

**FEMALE VIOLENCE AMONGST LEARNERS'
IN DURBAN SCHOOLS**

EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTERS IN EDUCATION

in the faculty of education, University of Kwazulu- Natal, Durban

DECEMBER 2004

I, Jean Virasamy, declare that this dissertation is my original work and that all references used in this dissertation have been acknowledged.

Virasamy

Dedicated to My Mother

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research has benefited from the advice and encouragement and support of several remarkable people.

Firstly I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Professor Robert Morrell for providing expert guidance, continuous support and giving insightful comments throughout the development of this challenging research. With him, I explored ideas, organization, requirements and development. His comments have been of greatest help at all times. He is responsible for involving me in research, by showing me the different ways to approach a research project and the need to be persistent to accomplish any goal. His wealth of knowledge is admirable.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people. I would like to thank the participants for providing the necessary information. I would like to thank my sisters and their spouses for their unconditional support and encouragement to pursue my interests. I would also like to thank my nieces for so willingly helping me when the need arose.

Special thanks to the following people:

My dutiful mother who was unselfish and worked tirelessly in the kitchen on many a nights affording me the opportunity to complete my studies. My brother Mags, for his valuable time and assistance that he gave to me at any given time. My sister Sylvia for her help. My niece Verushka for her valuable time. She is responsible for formatting and printing this thesis, and my inspirational role model, my sister, Dr D.L. Veeran (University of Galway, Ireland) for offering continuous help and support even from a distance.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the rest of my family for their support and concern.

ABSTRACT

Violence in schools is an everyday occurrence and, for the most part, it tends to be regarded as a male issue. There is little indication in media or research reports that female learners perpetrate violence in schools. Research suggests that school violence is caused by male teachers or learners, takes place amongst males and tends to be of a physical or sexual nature. There is, however, a less prominent body of international work, which has begun to explore female aggression and violence at schools. Thus far, there has been little comparable research in South Africa. The thesis is an exploratory study of female violence in schools. The subject is approached by examining the perceptions of male as well as female teachers in primary and secondary schools in Durban.

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CHAPTER ONE

WAR

A group of eight-year-olds
Follow me into a room
Three boys, three girls
'Let's move the table
'Who's going behind the table?' I say
'Me,' says one boy –
'Get away from the girls,' he says,
After eight years alive in this world
We have taught him to be at war
with half the people in the world.

Michael Rosan (Millard, 1998,p9)

PREAMBLE

The processes through which masculinity and femininity are constructed has been questioned in recent research as if they are mutually exclusive and fundamental identities (Pattman et al, 1998, 126). In some respects females and males are no different from each other. In fact, studies show that girls and boys share an overwhelming number of characteristics. They have the same potential to succeed in reading, writing and mathematics. However, it has been reported that physical violence and verbal aggression is more common among boys than among girls(Teenage Violence,1999,p1). It is these direct physical shows of force by males as opposed to female aggression which is characterized by passive and indirect actions that is of interest to the researcher. The question that arises now is what role do female learners play in violent behaviour. How do they aggress against other students?

Effective supervision was given to girls in the past with the result that they were less likely to be exposed to anti-social influences. But nowadays parents don't supervise their daughters as much as before. These days a longer period of time is spent by young girls at school, these girls are also spending more time away from home. The act of a thirteen year old sitting in her bedroom listening to her records with a friend now is no more because the trend is that girls are doing the

same as boys have always done which entailed roaming the streets in groups of five or more. The behavior of adolescent boys and girls is seemingly similar these days (Johnston, 1998, p1).

Decades of violent enforcement of apartheid policies have fuelled a culture of violence in South Africa. A great many studies have shown that, particularly during the period after 16 June 1976, the youth were centrally involved in the, often-violent, struggles against apartheid. "South Africa's legacy of violence is rooted in past apartheid policies. Mass mobilization against the state and its discriminatory policies took the form of worker stay –away, school boycotts and protest marches, most of which involved some degree of violence with the police and/or rival groups. The impact of violence was experienced in the widespread disruption of community life, families and individuals in urban townships and rural areas. In South Africa, the period preceding the 1994 elections and thereafter was characterized by high levels of violence in some parts of the country. Kwa-zulu Natal, was one of the provinces in the country that endured high levels of conflict and violence. The devastating effects of violence will still need to be contended with even in post apartheid South Africa" (Veeran, 1999, p 80).

While the literature attests to the violence of young men, little has been said about the existence of girls' violence in South African schools. There exists literature overseas that identified violence among girls in schools, as a problem. There are, however, no comparable studies in South Africa. In South Africa studies of violence in schools have focussed on boys and masculinity and this is the reason why we have limited knowledge of the extent to which girls are involved in school violence. This study will be unable to determine the extent, frequency and severity of violence among girls in school but will attempt to shed light on violence perpetuated by girls by examining the perceptions of girls' violence among teachers in secondary schools in Durban.

