a picture of what is happening. In order to obtain in-depth data and as a means to achieve data saturation, I used observation, focus group discussions and individual interviews to gather the data for this study.

3.7.1 Observation

According to Stake (2010), observation, interviews and examining artefacts are the most common qualitative research methods. Angrosino and Rosenberg (2011) state, that in qualitative research, the observer observes the activities as well as the physical space in which such activities are taking place. Nieuwenhuis (2007) describes observation as a vital method to collect data as it enables the researcher to see, hear and understand the truth as the participant perceives it. Another strength of using observation is that it exposes the researcher to original data that is happening live (Cohen et al., 2011).

For this study, observation was conducted concurrently with interviews and focus group discussions. Four different lessons were observed, two taught by female teachers and two by male teachers. The purpose was to understand the relationship between learners and teachers and also how learners interacted with one another in relation to gender. I also observed the physical spaces of the school, including writing on walls. Cohen et al. (2011) note that observation can include facts, events and behaviours. The observational data contained remarks on the physical spaces of the school. The interview schedule also included questions on these spaces in order to establish learners' perceptions of these spaces as well as the messages contained in these spaces (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.7.2 Focus groups

A focus group discussion is an interaction between one or more researchers and a few persons brought together to express their views on a specific set of open questions for the purpose of data collection (Welman et al., 2005). Interaction between participants that share similar experiences or characteristics might elicit thoughts, ideas and perceptions about issues related to the topic of interest. Focus groups are appropriate when adopting a qualitative research approach that calls for the collection of in-depth information. Nieuwenhuis (2007) observes that new perceptions are likely to arise within a focus group that can add weight to a study. The focus groups enabled me to gather information that could not be easily obtained from an individual interview (King & Horrocks, 2010). Therefore, it was important to complement the individual interviews in order to ensure both the collection of quality data and rigour. I was able to determine the shared understanding of several individuals as a small number of questions were asked and answers were forthcoming from all the members of the group (Cresswell, 2012; King & Horrocks, 2010). Furthermore, King and Horrocks (2010) assert that focus groups have the potential to reveal the social and cultural context of people's understanding and beliefs; interacting in a group also makes the process more natural.

To establish rapport with the participants, I started by asking them a few casual questions and they also asked me questions. From my accent they could identify me as a non-South African. When they asked me where I came from, I said 'Umbumbulu'. My pronunciation exposed me and they laughed out loud. I then told them that I came from Cameroon. They were excited that I could speak French and they wanted me to teach them a bit of the language. The most common question was, 'How do you say I love you in French, ma'am?' I said, 'Please call me Immaculate I don't want to feel old; I just want to feel your age'. They all giggled. This interaction established rapport with the participants (King & Horrocks, 2010). I therefore disagree with Maxwell (2012) who considers rapport as a means of manipulating participants. Some of the learners were a bit hesitant because they were concerned that they might give the wrong answers to my questions. I assured them that there was no wrong answer and that every word they said was very important for the study.

The nine focus groups were made up as follows:

- Two groups of only boys, with five boys in each group.
- Three groups of only girls, with two groups of five girls each and one group of six girls.

- Four mixed groups of boys and girls.

The key factor that determined the number of learners in each group was easy management and the sustainability of discussions (King & Horrocks, 2010). The reason for separating groups by gender was that I was interested in establishing the role of gender in informing the learners' positions and arguments (Welman et al., 2005). The sampling took into consideration the fact that learners were free to participate or not participate in the study. They were introduced to the topic and the nature of the study and were given an opportunity to declare whether or not they were willing to be part of it (Welman et al., 2005). During the focus group discussions, I identified five learners who participated in individual interviews. The selection of these learners was mainly motivated by the realisation that they apparently had more information to offer, but could not express themselves freely because they seemed intimidated by the presence of the other members of the group. At the end of each focus group session I gave the participants some snacks. This was done at the end as I did not want them to feel obliged to participate in the discussion.

3.7.3 Individual interviews

Nieuwenhuis (2007) states that, in qualitative research, the purpose of an interview is to view the world from the participant's perspective. Cohen et al. (2011) assert that amongst other things, interviews are useful in generating data as well as in sampling respondents' opinions. However, researchers need to take several factors into consideration before commencing an interview. King and Horrocks (2010) submit that before commencing an interview, the researcher needs to consider the following: the physical space of the interview; recording; building rapport; and the kind of questions to be asked. In line with the above, I conducted a mini-interview with my son to ensure that the audio recorder I had purchased was functioning properly. I used my phone as backup during the interview. Most of the participants that participated in individual interviews had already taken part in focus group discussions so rapport had already been established.

Bearing in mind the study's objectives and research questions, and that qualitative data would be generated to answer the research questions, interviews were a relevant data collection method. They took the form of semi-structured interviews, where open-ended questions are used to structure the conversation (Remler & Ryzin, 2011). Thomas (2011) notes, that semi-structured interviews are flexible in nature. In order to ensure that all the research questions were covered, I drew up an interview schedule with a list of issues (Thomas, 2011). Another

advantage of using semi-structured interviews was the fact that I was able probe in cases where the participants gave vague responses and I also encouraged them to expand on their initial answers in order to obtain more in-depth information (King & Horrocks, 2010; Stake, 2010; Welman et al., 2005). Abbott and McKinney (2013) note that some participants deviate from the topic; this occurred but I was able to bring them back on track.

Maxwell (2012) posits that the relationship between the researcher and the participants as well as the context of study influence the data. In order to create good rapport with the participants, each interview session started with casual questions that broke down power relations before moving to the core of the interview.

Eight individual interviews were held, five with girls and three with boys. Four of the five girls that took part in individual interviews had also participated in the focus group discussions but did not seem to express themselves freely. One of the three boys who participated in the individual interviews was part of a focus group discussion with boys only. During the discussion, he seemed to have much to say but was dominated by the other participants because they felt that he was taking too much time to make his point. Each time he started to speak, someone would interrupt and say 'I think what he is trying to say is ...' Thus, I decided to invite him to a one-on-one interview.

The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder. This was because, unlike a normal conversation, I needed to keep a record of the interview for analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Nieuwenhuis (2007) emphasises the need to obtain a participant's consent before recording an interview. All the participants were asked for their consent. Some were a bit hesitant at first, while others were excited that they were being recorded and tried to use big words. However, as (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) note, they quickly forget about the recorder during the course of the interview. While this process enabled me to understand the meaning of the participants' lives through their experiences, in line with Marshall and Rossman (2006) recommendation, I endeavoured to maintain a neutral position.

3.8 ANALYSIS

Nieuwenhuis (2007) submits that the aim of qualitative data analysis is to summarise what the researcher has observed as well as heard in relation to phrases and words that are common as well as patterns and themes. This summary enables the researcher to identify and elucidate these themes. Focus group discussions and interviews were recorded and transcribed. In line

with Anderson (2009) recommendation, I did the transcription myself so as to familiarise myself with the data, to ensure verbatim transcription and also because most of the discussions and interviews were held in the open air with background noise and in windy conditions. The quality of the transcript would have been compromised had it been done by another person. Transcription provides an accurate record of interviews (Cohen et al., 2011). Thereafter, the data were open-coded. Open coding is the practice of reducing text data into smaller units and then examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising it (Cohen et al., 2011). This helps to identify similar information and enables the researcher to search and retrace the data to identify items with a similar code. The codes were further grouped into categories and named. Once coded, it is possible to detect patterns and themes in the data.

Table 3.1 summary of the research design and method

Research approach	Qualitative
Research Paradigm	Social constructionism
Research style	Case study
Research sample	Non-random (purposive and convenient)
Data collection	Observation, focus groups, and individual interviews

3.9 Ethical issues

Ethics is a very important consideration when conducting research. Considering that this study involved human beings, ethics was of great concern. Abbott and McKinney (2013) emphasise the need to be vigilant concerning what is acceptable and what is unacceptable when doing research with human beings. It is therefore necessary for all researchers to uphold certain ethical principles, the most important of which are autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence (Cohen et al., 2011; King & Horrocks, 2010). This means that:

- The sovereignty of all the research participants must be respected;
- All participants must grant informed consent;
- Participate must be voluntary; and

- Participants must be reminded of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time should they feel uncomfortable.

Even though this study was part of a project ‘Stop the violence; boys and girls in and around school’ that already had an expedited ethical clearance, in line with the research procedure of the university (University of KwaZulu-Natal) I applied for ethical clearance which was granted by the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee before I commenced the process of data collection (see Appendix A). As the research participants were learners who were minors between the ages of 15 and 17 that could not freely give their consent, I explained the purpose of the study before giving them informed consent letters for them and their parents to sign. As Abbott and McKinney (2013) note, informed consent is necessary in order for the participants to clearly understand the purpose of the study, if there are any risks involved in participating, and how the data will be handled. There was an IsiZulu version of the consent letter that was sent to prospective participants’ parents (Appendix B) in case some parents did not understand English. The letter provided information on the study so that parents/guardians could make an informed decision as to whether or not to give their consent for a learner to participate. It also gave an assurance that the principles of confidentiality and anonymity would be upheld (Abbott & McKinney, 2013).

While this was included in the consent letters signed by the parents and learners, before each focus group discussion and individual interview, I reminded the participants of their freedom to participate or withdraw at any point or not to respond to any question that they did not feel comfortable with. The identities of the participants are protected by using pseudonyms for both participants and the school. The pictures used in this dissertation have also been adjusted to prevent the identification of the school.

3.10 Trustworthiness

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), trustworthiness is of great significance in qualitative research. Nieuwenhuis (2007) highlights the following factors that ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research:

- Control for bias
- Use multiple data sources
- Maintain confidentiality and anonymity
- State the limitations of the study

Observation, focus groups and individual interviews were used to collect data. The use of different data collection methods not only ensured that I achieved data saturation, but also made triangulation of data possible, thereby promoting the trustworthiness of the study. Furthermore, my position as a non-South African conducting a study in a South African school limited the possibility of bias. I approach the study from a neutral position as someone who had no direct stake, especially in the context under investigation. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to the participants and the school.