This chapter describes teachers perceptions related to violence by female learners in the classroom and on school property. This study is exploratory. It explores the perceptions of teachers in a few racially mixed, coeducational, primary as well as high schools in the greater Durban area. This study intends to establish whether teachers regard violence among girls as a problem and to find out further what they think about girls' violence in schools.

"Since teaching depends on habits and behaviours resulting from deeply held ways of seeing, perceiving, and valuing, perceptions are very important."(Young et al, 2002, p 1). This study uses perceptions as a way of obtaining an initial impression of the extent of violence among females in schools. The findings regarding teacher perceptions of violence in schools among girls will be presented in chapter four. The impression that girls' culture focuses entirely on looks, domesticity and the bedroom can be misleading "Our culture has long been accustomed to celebrating the "nice-ness" of girls" (Simmons, 2002, p13). The researcher wishes to establish whether teachers still view female learners in this light.

Professor Morrell a leading researcher in the field of gender at the University of Kwazulu-Natal states the following in his personal preface: "Misfits are not generally created unequal, they are constructed that way" (Morrell, 1996, p3).

The question arises then if girls resort to violent behaviour, are they misfits or do people want to view them through a different lens. The section on theoretical background will address this issue.

Previous research confirms that parents and teachers discourage the emergence of physical and direct aggression in girls early on while the skirmishing of boys is either encouraged or shrugged off" (Simmons, 2002, p18). Are girls in their way, every bit as mean as boys are? If female violence is taking place at schools, and if it is nascent, then we need to define this behaviour as a social problem, and

build a language about it. Consciousness about this issue must come to the fore (Gardiner and Paul, 2003, p2).

This study will focus on the perceptions of teachers regarding violence among female learners in schools. In particular the researcher focuses on girls as the perpetrators of violent acts instead of girls being the victims of violence. Simmons notes that aggression among girls is often off the radar screen (Gardiner and Paul, 2003). In South Africa presently this is true. This is the "backdrop" of this research. "Female aggression and rage are two areas that have been for the most part neglected "(Sismondo, 2002, p2).

DEFINITION OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Each person, school, community and family may have a unique definition of violence. This section presents some of the definitions of violence.

"Violence can take many forms, for example, verbal, physical, emotional, psychological, social, economic, physical and sexual abuse. Definitions of violence which only include overt acts of physical assault do not acknowledge the range of behaviours which can have damaging and destructive effects upon others."(Support for Teachers, 2001, p1)

The Center for the Prevention of School Violence defines school violence as "any behaviour that violates a school's educational mission or climate of respect or jeopardizes the intent of the school to be free of aggression against persons or property, drugs, weapons, disruptions, and disorder."(National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 2000, p1). Although the concept "school violence" has been extensively researched and there are several definitions available, for the purposes of this study the following definition is applicable: physical altercation between learners as well as non-physical acts such as threats, name-calling, harassment as violence.

Intrinsic in this research is that it is necessary to broaden our understanding of female violence in schools and to acknowledge that it may be occurring in our schools, even though such occurrences are minimal. Furthermore, it is important to discern the 'normal' belief that male perpetrators are the only perpetrators in school, which is well documented in national as well international research. Most South African literature and the media portray girls as victims. Little research examines whether they are the perpetrators. Meda Chesney-Lind, a criminologist states that there is little evidence to support the notion that there is a new, more violent female offender (Chesney-Lind, 2003, p2). Overseas researcher Douglas Smith, an associate Professor in the Department of Counsellor of Education at the University of Hawaii states that middle-class school teachers in Hawaii have reported increases in the number of times that physical fights broke out between girls on campus (Smith, D, 2003). The differences in the rate of occurrence of female violence in South Africa and abroad need to be examined.

One of the hallmarks of masculinity is aggression. It helps men to gain control in their lives. Boys become popular because they are willing to play rough, enjoying the opportunity of being rough and tumble. Boys get recognition and respected for the following reasons athletic prowess, displaying resistance against authority, and acting among other things tough and confident (Simmons, 2002, p17).

On the other hand, females are expected to grow into caregivers. This role which girls are expected to take on is at odds with aggression. Girls are to possess qualities that show that they are 'caring', further to this, girls are to be sweet, precious and tender. It would be consoling to think that we live in times whereby gender transitions are taking place, a world that is learning to give its girls equality in the ways it finds hardest (Simmons, 2002, p127). But gender transition may also usher in a new age of female assertiveness and violence and it is this phenomenon, in schools, that is of interest to this researcher

“While rarely studied or researched, the fact that packs of girls are cruel and a force to be reckoned with isn’t exactly a deep, dark hidden secret in our culture. We’ve come to understand the term “swarming.” We’re aware violence is not quite as isolated as we once thought” (Sismondo, 2002, p2).

Witnessing the emergence of fairly significant changes in the manner in which girls express aggression is coming to the fore (Smith, 2003). In South Africa facts and figures have not revealed if a new level of physical aggression among girls has emerged but if teachers perceive the onset of such a phenomenon then this issue will need to be addressed.