3.11 My experiences during data collection

My identity as a Cameroonian conducting research at a South African school had both disadvantages and advantages. Even though I was granted permission from the principal and I was accompanied by class teachers to explain what the study entailed, some students were still sceptical of my intentions. This was evident in one of the focus group discussions with a group of five girls. Before the interview started, they asked permission to have a discussion amongst themselves. They asked me why I chose their school and if I was going to write about it in the newspapers. They also said that because I am not from South Africa, it is possible that I might publish the information they revealed to me on the internet and hence give South Africa a bad international reputation. When they spoke amongst themselves they used coded language – to the best of my understanding it didn't fit into the category of any of the recognised languages in South Africa. When we started the discussion all they said was, "South Africa is a very good country, very safe, even our school is very good and we love school because we have wonderful and caring teachers... the community is also very safe". Everything they said was positive. This was a completely different picture from that painted by some of the other learners and even by taxi passengers with whom I commuted to and from the research site. It was clear that these learners had agreed not to divulge any information that might paint their country in a negative light. Even though this was not the intention of my study, I could not do much to convince them due to my ethical commitments. Another learner refused to be interviewed behind the library because of the "high rate of human trafficking in South Africa". One participant said that she could not be interviewed alone because she was afraid. She told me outright. "Miss, I won't lie to you, there is a lot of human trafficking these days so I don't want to be interviewed alone". These students did not trust me; they thought that an interview was a plot to lure them into my human trafficking net. However, these were exceptional cases and many of the other participants seemed to trust

me. I also used my knowledge of French to break power relations with the participants. They were keen to come back for me to teach them French.

In some instances I was mistaken for a social worker by auxiliary staff members. A school security guard approached me to talk about a girl in her neighbourhood who was being abused. This victim was not a learner at the school or a member of the community around the school. As much as I felt empathy with the situation, I was ethically bound not to intervene.

3.12 Limitations

Nieuwenhuis (2007) observes that all research endeavours have limitations. This study is no exception. The case study methodology employed meant that the findings are not generalisable and can only be applied to the context of the study. Unlike in quantitative and/or positivist research, generalisability is not possible because the sample is not statistically representative of the population (Payne & Williams, 2005).

Furthermore, I received ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee very late in the year. This resulted in data collection commencing barely a week before the learners wrote their examinations. The venues that could have been used for focus groups discussions and individual interviews were used to prepare for the examinations. However I met with all the participants during the first week and we made arrangements to meet in a quiet area behind the community library since the learners were studying in the library.

While some of the participants failed to turn up for the discussions, this had no effect on the sample and my study in general because I had anticipated such a set back and had taken the precaution of inflating the sample size. Thus, I still had the expected number of participants.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter described the research design and methodology used for this study. The chapter commenced with the clarification of the concepts of research design and methodology before discussing the specific design and methodological choices adopted in this study. Both design and methodology were informed by the critical research questions. It discussed the different procedures used to address the research questions. The study adopted a qualitative research approach within a social constructionist paradigm. The chapter equally underlined the case study methodology that was adopted and the 'case' in the case study was clearly defined.

The data collection methods were also elaborated on in this chapter. The researcher was the main data collection instrument. Data was generated using focus group discussions observation, and individual interviews. These different methods helped to ensure data saturation and triangulation which are important tools for rigorous research. Ethical principles were upheld throughout the data generation process which ensured that all participants were protected. The following chapter presents the data analysis and the study's findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology and design used to answer the research questions. This chapter is an analysis of the data that was generated using focus group discussions, individual interviews and observation. Despite interventions and measures put in place to ensure gender equality and make schools safer for learners, there is evidence that schools remain unsafe, especially for girls, due to numerous forms of violence that happen within school spaces. This study therefore investigated the gendered nature of school spaces and how violence is produced within these spaces.

As conceptualised in this study, two components of space are associated with gender violence, namely, the physical space and the social space (Johnson, 2009). According to Johnson (2009), social spaces capture the nature of the interactions that happen in school (including interactions with the school authorities and amongst peers) while physical spaces refer to the places where violence occurs. Part one of this chapter therefore analyses how gender violence is produced within social spaces while part two addresses the production of violence as learners mediate physical school spaces. The 49 participants in this study were Grade 10 learners at Nje Secondary School in the Pinetown district, KwaZulu-Natal. In order to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms are assigned to the participants and the school. The following themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data that was collected through focus groups, individual interviews and observation, form the basis for discussion in this chapter.

PART ONE: Gender, social space and school violence

4.1 Violence: gender power relations

4.1.1 Girls' accounts of boys' violence

4.1.2 Boy-on-boy violence

4.1.3 Heterosexuality and fighting for boys

4.2 Heterosexual intimate partner violence and culture

4.2.1 Boys' heterosexual intimate violence against girls

4.2.2 Girls' complicity in heterosexual intimate partner violence

4.3 “Our teachers are corrupt, they don’t like us”

4.4 “Yes and that is the problem, religion”: religious tension and homosexuality

PART TWO

4.5 Gender, physical space and school violence

4.5.1 The hall ways

4.5.2 The playground

4.5.3 Behind the girls’ toilets

4.5.4 Graffiti and the making of violence

4.6 Conclusion

PART ONE: Gender, social space and school violence

According to Johnson (2009), social spaces in school refer to the nature of the interactions amongst learners and with the school authorities. As is discussed in the following sections, violence is produced as a result of some of these interactions due to dominant ideologies of gender inequality which promote male domination.

4.2 Violence: gender power relations

Gender power relations are the key to understanding how violence is enacted. Connell (2011) argues that gender is characterised by power relations and that we have to understand how power operates in order to challenge gender power relations. Kimmel (2005) illuminates the role of power in gender relations and notes that the dimension of power, which is associated with manhood, is very prevalent in most institutions. Schools have been positioned as a central space in creating and maintaining gender relations and inequalities (Bhana, 2013; Swain, 2005). The unequal power relations prevalent in schools breed violence, thereby making schools unsafe. Learners’ accounts of violence in this study confirm the findings of previous studies that identified school spaces as characterised by deeply rooted gender roles and power dynamics (Bhana, 2012a; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Reilly, 2014).

4.2.1 Girls’ account of boys’ violence

Interviewer: Do you like boys?

Karen: Ayyyyyy Miss. They are ugly. They don’t know how to treat women.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Karen: *They like hitting us, shouting at us. They are very abusive.*

Akhona: *The comments too that some guys are making Miss. You're going and they'll be like (whistling) just to make you feel uncomfortable. They say you're ugly... and stuff like that. That too is harassment and harassment is violence.*

Various studies have confirmed the prevalence of gender violence in schools with girls being the most common victims of various forms of violence perpetrated by boys (Bhana, 2012; Parkes & Heslop, 2011; Pinheiro, 2006). These scholars submit that such violent acts are entrenched in unequal gender relations. Karen and Akhona's responses above illustrate that girls are victims of various forms of violence perpetrated by boys in schools. This is fuelled by dominant ideologies of inequality which promote male domination of females and greatly influence interactions amongst learners. Karen constructs boys as 'ugly' due to their hostility to girls in school. However, she doesn't advocate equality, but expects women to be treated in a special way. Therefore she is equally complicit in maintaining the unequal gender power relations that are at the heart of gender violence in schools.

Jane: *They [boys] play rough with us [girls] but to say they're gonna get angry and hit us, no they don't do that.*

Interviewer: *What do you mean when you say they play rough?*

Jane: *They punch you, throw you, you know us, we think we're strong too so we wanna take them on and say I can also do this and do that but we're weak, we'll try and do what they're doing but they are hurting us but we're not hurting them because they're stronger than us but it's just playing, nothing serious.*

Jane concedes that boys play rough, but at the same time, she notes that school girls are active participants in sustaining unpleasant and violent behaviours towards them, as she considers such behaviours as, '*just playing and nothing serious.*' The thin line between acts of violence and play as constructed by learners is problematic as boys take this as an opportunity to perpetrate violence against girls.

Most of the vast body of literature on violence has portrayed men and boys as the main perpetrators of violence against women and girls (Bhana, 2012a; L. M. Brown et al., 2007; Parkes & Heslop, 2011; Pinheiro, 2006). However, this does not mean that women and girls are pathetic victims of boys' aggression. This study found evidence of isolated cases of violence perpetrated by girls against boys. According to Bhana (2008), the presentation of

school girls as victims of violence and boys as perpetrators reveals insufficient knowledge of their experiences in school, including the survival skills girls develop in order to traverse violent school spaces. As the data suggest, not all the girls in this study conformed to everyday perceptions of femininities that portray women and girls as victims of violent acts perpetrated by boys.

Sandile: ...and Miss in this school, you've got some amazing girls. Girls that hit boys. They whipped him, they really do. There is this girl that hit boys, she is in grade 12, she is fat... she is strong. She fights to protect the interest of girls.

Due to the culture of silence, vulnerability and passivity that have been normalised in schools to represent feminine features, girls who broke the trend of passivity were identified by the boys as 'amazing girls'. According to the male participants, *amazing girls* were girls who tend to deviate from normal patterns of passivity to initiate as well as retaliate when boys are aggressive. These girls do not only resist boys' violence towards them, but they are also very concerned about their female peers who are victims of boys' aggression.

While one might be tempted to think that boys are the enemy due to their aggressive behaviours towards girls, it is evident from this study that friendships are still created. During my observation during breaks and in classrooms, I noticed that most friendship groups were separated along gender lines. However, when I quizzed some of the girls about who they prefer to hang out with, they had this to say:

Talia: We mostly chill with boys. Boys are more fun. Girls like trouble. When girls are together, there's conflict, there's a lot of scandal.

Sandra: I like hanging out with the boys. I leave my friends to go hang out with boys. They are so cool to hang out with. I can tell my male friends about anything. My boyfriend is like my brother. I tell him everything. But girls gossip a lot and when you tell them something, the next day it is everywhere and that's how a fight starts. Boys are cool. Girls are jealous of one another. They carry one another's story... I just like to hang out with boys.