PROBLEM FORMULATION

While there is an abundance of literature and research focussing on boys and their involvement in violent behaviour, there is a dearth of research on female violence especially in South Africa. Two major factors have influenced this study. Firstly, most research on youth violence does not distinguish between violence among girls and boys (Weiler, 1999, p1). Secondly, there is paucity of literature on violence perpetrated by girls per se because it is seldom differentiated locally. These factors provide a compelling case for the study of female violence in schools.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to:

Ascertain perceptions of teachers regarding the prevalence of violence by female learners in schools.

AIM OF THIS STUDY

The aim of this study is to:

1. Ascertain the extent of violence by female learners in South African schools by examining the perceptions of educators regarding female violence at schools.

2. To present an idea of the nature, extent and severity of female violence internationally since this is lacking South African literature.

MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are as follows:

1. What do teachers consider to be 'violence'?
2. Do they consider that such violence committed by girls is taking place in schools?
3. What are the types of violence exhibited by female learners?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Gender theorists have explained the social interaction of people in many ways. These include an analysis of how people's expectation of what men and women ought to be like shape such interactions and perceptions (Millard, 1998, p19). Males and females are made into men and women through the roles they play. Media coverage and literature have portrayed men as heroes. Men are seen as brave and courageous whilst women are viewed as petite, coy and withdrawn.

"Masculinity is understood as meaningful only in relation to femininity and as constructed through an interplay of opposites and alternatives"(Pattman et al, 1998, p123). Whilst boys measure their strength against girls, are girls who become involved in violent acts in school developing femininities in a similar way?

Social learning theory states that children's behaviour is shaped when they respond to the ways in which significant people in their lives expect them to behave. From the very start of learning and even before children go to school, different models of the kind of behaviour that are appropriate to their role are given to boys and girls. These models of behaviour are presented to them by the adults in their lives and by friends who control the boundaries of gender difference (Millard, 1998, p19). The question arises: why would girls go against

this image that has been clearly defined for them? Some of the reasons are discussed below.

Girls and women are trivialized by male pupils and members of staff (Thomas, 1990). This could be a possible explanation for females rebelling or resorting to violence. Girls and women also know that they are excluded from power in schools. One response to these situations is for some of these girls to engage in violence which is a way of displaying their power (Thomas, 1990, p13/14).

The general rule for the behaviour of boys and girls as they grow up, is for boys to become aggressive and independent while girls become passive, dependent and conventional (Artz, 1998). A possible explanation for female and even male misbehaviour is that those who have a low social standing in the school setting have little to lose by misbehaving, in contrast to the socially successful adolescents who hold positions as class monitors, cheerleaders or as members of prestigious academic or social cliques (Kratcoski, 1996). There is a correlation between the inability to succeed academically and the development of delinquency. This includes the child becoming violent. As a result of frustration the child becomes violent in school because of the pressure to achieve academically.

Studies conducted abroad reveal that family disintegration has a significant effect on girls than boys. Researchers have noted that female delinquents are more likely to come from dysfunctional families than male delinquents (Kratcoski, 1996, p129). Family disintegration has a greater effect on girls because they are often more carefully supervised by family members than are boys. This however does not mean that they are more violent than boys. Girls don't have so many opportunities as boys to develop peer group contacts outside the family, which can be used as family substitutes. Locally, in South Africa, girls could become violent due to the violent nature of society or due to the fact that they have been exposed to violence in the home. This is only one explanation. Other

perspectives will be presented in Chapter two, which serves to provide a more in-depth literature study on female violence.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Violence is overwhelmingly the domain of young men" (Cunningham, 2000, p1).

"However, the extension of general research findings to girls remains an open question because females constitute such a small proportion of the subjects in evaluation studies and meta-analysis (Koons, Burrow, Morash and Bynum, 1997 in Cunningham, 2000, p5).

"Recent reviews of studies on adolescent female aggression (Pepler and Craig, 1999, Leschied et al, 2000 in Cunningham) demonstrate that there is a small but interesting body of work. These and other studies of violent girls and women are shedding light on a much under-studied topic. Exploratory studies, in which it is wise to include research conducted on clinical and penal samples, have documented that girls can be physically violent"(Cunningham, 2000, p2)

There is no clear indication of the extent, frequency or severity of female violence in schools and, as already indicated this study cannot go far in providing data on female violence in schools per se. What this study can do, however, is to provide one of the first indications of the nature of the problem from a teacher perspective. This study can thus make two contributions: it can shed light on the experiences and perceptions of teachers insofar as girls' violence in schools is concerned, and it can begin to gauge what the effects of these perceptions are.

Teacher recognition of behavioural problems in school is of paramount importance for the academic and personal success of children. Perceptions of violence influence teachers and if girls' violence is not acknowledged or seen as a problem then teachers are likely to ignore it. This might be a problem in a context where such violence occurs.

In South Africa, there has been a recent increase in research work on gender in education. Among the researchers active in this field, Robert Morrell has done extensive work on masculinity. His work has focused on the extent and severity of school violence and by and large has equated this with the actions of boys. Morrell is not alone in this focus. Virtually all sociologists of education have made and continue to make the assumption that violence is 'a boys' problem'. (Leach et al, 2003). It is possible that researchers believe that girl-on-girl violence/ girl-on-boy violence is less important than the highly visible, disruptive male aggression and violence perpetrated by males on girls and women and this may be one of the reasons why girls' violence has largely been ignored. Dr Artz, an international researcher, who is the director of the School of Child and Youth Care at Uvic (University of Victoria) states that: " Girls are just as capable of inflicting violence as boys are and always have been" (Fitzpatrick, E, 1998, p1).

School violence has many facets. This chapter focuses on the range of violent behaviour displayed by girls. The general public tends to perceive school violence as initiated and perpetrated by male learners. Two reports namely 'The Human Rights Watch' and a report by the former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, 'Meeting the Challenge of Sexual Abuse at Schools' in which he makes mention of two young girls being viciously beaten by rampaging youth, lend support to the above. In this study, measuring the scope of female violence is difficult. If there were a continued study of female violence then researchers would have a better understanding of female violence and its effects on the South African schooling society.

This chapter will focus on the:

1. Teachers perceptions of violence
2. Extent of female violence
3. Examples of female violence
4. Causes of female violence

Teachers' perceptions of the extent, nature and cause of female violence will help to illuminate and give perspective to girls' violence in schools. It will help to answer the question: Is girls' violence in schools a problem? In some contexts, teachers are confronted with girls' violence and this can be quite a difficult experience for them as it can demotivate and humiliate them. They might fear a recurrence of the event. Teacher perceptions of the kinds of girls' violence and the extent of it will urge some teachers to equip themselves with the necessary skills to help female learners. At the same time, some teachers may not regard girls' violence as important because most violence (in South Africa and other schools) is in fact committed by boys. This violence actually threatens women teachers and many seem frightened of schoolboys.

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

"Teachers think that girls should be really nice and sharing and not get in any fights." - Shira

"They expect you to be perfect angels and then sometimes we don't want to be considered a perfect angel." - Laura

"The teacher says if you do something good, you'll get something good back."- Ashley

(Simmons, 2002, p19)

The views above are from American secondary school students and yet they may well reflect the views of at least some girl students in South African schools.

In the extracts presented below, South African teachers have not pinpointed a particular homogenous group when stating their perceptions, but have spoken about commission of acts of violence as a whole by both boys and girls. The extracts taken from literature presented below do not apply specifically to teachers' perceptions of female violence but refer to school violence as a whole.

Nevertheless, they give some idea of teacher perceptions of the broader problem of school violence to which girls may be making a contribution.

"Mobs of angry and ill-disciplined pupils in schools across the province have reduced places of learning to war zones as violence, gangsterism, vandalism and attacks on teachers and principals became the order of the day" (*East London's community newspaper*, 1999, p1). According to this article, vandalism seemed to take place mainly in black schools, but this did not mean that only black learners were destructive by nature. The Cape African Teachers' Union's secretary for conditions of service, Mzubanzi Nohesi, stated that the reason for vandalism occurring so often was due to the fact that pupils were taught under trees or in classrooms that were falling apart (*East London's community newspaper*, 1999, p3).

"FED-UP educators and politicians have blamed rebellious and demoralized pupils and a lack of firm government action and parental participation for the recent escalation of violence and vandalism in Eastern Cape schools" (*East London's community newspaper*, 1999, p1). Eastern Cape Department of Education and Training spokesperson Papama Mfenyana stated that the department was making every endeavour to address this issue. South African Democratic Teachers' Union provincial secretary Mxolisi Dimaza mentioned that schools in the Eastern Cape had different reasons for the rising violence. Mxolisi Dimaza states that violence in schools was due to the unrest in the communities which have spilled over into schools (*East London's community newspaper*, 1999, p4).

EXTENT OF FEMALE VIOLENCE

This section will focus on girls' violence in international schools and girls' violence in South African schools. According to Simmons (2002), the day to day aggression that persists among girls and which seems to be the deep dark side of their social world, still has to be chartered and explored (Simmons, 2002, p69).

Delinquent activity by girls has received much less attention by researchers than mis-behaviour by boys. In a US study delinquent behaviour by junior high school students, for example, only the results received from the 284 male respondents were taken into account and the data from the 336 females who were also part of the study was ignored (Kratcoski, 1996, p141).

According to Staples (2003), teenage girls are involved in acts of physical violence just as much as boys. A major study of youngsters aged 14 and 15 in Scotland provided evidence of this phenomenon. In conflict situations, girls were found to retaliate violently with their fists and hands as any male would (Staples, 2003, p1).

Camilla Pederson, a researcher at the Glasgow Caledonian University said:

"We were amazed because all the previous research suggests boys carry out more physical violence than girls"(Staples, 2003,p1). In this same survey of 74 girls and 96 boys, it was found that 17% of the girls that had been questioned had hit their parents as compared to 5% of the boys. The survey also showed that 60.8% of girls had been involved in a street fight as compared to 72.9% of boys (Staples, 2003, p1).