Bhana, Nzimakwe, and Nzimakwe (2011) submit that sexuality is an overriding force in the creation of friendships. In order to prevent the embarrassment of being regarded as boyfriends and girlfriends, girls choose to stay together in school even though they prefer the company of boys.

4.2.2 Boy-on-boy violence

Gender violence stems from unequal power relations and boys are the most common perpetrators of violence against girls (Leach et al., 2014; Merry, 2009; Parkes et al., 2013). However, as Kimmel (2004) notes, such power is not limited to the power men have over women but also includes the power men have over other men. The data revealed many incidents of physical forms of violence perpetrated by boys against other boys.

***Alain:** Children sometimes bring knives to school and when they fight, they fight with knives, mostly boys.*

***Themviso:** Some other boys fight to please their friends. They want attention. They just fight so people could see them that they are strong and must not interfere with them.*

***Zama:** Boy fights are very dangerous, boy fights can end in the last man standing. Its pride, its pride.*

***Brice:** They [boys] fight for anything. Problems, problems... or maybe they are arguing about liquor or even a cigarette and then poop! Somebody is bleeding on the site.*

Ringrose and Renold (2010) submit that the logic of masculinities in schools, especially on the playground, considers male victims as one of the greatest breaches of brave masculinity. Therefore, boys are under constant pressure to exhibit strength (Swain, 2005) as a display of their masculinity. This was evident in most of the fights amongst boys during the course of this study. The fights occurred in phases. If a boy or a group of boys were defeated during the first phase, they were under pressure to restore their status by exhibiting strength.

***Andiswa:** Like this Miss, if I come now and push him, the crowd will say, 'push him back, push him back' even if I wasn't gonna push him, now that is pressure because if I don't they would be laughing at me. So I think I should push him back, then when I push him back, then a fight starts. When I win in the first round he will come back again and there is round 1, round 2, round 3 just like that.*

This excerpt concurs with Parkes (2007a) who notes that in most cases, boys display hegemonic forms of masculinities by retaliating when faced with violent encounters. The culture of the peer group which has been highlighted by (Swain, 2006b) as a major factor in the lives of school children that promotes gender violence in schools is revealed by Andiswa when he yields to the demand from the crowd to retaliate when provoked. Boys feel obliged

to uphold group norms that reinforce hegemonic forms of masculinity by retaliating when faced with violence. The following extract illustrates how boys make use of physicality to perpetrate violence.

Bongani: *There's this guy in my class. Since I've known him he's been a violent guy. Physically, verbally. I remember this one time, his friend accused me of stealing his phone, his Blackberry phone. I never took the phone but they accused me of taking the phone because someone told them that I took the phone and that someone when the person was brought in front, he denied it. As soon as he heard that I took the phone he came to me and acted a violent act physically against me because he is a huge guy. He is very huge, even right now he is getting bigger each and every single day. I'm a small guy. And this guy when he grabbed me and pushed me against the wall. Meena I'm thinking to myself if I try to react against this guy, he is big, he is strong, he is muscled, and I am small, tiny, and he is big they're just gonna give me a good nice beating.*

Bongani's emphasis on physical features such as body size and muscles are all allusions to strength. He emphasises the fact that his opponent was very huge, creating a link between body size and strength. This concurs with Connell's (1995) attributes of masculinity which include a certain feel of the skin and muscles. Most boys use these attributes to perpetrate violence against smaller boys. However, Bongani displays an alternate form of masculinity that is non-violent.

This study also elucidates the culture of violence and aggression within the social spaces of school that boys exhibit through games. For example, one way of exhibiting power and a show of hegemonic masculinity is the *two litre game*. In this game, boys stab each other with a two litre bottle to determine who is stronger.

Tyron: *It's a boy game, just for fun and also to know who is stronger.*

The 'gaming of violence', which is a dominant culture amongst school boys and is a public display of strength (Ringrose and Renold, 2010 p. 580) has been normalised and is considered fun. During a focus group discussion Tyron pulled up his shirt to show me a scar he received during a two litre bottle game. Even though this game is very risky, boys still find it fun because it is a sign of strength and bravery, a major characteristic of hegemonic masculinity (Cornell, 2000). The normalisation of such acts of violence is a major challenge in contesting the cruel effects of the violence that is prevalent in schools.

4.2.3 Heterosexuality and fighting for boys

Heterosexuality is firmly implanted in social relations amongst learners in schools. According to Ringrose and Renold (2010), girls are captives of socially imposed qualities of ideal femininities. Consequently, they tend to position themselves and their peers in sexual hierarchies, mainly based on their appearance.

Rose: *When someone is jealous of another, they [girls] get offended by very little things. Also when a person is jealous of another person, then they degrade them, then the other person finds out, and that's a boom.*

Interviewer: *Why are they jealous?*

Rose: *For example beauty, yes beauty is the main thing, intelligence, style.*

It is significant that it is widely accepted that girls express cruelty via elusive and constant regulation of one another's sexuality. Some young school girls have developed a reputation for protecting their sexual prowess via rumours, gossip and violence (Bhana & Pillay, 2011). The participants cited gossiping, jealousy, and fights over boys as the main causes of girls' hostility towards other girls. Such hostilities were manifested through name calling, verbal confrontations and, most often, physical assaults. This is in line with the assertion that "boys do not need to be physically present to influence the power of sexuality – they are present in girls' heads in their physical fights" (Bhana & Pillay, 2011 p.72). The excerpt below illustrates this point of view.

Sandile: *To me, another reason why a girl will fight with another girl is that most of the time the one who starts the fight is scared of approaching the guy. Because if you think of it, it's the guy who is wrong.*

Leo: *Girls fight because of jealousy, finished.*

Interviewer: *Can you explain more about jealousy.*

Michelle: *Oh yea, like if you stole my man, I'll fuck you...*

Amanda: *Like, if I have a boyfriend in the school and she also is dating my boyfriend. I'm not gonna ask my boyfriend, I'm gonna hit her because she's dating my boyfriend.*

Interviewer: *So why do you hit the other girl and not your boyfriend?*

Amanda: *Because I'm scared of my boyfriend that he's gonna hit me back. So I'm gonna remove her so I can stay alone with my boyfriend.*

Dorine: *(Laughs). The boys are stronger, they go gyming and they'll hit them I'm sure.*

Pearl: Aah it's their boyfriend and she loves her and this other girl comes around and seizes her boyfriend and soon they say, you said I'm this I'm that, and soon they start fight and pulling each other's hair and ...

These extracts are responses from participants in different focus group discussions. Young adolescent girls have been socialised to condone men's aggression to the extent that they tend to take it out on other girls when they feel betrayed in a relationship. Gossip, jealousy and fighting over boyfriends were raised in all the discussions and interviews as the underlying motive for most girl-on-girl violence. Bhana and Pillay's (2011) study produced similar findings. Most of the participants in this study distanced themselves from such violent behaviour by making use of phrases such as, "*ah it's their boyfriend...*", "*like if I have a boyfriend...*", "*like if you stole my man...*" Chesney-Lind and Irwin (2008) note, that, due to the prevalence of gender inequality in society, it is challenging for girls to demonstrate aggression towards boys without grim consequences. Therefore, in order to secure a boyfriend, which is considered a sign of heterosexual success (Bhana & Pillay, 2011; Jewkes & Morrell, 2012), these school girls vent their frustration and anger out on other helpless girls.

As revealed above, girls tend to break gender norms by participating actively in mediating, resisting and even indulging in violence (Bhana, 2008). This study therefore adds to the body of literature such as (Bhana, 2008; Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2008) that does not merely portray girls as pathetic victims of boys' violence. It found that girls also perpetrate violence, mainly against other girls in order to secure boyfriends, which learners consider a sign of heterosexual success.

4.3 Heterosexual intimate partner violence and culture

Intimate partner violence also featured as a common form of violence amongst learners in heterosexual relationships. Research conducted by WHO in 10 different countries representing varied cultural settings confirmed the prevalence of intimate partner violence in all countries ranging from physical to sexual and emotional violence as well as acts of controlling behaviour by men over women (WHO, 2012). Research shows that contemporary society is implicitly governed by culture and gender beliefs that encourage inequality (Reilly, 2014; Vandello & Cohen, 2008) . Such beliefs promote male dominance of women and also normalise undesirable behaviour by men towards women. This is due to the fact that these customs equate manhood with dominance and aggression. Hegemonic masculinity which

triggers male domination of women is typical of a patriarchal society like South Africa (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010) and contributes greatly to the prevalence of men's sexual violence against women in the country (Centre for Applied Legal Studies, 2014).

4.3.1 Boy-on-girl heterosexual intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence is deeply rooted in culture and gender beliefs that enhance inequality (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Reilly, 2014; Vandello & Cohen, 2008). Jewkes and Morrell (2010) posit that common constructions of masculinity in South Africa validate the use of violence to police and penalise women. This behaviour seems to have been passed on to the younger generation as similar attitudes are displayed by boys and girls involved in heterosexual relationships in schools. Stein (2005) notes a remarkable increase in violence in dating relationships amongst teenagers. Most of the boys that participated in this study exhibited these traits and preserved their masculine identity through violence against their heterosexual partners.

Anele: You find the boys and their girlfriends, they wanna hit them in front of everybody if they are talking to other boys. Like I know one boy, he was in matric last year, his girlfriend was also in matric. I don't know if it's true that she was with this other guy in the same class but he hit her in front of everybody and you know teachers couldn't stop because you know, it's not their business, when they go home it's gonna happen again. What's the use in stopping when he's still gonna hit her when they are not there so she might as well just get the hiding and get finished.

According to these participants, boys are supposed to ensure that their girlfriends behave 'decently' in order to preserve their dignity amongst their friends. Decency meant that their girlfriends must be faithful; they were not allowed to have long discussions with other boys and were not allowed to be involved in acts such as smoking because smoking is not a 'girlish' habit. Girls who failed to comply with the rules faced violence. This was done in an attempt to redeem their reputation.