"Bullying is now far more prevalent among girls than boys and is blighting the future of a generation of young people" (McVeigh, 2002, p1). There is knowledge now of a huge rise in 'girl-to-girl cruelty', which has resulted in a large number of girls leaving school who are lowly qualified or have no qualification at all. Hendessi cited in McVeigh (2002) stated that bullies were also at risk of becoming involved in crime, girl gangs, drug/alcohol abuse and leading damaged lives. She goes further by stating that girls are now more involved in sustained bullying than boys (McVeigh, 2002, p1).

Schools may be the places, which help in perpetuating the vicious cycle of violence. An 11-city survey of eighth graders in America undertaken in the mid-

1990's found that more than 90% of both male and female gang members reported having engaged in one or more violent acts in the previous 12 months (Esbensen and Osgood, 1997). Statistical information points to the conclusion that delinquent behaviour of females is becoming more like those traditionally associated with males. A survey done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Youth Risk Behaviour, stated that five percent of girls reported carrying a weapon to school (Flannery, 1997 cited in Weiler).

STUDIES DONE IN SOUTH AFRICA

"Schoolgirl prepares for prison". This article reveals shocking evidence of a 14-year-old Pietermaritzburg girl, who was convicted of killing a grandmother. The judge found that the teenager had planned and executed the murder. The convicted schoolgirl was also guilty of creating an "elaborate web of lies and deceit" to avoid the consequences. This horrendous act although not committed by the schoolgirl, but orchestrated by the schoolgirl, is a reference point relating to female violence in South Africa. "(TRIBUNEHERALD, DECEMBER 5 2004,p1). ✓

Although the above does not relate specifically, to school violence it draws attention to the fact that schoolgirls may be violently inclined these days and may take these violent tendencies into the school. There may exist other examples of schoolgirl violence, which may not have been documented as yet.

A study undertaken by The Institute of Criminology of the University of Cape Town in the late 1990s offers some tantalizing insight into girls' violence even though it does not focus particularly on female violence. The study focussed on a survey of crime and violence in 20 schools in the Cape Metropole and beyond. This study was done between February and June 1998. The sample consisted of primary and secondary schools. The findings were as follows:

→ This study reported fighting/ physical violence and vandalism in 95% of the schools. Bullying and intimidation took place in 75% of the schools. Assault was

prevalent in 60% of the schools and gangsterism in seven secondary schools (Eliasov and Frank, 2000, p1). This study does not differentiate between male and female offenders in school but it offers a reference point that large numbers of learners are engaging in violent acts in schools.

Despite the dearth of literature on female violence in South African schools, mention needs to be made of one study relating to 'Direct and Indirect Aggression in Women' by Theron, et al (2000) from the Department of Psychology, University of Stellenbosch. This study examined direct and indirect aggression by 148 South African university students. Although this study focuses on female students in tertiary institutions, it sheds light on female aggression in educational institutions because the causes of female aggression here could be similar to that in the lower educational institutions. This study focussed on attitudes and beliefs about aggression in the South African population. It provides an understanding of aggression across cultures and secondly it provides an explanation for the possibility of a clearer picture of aggression in the South African context. This study only involved female participants so that female aggression could be seen as a element in the construction of 'femaleness'.

According to Theron et al (2000), the aggressive strategy adopted by women as a choice has been limited by traditional social norms, which are linked to their position in society as the weaker sex. This allows them to resort to covert strategies such as indirect aggression. South Africa has undergone socio-political changes with the empowerment of women seen as an important issue. The question that emerges now is: will this empowerment of women offer more available overt aggressive strategies to women? (Theron et al, 2000, p2).

This study can also be linked to radical feminism because women are seen here as emancipating themselves from dominance of their male counterparts and the subdued positions that they held in society.

THE NATURE OF FEMALE VIOLENCE

Not all-female learners resort to physical violence. There are those who have become physically aggressive and those who have resorted to relational aggression. Relational aggression is a type of emotional violence whereby individuals use relationships to harm others. Examples include exclusion from a group and rumor spreading.

Girls are also capable of psychological violence. A teacher Heidi During who teaches German abroad, reported that physical violence was practically non-existent at the all-girl school in which she taught at. She mentioned that violence, which took the form of psychological abuse, was prevalent at the school. She stated that backstabbing, name-calling spreading of rumours, gossiping and the stealing of boyfriends from other girls was more prevalent (Hawley, 1997, p1). Therefore acts of violence of female perpetrators can range from psychological harm to physical acts. These include:

1. Hitting, kicking or pushing other students
2. Jeering/ mocking / scoffing / teasing at them or their families
3. Damaging other students' property or school property
4. Threatening students or teachers in any way
5. Killing

This section deals with girls who express their anger indirectly. The important element in this section is that violence exhibited by girls is planned or premeditated. This section differs from research, which states that girls' violence is reactive and individual. Girls declare war on other girls in their own way. Ganging up against other girls is a form of indirect aggression where direct conflict between girls is forbidden (Simmons, 2002, p80). Some girls may methodically build a coalition by getting the support of other girls against her target. When girls engage in conflict as a group then no one girl becomes directly responsible for her aggression. Expression of anger takes place

wordlessly and the group is used to disguise the nastiness of girls. In other words the group is used to present to others the 'nice girl' image (Simmons, 2002, p80).