In a focus group discussion with six boys, four said that they had physically abused their girlfriends for not behaving in line with their expectations.

Interviewer: Why did you hit her?

Sizwe: Miss she was very close to my friend and I told her to stop but she wouldn't listen.

Nkululeko: *Hey Miss, I can't say this eish but you know Miss, some chicks can't keep their legs closed. She was giving it to everyone in the school, you see Miss and all my friends were talking about it and laughing at me saying I cannot discipline a chick (laughing). And you know Miss, it's not ayopa (cool) for a girl to do that. I asked her why she was doing that but Miss you know bad mouth, so I was tempted to smack her, just once Miss. Ya Miss and that was the end.*

Interviewer: *You said she was giving it to everyone. What was she giving everyone?*

Nkululeko: *(Group laughs) hey Miss you know, Miss you know, 'ephakathi' Miss.*

It is evident from Nkululeko's responses that boys tend to be violent in heterosexual relationships when their masculine identity is endangered and also for fear of being humiliated in public. They seem to be under constant pressure to maintain their status as boys amongst their peers and equally sustain hegemonic forms of masculinity as per their socialisation of male domination of women. Nkululeko's reaction to his girlfriend is in line with McCarry (2010) assertion that the culture of peer groups has a major influence on the way learners behave in school. Nkululeko's action is not only based on the fact that his girlfriend is alleged to have multiple partners but the main reason for his aggression is the humiliation he is subjected to from his friends due to his inability to control his girlfriend. According to Anderson (2009), girls have been located within patriarchal discourses of male respect. Thus, Nkululeko is obliged to regain his pride. These young learners' aggression is due to their socialisation into cultures that encourage male domination which in turn encourages violence in schools.

However, like the boys in Anderson's (2009) study, some of participants resisted the hegemonic masculinity that prevails in most heterosexual relationships in and around schools. As Anderson (2009) notes, non-masculinities value love and respect in a relationship with girls.

Scelo: *Spending time with girls will also improve your general knowledge and also the way you behave with other girls and your thinking capacity, but when you're chilling with boys you really don't mind, you can even fart next to this guy no problem. I love girls...*

Andile: *Ok, I was trying to make reference on what this country is founded upon; the constitution. Culture has deceived us. I cannot say when I marry my wife, I say I'm*

the head or your opinion is irrelevant. Why, because there is nothing that separates me and her when you think about it now, she is human and I'm human. We eat, we share the same sun, we share the same air, everything. We are equal. The constitution states that there must be equality. In as much as she has to respect me, I in that same breadth must respect her we need to be equal but culture deceived us ehh you are the head, I'm the tail you know.

The male teachers that participated in (Bhana et al., 2009) study claimed that learners have been predisposed to cultures that endorse male domination of women with significant impact on the ways these learners relate to one another in school. However, young men like Andile refer to the South African constitution to reject cultures that celebrate relationships of power and domination.

4.3.2 Girls' complicity in heterosexual intimate partner violence

According to Jewkes and Morrell (2012), most women's agency ends at the level of choosing a partner; once in the relationship, they are trapped in heterosexual masculinities that restrain their agency.

***Rachel:** Some boys tell you they love you, when you are serious with them, you tell them you love them, they still cheat on you. They play with your feelings, they say they love you, you forgive them, but they still do the same thing. So in that case, I'll say they are bad. But there is nothing you can do because you love him.*

Paradoxically, women and young girls are not only subordinated by men and boys but have internalised the subordinate roles assigned to them by society and have become active participants in their own subordination, opening the door to violent masculinity. Rachel exhibits the predominant model of femininity that tolerates spiteful behaviour towards women in intimate partner heterosexual relationships (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Instead of resisting, the dominant model of femininity is accepted and violent and malicious behaviour is tolerated. Some of the girls that participated in this study portrayed the characteristics of femininity which Cornell (1987) refers to as emphasised femininities. These include reliance and fearfulness. According to these girls, the acts of violence perpetrated against them are justified if their actions are considered socially unacceptable.

***Interviewer:** Have you ever been a victim of violence?*

Londi: *Not really, not really.*

Interviewer: *Ok but you mentioned during our discussion that your boyfriend hit you, was that violence?*

Londi: *Yeah, it is violence when someone hits you. Yeah, he hit me but it was not really hit as in when they hit you. It was just a slap, not boxing you or something like that.*

Interviewer: *Ok, so just a slap is not violence.*

Londi: *It is violence but what my boyfriend did was not really serious... that's why I say it was just a slap. He only hit me once because I smoked. So I don't take it as violence...*

Interviewer: *Does your boyfriend smoke?*

Londi: *Yes he does.*

Interviewer: *So why would he give you just a slap when you smoke?*

Londi: *Well for me I think it's because it is weird for girls to smoke. For boys it is okay, but for school girls it doesn't sound right.*

Londi is one of the many school girls who are firm in justifying their boyfriend's violent acts. School girls acknowledge their subordinate position in a relationship, thereby giving boys the authority to control their behaviour. Because smoking is considered indecent, it is the boys' right to make sure their girlfriends stay away from indecent acts that will jeopardise their reputation amongst their peers. Young women remain passive to violence perpetrated by their boyfriends; this shows that they have been socialised to comply with male domination. Internalised subordination enables violent masculinity to prevail. According to Londi, a slap from her boyfriend is not an act of violence because it is her boyfriend's right to discipline her when he views her behaviour as socially unacceptable; therefore, she sees no reason to retaliate. This is illustrated when she says, '*it was just a slap because I smoked*'. Young school girls comply with their boyfriends' aggression against them, thereby accommodating the boy's desire to control. Intervention strategies are therefore difficult to implement due to the fact that such aggression has been normalised as part of everyday life. Men and boys are not held responsible for their actions, especially in a heterosexual relationship.

However, not all girls condoned such aggressive behaviour on the part of their boyfriends. The data revealed that some girls contravened heterosexual rules by retaliating when faced with violence from their boyfriends.

Cindy: My boyfriend don't hit me because I'll put him in his place.

Interviewer: How do you put him in his place?

Cindy: I won't even let him hit me. I'll hit him back.

Jaden: Hey Miss, these girls; they can pour hot oil on you. They use anything that is closest to them on you. Knives, bottle, anything.

The challenging and rebellious tone in which Cindy expresses herself elucidates her agency in the relationship with her boyfriend.

4.4 “Our teachers are corrupt; they don't like us”

Children spend the greater part of their days in school learning and socialising (Burton, 2008). This implies that, for learning to be effective, the school space should be safe and free from violence. Schools play a very important role in the fight against gender violence but at the same time, there is evidence that they are settings where gender and sexual violence is prevalent (Bhana, 2009b). The school where this study took place acknowledges the need for learners to study in a safe environment; this is part of its mission statement that is posted on the wall as one enters the administration building. However, this statement seems to be a mere work of art on the wall as the learners reported that much of the violence perpetrated by learners against other learners, teachers against learners and even by learners against teachers in the school goes unpunished. The learners referred to the failure of the school and teachers to intervene in issues of violence and to ensure learners' wellbeing at school, as well as the violence perpetrated by the teachers against learners as 'corruption'.

Joyseline: You don't have to do your work if you don't feel like doing your work. The teachers they don't care. They are so corrupt. They use swear words on you, they don't care how you feel, they are so corrupt.

Nomsa: Like calling children names is not the role of a teacher, they should encourage children, like not trying to bring their level of confidence down.

Interviewer: When you say they swear, tell me some of the words they use.

Joyseline: You are dumb, 'uyagula', 'fotseke'.

Jaden: Some of the teachers threaten us even though it's illegal. They don't like us.

Interviewer: *How do you mean?*

Jaden: *They don't care whether we understand the lessons or not. They just shout.*

Reily (2014) asserts that quality education is not only achieved by sticking to the curriculum and learning outcomes but also depends on the school being safe and violence free. Therefore, teachers should act as watch dogs against violence, empower learners, ensure gender equality and raise socially responsible young people. Ironically, teachers are themselves perpetrators of gender violence and also strongly abide by the social norm of gender inequality that encourages boys to be violent. Joyseline's emphasis on the word 'corrupt' is evidence of how disappointed some of the learners are with their teachers for failing to meet their needs. Teachers are supposed to be role models. According to these learners, the high levels of violence in the school are due to the lack of intervention by teachers and the school administration. Like the children in Pinhero's (2006) study, the participants placed the onus on teachers to make their social world safe by putting an end to violence in the school and helping them to accommodate one another irrespective of gender or race.

In line with the WHO's definition of violence which include acts of neglect (World Health Organisation, 2002) teachers' and the school administration's passive attitude towards violence is itself considered a form violence. A focus group discussion with a group of five boys revealed that gender violence had been normalised in the school, thereby promoting relationships of domination and subordination which breed violence.

Interviewer: *And the teachers, what do they do when children are violent?*

Nkosi: *They don't care.*

Mbali: *They [teachers] don't care. It's only Mr... (Deputy Principal) that the children stop fighting if they see him. The rest Miss, they don't care.*

Karen: *Nothing, the teacher just stays there and stares at them fighting because they don't know how to stop the fight.*

Jack: *The teachers, they don't care. You can kill each other, nobody cares.*

This concurs with assertions by some scholars that a lack of intervention by the school authorities promotes continued violence (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013; Dunne et al., 2006; Haber, 2004; E. Meyer, 2008). This deters victims of gender violence from reporting such cases as they are sure that nothing will be done to address it. It is considered part of growing

up, even by learners. However, some of the participants felt that the teachers were tired of trying to fix the school with no success. The question remains: what is the limit of care?

Another form of violence perpetrated by teachers against learners is the use of corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is considered an unsuccessful means of both discipline and reducing violence in schools (Brown, 2011). While corporal punishment is illegal in South Africa (Save the Children, 2005), there is evidence that teachers still use it as a form of discipline (South African Council for Educators (SACE), 2011). The gendered dimension in the administration of corporal punishment is noteworthy.

Jake: Some [teachers] twist you ears and pinch you.