To summarize the nature of female violence:

1. Girls operate in cliques
2. Engage in one to one confrontations

Simmons (2002) also makes mention of the fact that girls who don't want to be involved in a conflict may use another form of behaviour to target their victim, that of humour, which can injure a peer indirectly. "When a girl is at the butt of all jokes, she wants to tell her friends it hurts her," states sixteen year old Ellie (Simmons, 2002, p78). Girls are willing to sacrifice their own personal relationship to gain social status. Boys are central to them acquiring status. Girls' behaviours are learned, they learn from other girls.

EXAMPLES OF FEMALE VIOLENCE

In this section I offer some examples of girls involved in cases of physical violence in schools ranging from the use of firearms to physical force.

In the 1979 song "I Don't Like Mondays", Bob Geldof sang about Brenda Spencer, the schoolgirl from San Diego who opened fire on her teachers and schoolmates (Harnden, T, 2000,p1). Incidents like these are not uncommon in the European continent. Over the past few years, students going on a rampage, firing bullets at learners in the United States has been a common occurrence. "Shootings in the United Kingdom has repeatedly made headlines or the news on television and radio, among the most tragic being the massacre at Dunblane in Scotland when scores were wounded and fourteen killed after a crazed gunman fired randomly" (*the Teacher*, p1, 2001).). To date tragedies like this still take place. Many youth are 'trigger-happy' in South Africa today.

Smith (2003) brings to our attention an incident of violence, which took place at the Rotorua Girls' High School, New Zealand. The incident is about a female student who set fire to her science teacher's hair. Although school responses to female violence will be dealt with in chapter five the response from Smith regarding this incident will be stated here. Smith says: "Schools should treat any incident involving violence against teachers and students very seriously and where necessary, get support from outside agencies" (Smith, 2003. P2). In this instance the student was suspended. The behaviour of this learner was seen as hazardous under the 'Health and Safety Amendment Act'. According to Smith (2003), anecdotal reports of violence against teachers suggested an increase and the danger it posed was that it would act as a deterrent for those who were considering taking up teaching as a profession.

At the University of Missouri-Columbia, a fiery feminist student slapped a male student on his face and used her foot on his body simultaneously stating that he was "a misogynistic SOB" with every blow that she made (Mucci, 1999, p1-2). The student was removed from the class and placed in another class. This student was not only inflicting physical harm but she was also verbally abusive. In some instances violent acts and verbal abuse reinforce one another.

The following example of violence (in the United States) to be mentioned is of importance because teachers need to be made aware of the fact that the slightest provocation by any learner can lead to another learner becoming violent. At Hillhouse High School, a fifteen-year-old female student was charged for possessing a knife with a seven-inch blade. This female perpetrator was upset with another female classmate who had rolled her eyes at her. MacDonald said that 'the rolling of the eyes' was a sign, which offended the 15-year-old female. He went further by saying that this incident could have resulted in a stabbing (Hasday, 1995, p1).

Acts of violence in schools can happen unexpectedly and suddenly (Hasday, 1995, p1). If violence can erupt so easily in schools, then teachers should not ignore the slightest of offences committed by learners. Teachers should try to quell a situation that has arisen as a result of violence delicately.

Media reports in Canada have contributed to the view that a new violent girl walks the street of Canada. A 14-year-old Reena Virk was beaten so severely by seven girls aged between 14 to 16 years old, and one boy that she drowned in shallow water. Canadians began to feel troubled by the image of a group of girls swarming and brutally beating another girl. Whilst it has not been uncommon for boys to engage themselves in such an activity, the assumption is that girls are immunized from such behaviour (Cunningham, 2000, p 1). Of significance here is the fact that the girls who were responsible for this murder were of a school going age and in all probability could have been schoolgirls. This incident can be closely correlated to the murder orchestrated by the South African schoolgirl that was mentioned earlier on.

At the University of Arkansas, a new study relating to the occurrence of dating violence was conducted. This study targeted high-school students. Of significance is the fact that male and female students perpetrated an equal rate of violence. Megan Mooney, a Ph D student at the University of Arkansas reported her findings on 'assessing dating histories and attitudes toward violence and experiences with violence in relationships' at an International Research Conference in Portsmouth (University of Arkansas, 2003). She found evidence that women perpetuated an equal amount or even more violent acts than men (University of Arkansas, 2003, p1).

Mooney says that women are expressing their assertiveness now more than before, and a possible explanation for women becoming assertive and feeling comfortable with being physically aggressive is due to the fact that they feel

threatened. Mooney says that we should not assume that women are always victims (University of Arkansas, 2003, p1)

CAUSES OF FEMALE VIOLENCE

Youth violence is an issue of national concern. This section considers the broader societal causes of violence, which has impacted on the lives of schoolgirls. Violence is a societal issue, but schools are expected to deal with it. There are many factors, which can lead to one becoming violent. A few of the causes of violence are outlined below. Although the causes of violence don't apply to a specific gender group, it may well reflect the reasons why violence takes place.