George: The teachers, they even hit your head with a ruler.

Sithole: Some, they punish you that you gonna sweep the class if you're a girl and if you're a boy they smack you.

Mercy: Hmmmm, ok I don't want to say teachers are violent because if they get angry, they get angry because you never do your homework work, then they shout at you and sometimes they hit you and stuff.

The role of the school in reinforcing and propagating gender role stereotypes that sustain gender inequality is clearly visible in the above extract. The gendered nature in which corporal punishment was administered at this school resonates with Dunne and Leach (2005) assertion that the use of corporal punishment in schools aims to make boys stronger and uphold female submission. However, some learners like Mercy in the above extract, felt that corporal punishment was justified as a form of discipline.

4.5 “Yes and that is the problem, religion”: Religious tension and homosexuality

Jaden: When you look at them, they're not girlie.

Tyron: Yeah, they act like men basically.

Sharon: They don't wear skirts, they only wear track suits throughout the year.

Nosizwe: They have haircuts like boys and they chill with boys.

Zama: We see them kissing and touching.

***Sne:** A gay, I can even identify a gay by tone, all the hand motion, you see the way I'm talking now, if I'm gay I wouldn't be speaking the way I'm speaking now. I will be speaking like 'meow' (cat noise).*

While schools acknowledge and legalise students' sexuality (Allen, 2007), young boys and girls in schools seem to have assumed the role of gender police. Learners who dress and behave outside socially constructed gender norms are perceived as gays and lesbians. This is due to the manner of the socialisation these children have been exposed to that compels them to be heterosexual and where masculine and feminine are considered normal. As the above excerpt shows, learners who fall outside the 'normal' category are named and exposed to various forms of homophobic violence. Connell (2000) maintains that the construction of masculine and feminine as normal is what exposes homosexuals to violence by straight youths.

Homophobia is a major manifestation of violence in schools. In this study, it was mainly manifested through name calling and outright hatred for gays and lesbian learners in the school. Some learners said they could not be friends with gays and lesbians for fear of being identified as one of them.

However, even though most of the male learners were against homosexuality, they considered it more offensive to be gay than lesbian. Gay learners therefore faced more persecution than lesbians.

***Sphiso:** Yes, for me when I see a guy who is gay, I'm like what is he doing, it's like he is degrading us. Men are supposed to be responsible, strong and look after the family but now he is weakening himself, he's making as if ... and I'm like what is wrong with this guy, he is going from top to bottom instead of from bottom to top but a girl that is a lesbian is like going from bottom to top.*

***Bryan:** Yeah, I have a couple of lesbian friends but hey, I can't stand gay people. Lesbian is ok but a gay.... Noooo. When the women do it its ok but when a man does it, it's disgusting.*

***Jason:** Ayyy, gays is so wrong. The place where you gotta be... ahhh it's so small bru.*

The tendency for heterosexuality to be compulsory in schools restricted straight boys from associating with gays in order to protect their heterosexual identities (Anderson, 2009). Boys

have been socialised into masculinities that compel heterosexuality. Such masculinities include a certain feel to the skin, muscles, posture and even movement (Connell, 1995). According to Paechter (2006), the ways in which masculinities have been constructed attribute cultural power to men. From Sphiso's statement, it is evident that boys who fell outside these constructions were considered abnormal and a disgrace to manhood. They were therefore more vulnerable to homophobic violence than lesbians. This might account for why more lesbians were reported in the school than gays. It is possible, that, like the boys in (Msibi, 2012) study, for fear of violence from straight boys, gay learners tend to remain in the closet.

The main tool used by all the learners in this study to challenge homosexuality was religion. According to Msibi (2012) and Bhana (2014b), religion is a strong weapon that is used to contest gender roles, thereby justifying homophobia in schools. All the study participants cited religious reasons for rejecting homosexuality.

***Brice:** Gays and lesbians are wrong. When God made people he made Adam and Eve not Adam and Adam or Eve and Eve. So what's the point of being gay or lesbian?*

***Fikile:** We like them but they must stop what they are doing. It's not right.*

***Sne:** For me I don't like it, I just hate it and I think it's something that shouldn't even exist and I don't know why it's legalised.*

***Siyabonga:** I'm a Christian, so if the Bible says a guy shall not sleep with a guy, then I agree with the Bible, so for me it's not good.*

Like I said before, behind everything there is a spirit behind it. You see gays and lesbians even in the Bible, Jesus destroys a lot of them.

You see behind gays and lesbians there is a spirit of Jezebel behind it. You can't say you are a boy and you are gay, there is something inside you that has made you gay.

These are just some of the many responses on homosexuality and religion. Bhana (2012b) asserts that issues of sexuality are in conflict with religion. She adds that the dissemination of Christianity in South Africa is in conflict with the rights of gays and lesbians. While some learners cited personal reasons for denouncing homosexuality, prominent amongst the reasons for such negative attitudes was religious ethics. They ignored the culture of rights in South Africa as well as the elasticity in religious interpretations and meaning that Bhana (2012b) makes mention of. Even though some learners seem to be supportive of

homosexuality, like Fikile in the above excerpt, their religious ethics remain a barrier to the rights of gays and lesbians.

Even though teachers and principals have the authority to intervene and discourage homophobia, Goldstein, Collins, and Halder (2008) note that they are also influenced by the broader society that promotes homophobia. Heterosexuality is perceived as the norm in schools. The participants cited cases where gays and lesbians were teased by teachers in class. Mrs Dlomo, a teacher that participated in Msibi's (2012) study, stated that contesting gender roles contests God's authority. This suggests that teachers, who could offer support to learners that are discriminated against due to their sexual orientation, are also caught up in the dilemma of religion.

Despite the oppression and violence suffered by homosexual learners in schools, some stand tall and manifest agency in their sexuality. Two of the girls in a focus group discussion were lesbians. I noticed that the one was a lesbian when she brutally interrupted another participant who used religion to reject homosexuality.

John : I read the Bible a lot and I know that it's not right to...

Lungile: That's what I meant, religion cause a lot of conflict and stuff. Some know that it is wrong in the eyes of God but it's like something you can't change because it's who you are. Some people don't just understand, they think....

After Lungile's intervention, I sought her opinion on gays and lesbians. She said that she had no issue with homosexuality because she is a lesbian. Religious ethics and dominant notions of heterosexuality that are reinforced in schools as norms at the expense of other forms of sexuality, expose homosexual learners to various forms of violence. Such learners find themselves in the position of always having to explain and defend their choice of sexuality in order to remain safe.

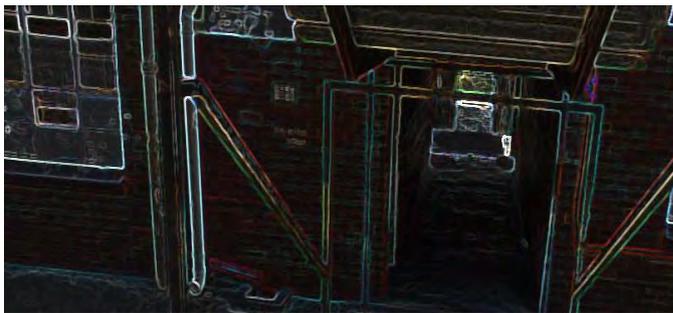
4.6 Gender, physical spaces and school violence

Various studies have highlighted that some physical spaces such as classrooms, hall ways, playgrounds and toilets are significant in the manifestation of gender violence (Bhana, 2012; Dunne, 2007; Human Rights Watch, 2001). O'Donaghue (2007) notes, that these are high levels of social interaction and gender stereotyping in these spaces. This section therefore addresses power relations on the basis of how learners negotiate the physical spaces of the school.

Both the formal and informal spaces of the school are gendered (Dunne & Leach, 2007). Even though spaces outside the class room are considered informal because of the absence of formal lessons, many lessons happen informally in informal spaces. In such spaces, learners feel more empowered in the construction of their identities (Tupper et al., 2008). This study found that spaces such as the hall ways, the area behind the girls' toilets and the playgrounds, as well as behind the community library, were spaces where learners negotiated their identities.

4.6.1 The hall ways

Fig. 4.1: Hall ways



Hall ways have been identified as one of the prominent spaces in schools where gender violence is manifested (Bhana, 2012; Dunne, 2007). The school that was the site of this study has three blocks and each block has three corridors. I observed that boys were dominant in the spaces along the corridors during breaks or when they were not in class. Most boys claimed these spaces as their space and girls were not allowed free movement along these

corridors. Boys usually stood on both sides of the corridors to indicate their ownership and authority in the space along the hall way while girls did not seem to belong. However, some girls seem to have earned their space along the corridors by engaging in heterosexual relationships. In some instances, one or two girls could be seen with boys, holding each other intimately. In most cases girls who passed the corridors were physically, verbally or sexually abused by the boys. Their freedom of movement at school was therefore restricted.

Antoinette: These boys Miss, they are very abusive. Like when you walk into the corridors, they are always standing there.

Interviewer: What do they do when you walk into the corridors?

Antoinette: No Miss, they always have bad comments when you pass through the corridors.

Interviewer: Can you give me some examples of the bad comments made by these boys?

Nicoline: They say you're ugly, you're a bitch, your pussy, like actually bad names and stuff.

Interviewer: Do you think its violence when they make all these bad comments?

Interviewees: (The whole group) It is violence Miss.

Interviewer: Why do you think its violence?

Pearl: Yes Miss, because it makes you feel uncomfortable and feel bad about yourself.

This excerpt shows how school boys use their power to dominate the physical spaces in school. It also illustrates the role of power relations in relation to gender and space (Low, 2006). Pearl's response on why name calling is violence is in line with Bhana's (2013) assertion that schools have become sites where children develop distorted perceptions of their identity due to the prevalence of violence. Pearl's self-esteem and pride as a girl is reduced when boys call her bad names.

Boys' domination of the corridors suggests that they had created an invisible spatial boundary which restricted girls' freedom of movement. Girls who attempted to challenge these spatial boundaries were faced with violence. Sexual harassment was a prominent form of gender violence encountered by girls along the school corridors. Girls reported many sexual comments made by these boys as well as being touched in inappropriate places when they had to walk through the corridors. Such cases are not reported because, according to the learners, the girls would be blamed for walking through the corridors knowing that it is a male dominated space. This serves as a justification for the role played by the school

authorities in endorsing hegemonic forms of masculinity that justify violence (Anderson, 2009).

Most discourses around sexual harassment of young girls and women by men have blamed the woman, who is the victim (Leach & Mitchell, 2006). Such discourses are based on cultural values that portray women as the custodian of morality (Ringrose & Renold, 2012).

Interviewer: *Have the boys ever touched your titi [breast] in the corridors?*

Nicole: *I don't go there because I know what they do when they are there... a group of boys in grade 11. They do it to many girls. But if they try me I'll give it to them.*

Anele: *But Miss, the girls seem to like it when they [boys] touch them.*

Interviewer: *Mandla, you also mentioned girls doing something, only for a boy to react. Can you explain that please?*

Mandla: *Yes they do like emm... (Interrupted)*

Nombuso: *Sorry to cut you short, my opinion is that harassment is something that you don't have control over. Like you are the victim. They are saying girls do seduce them but they have control over their emotions and they don't have to act if they don't want. So even if I show you my thigh you don't have to touch me. So you have power over yourself and I don't have power over you.*

Mandla: *Ok Nombuso, can I ask you a question? What's the purpose of you showing me your thigh?*

Nombuso: *You choose to look at my thigh, not me showing you my thigh.*

Thembisio: *But sometimes they, girls they turn to allow it happen.*

Peter: *They seem to like it even though they pretend they don't like it.*

Scelo: *They are like stop it, I like it, stop it, I like it!*

Pinky: *They don't say I like but they are not angry.*

Most of the boys and some of the girls who participated in the study blamed the girls who were sexually harassed in the corridors, behind the girls' toilets and in other school spaces that were male dominated. According to participants like Nicole and Mandla, girls go through the corridors and to other spaces dominated by boys because they like to be touched by them; thus, they should not complain when it happens. Girls like Nombuso expressed disgust at the

way the female body is sexualised and abused by school boys. In line with Connell's (1995) portrayal of femininity as fearfulness, girls like Nicole chose to stay away from the corridors in order to remain safe. Meanwhile the boys continued to use violence to maintain dominance.

However, not all the girls yielded to such restrictions and violence from the boys, especially in determining who owns particular school spaces. There were some girls who challenged the invisible codes of restriction imposed by the boys. For example, despite the harassment faced by some girls in the corridors, they could walk along these corridors without fear of being attacked.

While there is a rich literature related to teachers who use their power to sexually abuse learners (Bhana, 2012; Francis & Mills, 2012; Parkes & Heslop, 2011; Centre for Applied Legal Studies, 2014), in this study no cases were cited of sexual harassment perpetrated by teachers against learners.

4.6.2 The playground

Fig. 4.2: The school play ground



According to Connell (2000), the school plays a substantial role in the making of masculinities through its structures and practice. Fig 4.2 above shows the only playground in the school that is used for soccer. Gendered practices such as sports stimulate the performance of hegemonic masculinity which promotes male domination of females and other males (Sauer & Ajanović, 2013). Connell (1995) submits that sports are an epitome of masculinity, with football predominantly associated with boys (Renold, 2004). Boys were the dominant occupants of the playground while girls only used it for practice prior to a female soccer competition. I observed that most of the girls used the peripheries of the playground to

play games such as ‘*skipping*’ and ‘*shumpu*’ (a game whereby a ball is shot at someone but the ball is not supposed to hit them, once the ball hits you, then you are out of the game). while others watched the boys playing soccer. This illustrates the role of the school in actively upholding gender inequality which is the root of gender violence in schools.

4.6.3 Behind the girls’ toilets

The school has separate toilets for boys and girls. The boys’ toilets are located close to the administrative building, while the girls’ toilets are situated close to the playground away from the classrooms. Learners designated the space behind the girls’ toilets as a smoking and gambling area. This is because it is isolated and out of sight of the teachers. The location of the girls’ toilets increases girls’ vulnerability to different forms of sexual violence. While there were no reported cases of rape, the girls complained that the boys called them bad names and peered through the windows to see them in the toilet. Irrespective of how it is manifested, sexual violence remains an extremely damaging form of gender violence (UNESCO, 2015). There was much fighting and hitting in this area over drugs, cigarettes or when someone lost at gambling.

As noted in the previous chapter, there is a high rate of drug abuse in the Nje community. Access to drugs, alcohol and weapons has been highlighted as one of the characteristics of a violent community (Leoschut, 2008). The use of drugs also increases the level of violence in any setting (South African Council for Educators (SACE), 2011). Cigarettes and other drugs such as ‘dagga’ and wonga were commonly used by the learners. While the law prohibits the sale of cigarettes to children below the age of 18 and also forbids anyone that is under the influence or in possession of illegal drugs access to school premises (Government Gazette, 2001), there was evidence that these young learners had easy access to cigarettes and other drugs. Some stole cigarettes and drugs from their parents and shared them with their friends in school while others bought them from older boys in the community. However, they did not seem to be ignorant of the consequences of drug abuse as they showed knowledge of the effects of drug abuse. During a focus group discussion with five coloured girls, they had this to say:

***Shirley:** There’s a lot of drug abuse here in ..., in the community and in the school. You must see the back of the girls’ toilet... that’s where they always smoke. I’m sure they are even smoking now.*

Antoinette: *Yes we go there because we also smoke. We all smoke everyday don't lie (to her peers). We also smoke behind the toilet. That's how we know.*

Interviewer: *What do you smoke?*

All: *We smoke cigarettes in school and on the weekends we smoke dagga.*

Interviewer: *Why do you smoke?*

Antoinette: *You know, just to be in that mode we smoke every day, just to be naughty at times, feel high and be happy, it eases your mind you know.... You know at times you just want to get away from everything. At times you have a lot on your mind and you just want to get everything off for a while.*

Interviewer: *Why do you think the boys bully?*

Shirley: *Because of drugs and alcohol. People take a lot of drugs and alcohol here in ... You must come here on weekends.*

Shirley displays knowledge of the danger of drug abuse when she says she smokes when she wants to be naughty and feel high. Even though these girls claimed to use drugs as a way of escaping their realities, the consequences of drug abuse cannot be ignored. In an individual interview with Shirley, she acknowledged that girls get involved in indecent sexual behaviour while under the influence of drugs. However, she denied ever being a victim of such behaviour.

4.6.4 Graffiti and the making of violence

Fig. 4.3: Examples of graffiti invaded spaces



Much attention has been paid to physical forms of gender violence within the school premises because such behaviour is more noticeable and can be easily identified. Less emphasis has been placed on the verbal and emotional forms of violence which characterise school spaces. A very common and disturbing form of gender violence that has been ignored in most cases is perpetrated through the use of graffiti. Below are some of the participants' responses to the question of what motivates such graffiti.

Interviewer: *I see writings on all the walls. Who writes on the walls?*

All: *The children.*

Interviewer: *Boys or girls?*

All: *Every one, boys and girls.*

Interviewer: *Why?*

Nadine: *Miss, I can say jealousy, you know, if you are jealous of someone you just go and write their names on the wall.*

Happiness: *Yes Miss and that's how a fight starts because if I know you wrote my name say I'm a bitch.... Or I love someone when it's not true and stuff like that I'm gonna come for you.*

Marcel: *Ah Miss nothing, we just write; like you see the names, like just say they are a gang and they usually sit there and just for this one day we just chose to sit there for just one day. We can't just go and sit there because it's known to be their place because their names is there... But you know this space is their space why would you wanna sit there? They gonna come and they're gonna want to move you and most of the time it ends up being violent or in a fight.*

Mthetwa: *Miss and you see some of these boys, when they can't stand their ground they write stupid things on the walls, you know Miss, like the f word.*

These responses illustrate how the walls of the school are used to perpetrate violence. According to Yogan and Johnson (2006), gender inequality is not only reflected in facial expressions and body movements, but is also visible in non-verbal communication. The art work on these walls included drawings and writings with pens, permanent markers and chalk as well as scratches. Crews, Crews and Turner (2008) maintain that hate-related graffiti is one of the causes of violence in schools. I observed many messages clearly written on all the walls of the school, including the walls of the toilets. Prominent amongst the messages were names, sexist comments, relationship issues, obscene language and hate-related words and phrases. When I went into the girls' toilets I saw many stories on the walls, especially dating stories, stories about girls who had crushes on boys, and who was jealous of another girl at school. Outside the girls' toilets, the smoking area mainly used by boys contained more obscene language, threats and pictures. These observations are in line with Fletcher (2006) assertion that female students mainly write about relationships and emotions while male students mostly write about violence and action.

While the learners seemed to attribute school violence to individual causes rather than school factors (Johnson et al., 2011), this section showed how the physical spaces of the school serve as a catalyst in the making of gender violence in schools.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the data generated through observation, individual interviews and focus group discussions. Data was analysed according to themes that emerged. The findings were discussed in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter two. The data was organised in two parts. Part one established how gender power inequality, which is the foundation of gender violence, characterised social interactions amongst learners and with the school authorities. Prominent forms of violence that girls identified at the hands of boys within the school's social spaces were physical assault, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, sexual comments and heterosexual intimate partner violence. Girls were presented in this study as not just passive victims of boys' violence but also as perpetrators of violence. This was evident in various incidents of violence perpetrated by girls against other girls and some isolated cases of girls' violence against boys. In most cases, gossiping and fighting over boys were the basis of girls' aggression towards other girls. According to Chesney-Lind (2008), such reactions could be attributed to the gender inequality prevalent in the broader society that deters girls from being violent to boys without adverse consequences while Bhana and Pillay (2011) consider girls' fights over boys to be a sign of heterosexual success. Culture was also recognised as a major aspect that exposed girls to heterosexual intimate partner violence. It emerged that learners have embraced cultures that promote violence against women and girls, especially in heterosexual intimate partner relationships. Most of the boys did not tolerate any behaviour from their girlfriends that threatened their masculinity. Even though some girls seemed to exhibit agency in their heterosexual intimate partner relationships by rejecting aggressive reactions from their boyfriends, others felt such aggression is justifiable if the girlfriend's behaviour is socially unacceptable. These are all characteristics of a patriarchal society like South Africa that condones male domination of women. Religion was also found to be the main instrument used by learners to perpetrate homophobic violence, mainly through name calling and outright hatred of homosexuals. It also emerged that teachers and the school authorities perpetrate violence through the use of corporal punishment and by failing to intervene when learners report acts of violence.