The causes of school violence, like all violence, is determined by many factors. The same is true for female violence. Educator Leroy Robinson mentions that students' bodies and emotions are changing, and the fact that students are in school together for eight hours most certainly will allow for altercations to take place (Hawley, 1996,p1). "Baker (1998) has suggested that youth violence and unwanted aggression in schools may simply be "the manifestation of poorness of fit" between an individual's student's particular social context and the social context of his or her school (Jull, 2000, p5).

In 2003, the results of one of the most extensive studies ever done pertaining to violence and television were released. In one particular study, over a period of seventeen years, male and female youth were studied with regards to the relationship between television viewing habits, and acts of aggression and crime in the later life. The results, which were released in March 2002, showed a definite relationship between the effects of television and violence carried out in movies. This study constituted 700 male as well as female youth (Critical Issues in Film and TV, 2004, p2)

There are many problems in linking media violence to violence in society. Firstly, only a small percent of those who watch violence are responsible for violent acts. Most of us are seemingly unaffected by it. Even though we can't establish a simple, direct, cause-and-effect relationship between media violence and violence in our society, we can draw some conclusions from the data (Critical Issues in Film and TV, 2004, p2).

Studies have indicated that those individuals who tended to watch a significant amount of television, not only display aggressive tendencies but are also likely to adopt attitudes that are in favour of resolving conflicts violently and aggressively. These viewers begin to see the world as a hostile place and they are less trusting of people (Critical Issues in Film and TV, 2004, p2).

Youth violence is determined by factors such as biology that is, temperament, style of parenting, exposure to violence in the home, cultural factors such as norms that promote or discourage violence, and situational factors example gang membership. All of the above are affected by social forces such as socio-economic backgrounds, prejudices, violence represented by media, attitudes of tolerance toward violence and sex- role stereotyping. The contribution of each factor is unknown (Cunningham, 2000, p3). Many observers have stated that when one is exposed to violence in one's childhood home, then there is a powerful force that raises the probability of violent perpetration or victimization in a significant way (Cunningham, 2000,p 4).

School policies may also have some part to play in the apparent upsurge of school violence by girls. Simmons cited in Paulson (2003) states that policies of schools that relate to anti-violence typically focus on physical aggression, which is traditionally male. She says that girls are aware that rules relating to anti-violence don't apply to them (Paulson, 2003, p). This gives girls reason to behave violently without being seen as perpetrators.

Cunningham (2000) explains girls' reasons for their involvement in violence as different to that of boys. One explanation could be that aggressive behaviour is a defence mechanism for surviving abuse. Cromie (1998) notes the association between media violence and real-life aggression. In this article concerns were raised about how violence is portrayed in music videos which had direct bearing on adolescents expectations regarding their own safety and the way they perceive people of another gender or race. The article gives insight that shootings, stabbing, punching, and kicking were shown on violent videos, a perception, which gave adolescents (girls and boys) the idea to carry weapons and use weapons.

CONCLUSION

There is much research work needed before we better understand girls' violence generally, and in schools in particular. From the work that has been thus far conducted, it can tentatively be stated that girls' violence is not new though appears to be on the increase. The causes are multiple but the gender regime of schools, changing gender identities (especially constructions of femininity) and wider social forces which have generalized violence into public spaces are probably all-important.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe, explain and justify the methodology that was used in order to obtain data for this study.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is a descriptive research project. Descriptive methods aim to describe and interpret what is (Cohen and Manion, 2001, p169). According to Best (1970) descriptive research is to do with among other things: "points of views, or attitudes that are held, effects that are being felt, or trends that are developing" (cited in Cohen and Manion, 2001, p169). Descriptive studies are concerned with groups, institutions and individuals. Methods and materials are also looked at for the purpose of describing, comparing, contrasting, classifying, analyzing and interpreting anything that exists or may be supposed to exist and the events that develop in the various fields of inquiry (Cohen and Manion, 2001,p169).

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

All the key participants included in this study were teachers. A total of fifty teachers participated in this study. These teachers were from five schools in the greater Durban area. The participants were from primary schools as well as secondary schools. The researcher chose ten participants per school. The researcher chose participants to whom she had easy access.

The researcher chose participants who:

1. Were situated close-by for the purpose of avoiding travelling long distances
2. Would be knowledgeable about the area of inquiry
3. Would understand questions and presumably have sufficient knowledge to answer them depending on their experiences.

The researcher wanted to establish that female violence was a phenomenon in both primary as well as secondary schools therefore participants came from both types of schools. These schools were in close proximity to the researcher's place of residence, which meant easy access to the participants.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Data was obtained from one sample group. The sampling technique used in this research project was the non-probability sampling procedure referred to as 'convenience sampling'. According to Paton (1980 cited in Cohen and Manion, 2001) this type of sampling saves time and money and minimizes the researcher's efforts of finding participants who are less agreeable in taking part in the research. Convenience sampling involves the researcher choosing the nearest individuals until he or she has obtained the sample size that he/she needs (Cohen and Manion, 2001).