Part two of this chapter captured the gendered nature of the physical spaces of the school and how violence is produced as learners negotiate these spaces. Spaces such as the school playground, behind the girls' toilet and the hall ways were highlighted by the participants as prominent spaces within the school where boys validated their power over girls. The use of graffiti was also underlined as a dimension through which gender violence was manifested in

schools. While this has hurtful consequences, in most cases it was ignored, with more attention paid to physical forms of violence.

In the process of analysing and discussing the above themes, the study's research questions were addressed. Chapter five provides more detail on how these questions were answered through the findings and serves as the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study investigated the gendered nature of school spaces and how violence is produced as learners negotiate and mediate these gendered school spaces. This final chapter provides a summary of how the research questions have been answered by summarising each chapter. It also integrates the study's main findings and provides recommendations to address gender violence in and around schools.

5.2 Summary of chapters

Chapter one served as the introduction to this study. It presented the background of the study and its rationale, aims and objectives as well as the three critical questions that served as guideline to the study. The research site was also described.

Chapter two was literature review in relation to the key phenomena under study. It began by highlighting the relevance of literature review in a dissertation. In order to establish the conceptual framework that was used in this study, I examined the following concepts: Gender power; school spaces; violence and gender relations. I further explored international, sub-Saharan African and local literature on gender violence in schools. This literature was reviewed under the following sub-headings:

- Gender violence as a global phenomenon
- Forms of gender violence
- Gender violence in schools
- Factors that contribute to gender violence in schools
- Schools and the construction of masculinities
- Schools and the construction of femininities
- Gender and spaces
- Gendered school spaces and gender violence

Chapter three discussed the research design and methodological procedures employed to generate data. A qualitative approach was adopted, located within the social constructionism paradigm. The research site was briefly described and my experiences as a foreign African

conducting research in South Africa were discussed, which I can summarise as a hybrid of sweet and bitter experiences.

Chapter four analysed the data that was generated through focus group discussions, individual interviews and observation. This chapter was divided into two parts. Part one revealed how unequal gender power relations, which are the source of gender violence, constrain social spaces in schools. Part two described how the gendered nature of physical school spaces serves as a catalyst for the manifestation of gender violence in schools.

5.3 Main Findings

Gender, social spaces and school violence

This study established that dominant ideologies of gender which uphold male domination of females influenced learners' interactions in school. Physical assault, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, sexual comments and heterosexual intimate partner violence are some examples of enactments of violence that many girls reported at the hands of boys within the social spaces in school. This study therefore concurs with other studies that recognise girls as the victims of violence perpetrated by boys (Bhana, 2012; Parkes & Heslop, 2011; Pinheiro, 2006).

However the study did not present girls as simply pitiable victims of boys' aggression, but highlighted cases of girls' violence against other girls as well as isolated cases of girls' violence against boys. Gossiping and fighting over boys were the root causes of girl-on-girl violence. This manifested through name-calling, verbal confrontations and physical assault. Irwin and Chesney-Lind (2008) note that gender inequality in the broader society inhibits girls from being violent to boys without suffering unpleasant consequences. Girls therefore perpetrated violence against other girls in order to consolidate their femininity. In most cases, this violence was prompted by the desire to secure boyfriends. Bhana and Pillay (2011) consider this to be an indication of heterosexual success. The finding that girls also perpetrate violence is in line with Bhana's (2008) study that noted that simply portraying girls as victims of violence and boys as perpetrators does not reflect girls' experiences in school as well as the survival skills they adopt to traverse violent school spaces. Girls who challenged dominant notions of femininity which imply vulnerability and passivity were constructed by some boys as 'amazing girls'. This is because notions of femininity that greatly expose girls to violence by boys have been normalised in schools.

This study also revealed that unequal gender power relations are not limited to the power men/boys have over women/girls but were also evident in relationships amongst boys (Kimmel, 2005). Physical features such as body size and muscles (Connell, 1995) as well as sexuality are assets that are used by boys who possess these features to perpetrate violence against other boys.

The study also identified culture as a leading factor that exposes young school girls engaged in heterosexual intimate partner relationships to violence. Contemporary society is governed by gender and cultural beliefs that promote inequality (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Reilly, 2014; Vandello & Cohen, 2008). Jewkes and Morrell (2012) note that hegemonic masculinity is a major characteristic of a patriarchal society like South Africa and that this condones male domination of women. This study found evidence that young school boys and girls have adopted cultures and beliefs that promote violence against women and girls. Boys policed their girlfriends and did not tolerate any action or behaviour that jeopardised their masculinity. However, alternative masculinities were displayed by a few boys who advocated for equal respect in a heterosexual intimate partner relationship.

Some girls displayed agency in their heterosexual intimate relationships by rejecting violent behaviour on the part of their boyfriends for whatever reason, while others felt that it is justified for a boy to react violently if the girls' behaviour is considered socially unacceptable. These girls were influenced by the culture of patriarchy that subordinates women and had therefore internalised their subordination, creating a favourable environment for the prevalence of violent masculinities.

The study also found that religious ethics were the main tool that was used to promote gender power inequality in relation to sexuality. Straight learners drew on religious ethics to justify homophobic violence. Heterosexuality remains the norm in schools while the culture of rights in South Africa and the elasticity of religious interpretations (Bhana, 2012; 2014) are simply disregarded. Homophobic violence in schools thus remains a matter of great concern. Name calling and outright hatred of homosexuals are the main devices used by learners to perpetrate homophobic violence. Most of the boys that participated in this study were irritated by gays but condoned lesbianism to some extent. According to them, boys who acted contrary to constructions of masculinities which require heterosexuality were considered a disgrace to manhood. Consequently, gays were more exposed to homophobic violence than lesbians.

This study also found that teachers and the school authorities contribute significantly in maintaining manifestations of violence within school spaces. While most learners expect teachers and the school authorities to make the school a safe and conducive space for quality education, the learners that participated in this study felt that teachers were not sufficiently concerned about acts of violence and learners' wellbeing. Teachers' failure to intervene when acts of violence were reported frustrated the learners that were victims. These learners referred to the teachers as 'corrupt'. Teachers also enhance unequal gender relations by administering punishment. For example, girls are punished by having to sweep the classroom, while boys are smacked. Sauer and Ajanovic (2013) maintain that these are gendered practices that illustrate the relationship between masculinity and violence. Teachers' use of corporal punishment also marked them as perpetrators of violence.

Furthermore, the notion that the victim rather than the perpetrator is punished was also highlighted in this study as a motivation for violence against girls in schools. For example, girls who were sexually harassed along the corridors were blamed by the teachers and their fellow learners for inviting it by walking through the corridors which were a male dominated space. The boys took advantage of the fact that they would not be punished to sexually abuse girls.

Gender, physical spaces and school violence

This study also examined the role of the school in encouraging gender inequality through the gendering of school spaces. A case in point is the playground. By allocating just one playground which is used for soccer, the school assigned control of the playground to boys and not girls. In order to avoid conflict on the playground, girls used the peripheries of the playground for their games or just sat and watched the boys play.

This study also highlighted the gendered nature of physical school spaces and how they serve as fertile ground for gender violence due to gender power inequality. Spaces such as the school hall ways, behind the school toilets and the playground were prominent spaces where boys exhibited their power over girls, often through sexual violence. Girls reported episodes of sexual harassment along the corridors enacted through name calling, sexual comments, touching, whistling and physical assault. According to Sauer and Ajanovic (2013), sexual violence is a technique used by boys to contest hierarchical school settings. Even though spaces outside the classrooms are considered informal spaces because no formal lessons take

place, a lot happens in these places as this is where learners feel empowered to construct their identities.

The study further uncovered the use of graffiti as another dimension through which gender violence is manifested in schools. This common manifestation of gender violence has hostile implications, but it is often disregarded in schools, with more attention being paid to physical forms of violence. The walls of the school in this study were covered in violent writing and drawings. Hate-related comments, sexual comments, threats and drawings are a few examples of how violence is perpetrated through the use of graffiti in schools. In some cases, where the author was identifiable, this graffiti led to physical confrontations.

5.4 Recommendations

Schools serve as a vital socialising mechanism due to the fact that children spend most of their time in school (Burton, 2008). According to Crews et al. (2008) violence in schools does not only affect the schools in question but it is a larger societal issue that requires a joint effort in order to make schools a safe space for learners, teachers and school authorities. The school authorities, teachers and parents who are the custodians of these learners have a major role to play in creating awareness and also in ensuring gender equality, fairness and the other conditions necessary to promote safe schools for all learners. Johnson et al. (2011) suggest that more efforts should be directed towards the prevention of violence rather than focusing on punishment. This section presents the recommendations emanating from this study in relation to different stakeholders.

5.4.1 The principal

School principals should ensure that all policies, including those on gender equality and non-violence in schools, are strictly implemented by members of staff. Principals could organise school-based forums where members of staff are given the opportunity to deliberate on issues relating to sexual activities and violence. Such forums would also serve as refresher courses for staff members (academic, administrative and auxiliary) who might not be very familiar with these policies. This is in line with Crews et al. (2008) who suggest that teachers and students need to be educated on how to deal with hate related crimes.

Furthermore, this study confirmed the findings of other studies that physical spaces such as hall ways, playgrounds and toilets are infamous in the manifestation of violence within schools (Bhana, 2012; Dunne, 2007). Dunne and Leach (2007) note that a major reason for

this predicament is the fact that these spaces lack adult supervision; thereby enabling learners to use them as sites for the construction of their identities. In light of this, school principals should ensure that there is a greater staff presence in and around these spaces. Increased staff supervision during high traffic flow times such as when learners move in to the school, during breaks and at home time would also (Eisenbraun, 2007) go a long way in reducing the number of negative encounters between students that result in violence.

5.4.2 Teachers

According to Bhana (2012), teachers could play a very significant role in facilitating a school environment that is gender friendly. She advocates for a 'right-based approach' in schools to promote gender equality and to maintain daily school practices that are friendly to both genders (Bhana, 2012, p. 357).

There is therefore an urgent need for teachers to go beyond the school curriculum and learning outcomes and ensure a tension-free environment for all learners. According to Prinsloo (2006) change regarding violent free schools must always come from the school and the school communities. Therefore teachers are supposed to willingly assume the responsibility of advocating and protecting the rights of school girls to a school environment void of violence including any form of harassment and threat. Teachers can equally break down barriers between learners beginning from as primary schools by pairing them up with someone they do not know and have them introduce the new person to get to know and be comfortable with people who are considered 'different'. Reily (2014) notes, that, quality education depends on the circumstances under which learning takes place. Therefore a violence free space is a good recipe for quality education. Eisenbraun (2007) suggests that it is necessary for teachers to nurture an affirmative environment within the classroom. He advocates for the introduction of social skill programmes such as anger control strategies and calls on teachers to respond quickly to threats which often lead to physical confrontations. Similarly Crews et al. (2008) calls on teachers and other school authorities to rapidly intervene in every perceived threat including jokes about violence or other indications of violence. Keddie (2009) encourages a teacher practice that transforms the masculinities of entitlement which greatly contribute to sexual violence in schools. Johnson et al. (2011) equally encourages teachers to address students' relationship with each other and also have a clear and consistent expectation for students' behaviour as well as address the influence of the neighbourhood in order to reduce the likelihood of violence.

Furthermore the culture of corporal punishment in schools as a form of discipline complements perceptions that violence is a suitable reaction to unacceptable behaviour and that it is acceptable for powerful people to be violent to weak people (Save the Children, 2005). Teachers should therefore engage in dialogue and adopt non-violent forms of discipline (Save the Children, 2005).

5.4.3 Parents

According to Jewkes and Morrell (2010), the construction of a masculinity that upholds the use of violence to reprimand women has been normalised in South Africa. This behaviour seems to have been passed on to the younger generation. In order to challenge prevailing gender violence in schools, it is crucial to reshape the socialisation of young people. Cultures and values that encourage gender power inequality which is the core of violence in and around schools need to be revisited or discarded. Therefore, interventions that address gender inequality and promote the transformation of social practices that encourage inequality should be extended to communities in order to get parents involved.

5.5 Conclusion

The levels of gender violence in and around South African schools call for urgent intervention. Bearing in mind that all acts of violence are embedded in unequal gender power relations, understanding violence in schools from a gender perspective and how it is produced and encouraged within school spaces is imperative in determining the causes and manifestations of violence in and around schools. It is of utmost importance to bear in mind that all violence is gendered. Since gender violence is behaviour that is nurtured (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010), it can be unlearned. The recommendations presented above are therefore achievable and could make a difference in achieving violence-free South African schools.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Letter to Learners

Date:

Dear _____

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

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

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

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

DECLARATION

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

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

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES/NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES/NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	YES/NO

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

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

Thank you for your willingness to participate.

I can be contacted through:

Email: forlumf13@gmail.com

Cell: 0739607048

My project supervisor is:

Professor Deevia Bhana, PhD

School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X03

Cnr Mariannahill & Richmond Roads

Ashwood

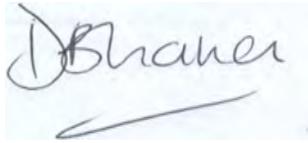
3605

South Africa

Tel: +27 (0) 31 260 2603

Fax: +27 (0) 31 260 3793

Email: bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature appears to be 'D. Bhanad' with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

You can also contact the Research Office through:

Mariette Snyman

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Research Office: Ethics

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X54001

Durban

4000

Tel: +27 31 260 8350

Fax: + 27 31 260 3093

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARENTS/GUARDIAN



Dear Parent/Guardian

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____

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

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

Your daughters'/son's/wards' identity will remain anonymous throughout the study and in the various publications we will produce from it (we will not use their real name or the name of their school). In addition, her/his participation in the study is voluntary and he/she may decide not to participate without any penalty. She/he is also free to withdraw from the

project at any time during or after data collection, without penalty. Whilst every precaution will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in every group, there will be limits of confidentiality. Participants will be informed that should there be a disclosure/s which indicate that their well-being is being compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek their consent in addressing the matter.

DECLARATION

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

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

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

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

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

Use of my photographs for research purposes YES/NO

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

Thank you for your cooperation.

I can be contacted through:

Email: forlumf13@gmail.com

Cell: 0739607048

My project supervisor is:

Professor Deevia Bhana, PhD

School of Education

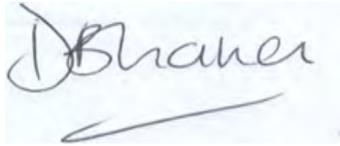
University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X03

Cnr Mariannahill & Richmond Roads

Ashwood

3605
South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 31 260 2603
Fax: +27 (0) 31 260 3793
Email: bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za



You can also contact the Research Office through:

Mariette Snyman
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Research Office: Ethics
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X54001
Durban
4000
Tel: [+27 31 260 8350](tel:+27312608350)
Fax: [+ 27 31 260 3093](tel:+27312603093)
Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

I..... (Full names of parent/guardian) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to my daughter/son/ward participating in the research project.

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

.....

.....

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

DATE



Incwadi yokwazisa eya kubazali/ kubabheki

Usuku:

Mzali/Mbheki ka.....

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

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

Umntwana wakho ngeke aziwe igama lakhe lempela kulona lonke ucwaning nakuzona zonke izishicilelo eziyoqhawuka kulolu cwanningo. Akaphoqiwe ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwanningo ngeke ajeziswe uma engavumanga ukuba yingxenye.

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

Ngyabonga ngokubambisana

Umdloli wocwaningo

Prof. Deevia Bhana

Tel: (031) 2602603

Email: bhana1@ukzn.ca.za

Mariette Snyman

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Research Office: Ethics

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X54001
Durban
4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350
Fax: + 27 31 260 3093
Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

UKUZIBOPHEZELE

Mina.....(amagama agcwele omzali/mbheki)
ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyakuqonda konke okuqukethwe yilo mbhalo mayelana
nocwaningo. Ngiyavuma ukuthi indodana/ndodakazi yami ibambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo.
Ngiyaqonda ukuthi indodana/indodakazi yami ingaphuma noma kunini kulolu cwaningo uma
efisa.

Sayina (umzali/mbheki).....
Usuku.....

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT TO PRINCIPAL



Date:

The Principal

Name of School.....

Dear Mr/Mrs/Dr.....

Re: Permission to conduct a research study in the school

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

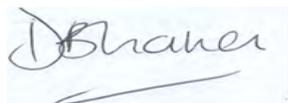
The project aims examine how learners experience, witness and observe GBV in schools. Every day newspaper reports show us that GBV is a problem in some schools and has negative effects for some learners. The project will involve establishing whether and how girls and boys experience GBV. The study aims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

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

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

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely



Project Leader

Prof. Deevia Bhana

Tel: (031) 260 2603

Email: bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za

Permission Form

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

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

.....
SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

.....
DATE

.....
SGB CHAIRPERSON

.....
DATE

APPENDIX D

Semi-structured interview schedule for individual and focus group discussions

Focus group discussion questions

1. What do you understand by violence?
2. What kinds of violence are common in your school?
3. Who are the most violent; boys or girls?
4. Tell me what can be done to achieve violent free schools

Individual Interview questions

1. What is your name?
2. What grade are you in?
3. How old are you?
4. Where do you live?
5. Who do you live with?
6. Is he/she/they employed?
7. What job?
8. How long have you been in this school?
9. Tell me what you understand by violence
10. What are some examples of violent behaviours that you know?
11. Have you ever witnessed violence
12. What kind of violence?
13. Where did it happen?
14. Explain
15. Have you ever been a victim of violence?
16. How many times
17. Explain
18. Have you ever been a perpetrator of violence??
19. How many time?
20. Explain
21. Who in your opinion is most violent; boys, girls or both?
22. Explain
23. Where do most incidents of violence take place in your school?
24. Why do you think violence is prevalent in these places?
25. Explain

26. How do victims of violence react towards their perpetrators?
27. What does the school authorities do to perpetrators and victims of violence
28. Do teachers intervene?
29. How?
30. What can be done to eradicate violence in your school?

APPENDIX E

Turn-it-in Originality Report

Boys, girls and the making of violence in a Pinetown secondary school: A case study of gender violence. By Forlum Ngwa Immaculate

From Gender Education dissertation (Masters)

- Processed on 24-Oct-2015 3:30 PM CAT
- ID: 589469229
- Word Count: 32825

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APPENDIX F

ETHICAL CLEARANCE



17 September 2024

Mrs Fortum Ngwa Immaculate (212538790)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference numbers H55/2452/05444 (Linked to H55/1157/013)
New project title: Boys, girls and the making of violence in a Pinetown secondary school: A case study of gender violence

Dear Mrs Immaculate,

Approval Notification – Expedited Application / Amendment

This letter serves to notify you that your request for an amendment dated 05 September / 2024 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in Title
- Change in sites

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

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

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

We wish for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

Dr. Shemika Singh (Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor Professor Debora SHANE
cc Academic leader Research: Professor @ Mphahlele
cc School administrator: Mr. Thabathemba

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr. Shemika Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Gordon Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag 954001, Durban 4150

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 261 1331/0312614999 / +27 (0) 31 261 4999 Email: ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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