In other words convenience sampling involves those who happen to be available for the research. This sampling method does not make any generalizations about the wider population (Cohen and Manion, 2001). Participants had the choice of participating i.e. participation was voluntary. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the intention of the researcher regarding the desired responses before they answered the questionnaire. Respondents were assured of anonymity and that their responses would be kept in the strictest of confidence.

THE SAMPLE SIZE

Novice researches are faced with the question of just how large their sample should be. A sample size in research is not specified. The correct sample size will depend on the purpose of the study. The nature of the population will also give the researcher an idea as to what the sample size should look like. Thirty is a sample size held by many to be the minimum number of cases in order to conduct statistical analysis on data

(Cohen and Manion, 2001, p93). To some extent the sample size is determined by the objectives of the research. For the purpose of this research the sample in this project consisted of fifty Indian male as well as female teachers.

This research was carried out in five schools in the greater Durban metropolitan region. The schools were co-educational. Of the five schools from which the sample was drawn, only one site in this research project had a school population of under 700 learners. The rest of the schools all had a school population of over 1200.. The table below gives a detailed account of learners who fall into the different race groups. The composition of the school population of the participating schools were as follows:

RESEARCH SITE	BLACKS	COLOURED	WHITES	INDIANS
1	98%	1%	0%	1%
2	40%	0%	0%	60%
3	20%	0%	0%	80%
4	30%	0%	0%	70%
5	48%	2%	0%	50%

Indian students constituted the majority of the total number of students at all five schools. One research site had a 98% black school population. Two research sites had a component of coloured learners ranging between one and two percent. The data revealed that none of these schools had white learners. This would mean that teachers' perception of female violence involved Indian and Black learners. The schools in which the research was conducted were primarily working class, former Indian schools. There were no white students but a sizeable minority was African.

PROCEDURE OF OBTAINING DATA

"Permission to carry out an investigation must always be sought at an early stage"(Bell, 1987 cited in Cohen and Manion, 2001, p53). The first stage of any research project involves obtaining official permission to carry

out research in a specific community. For the purpose of this research, the researcher contacted the heads of the respective schools. The research was explained to the principal who provided the consent for the teachers to participate in the research. The researcher asked one teacher in each school, who was further briefed by the principal to seek the assistance of voluntary teachers for this study and distribute and collect questionnaires. This method was facilitated by the distribution of a covering letter which explained the purpose of the research project and addressed issues of confidentiality.

DATA SOURCES

The source of data for this study came from educators in the Durban metropolitan region. Educators from the selected schools were the key informants in this study.

THE RESEARCH TOOL - THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey was undertaken through a self-administered questionnaire, which was formulated by the researcher. The researcher found this to be a useful and necessary technique of acquiring information since each participant would have a different experience and level of knowledge

The survey took the form of a questionnaire which the participants had to fill in. The researcher chose this research tool because

1. it was an economical way of acquiring essential information:
2. Information could be acquired in the shortest possible time
3. A range of information was likely to be acquired.

Each participant was given a period of two weeks in which to complete the questionnaire. This in turn allowed them to fill in the questionnaire at leisure. An explanation regarding the method of distribution of questionnaires will be given later on. The use of a survey-questionnaire enabled the researcher to collate

data on behaviours, beliefs, and observations of a specific group. The data could then be identified, reported and interpreted.

The researcher used the questionnaire because of the following advantages

1. Response alternatives were clear
2. Questions and response alternatives did not reflect biases of the questioner
3. Each question contained one thought only
4. In a questionnaire, the vocabulary and syntax of the questionnaire is in keeping with that of the respondent sample.
5. Questionnaires can contain questions that are simple and concise in understandable language in order to obtain unbiased responses (Epstein et al, 1977, p14)

CONSTRUCTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Types of Questions that appeared in the Questionnaire

The questionnaire that was given to participants to answer consisted of different types of questions. Questions fell into two categories:

1. open-ended questions – views / opinions/ suggestions from respondents
2. closed questions – dichotomous questions, multiple choice questions and rating scales.

Closed questions allowed the teachers to respond quickly and it was straightforward to code. The dichotomous questions were useful as they allowed the respondent to be direct. The question required a simple yes or no (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982 cited Cohen and Manion). The multiple-choice questions gave respondents a range of choices. When researchers offer these types of questions in a questionnaire, they must ensure that each alternative does not overlap. The researcher presented as broad a range of alternatives as possible. These types of questions too can be quickly coded (Cohen and Manion, 2001, p251). The researcher put in questions that accommodated only one reply, such

as age or years of experience, the second type accommodated multiple replies as well as other types. The following are examples of the types of questions in the questionnaire.

Which age group do you fall into?

- A. 21-30 years
- B. 31-40
- C. 41-50
- D. 51-60
- E. Other

EXAMPLES OF MULTIPLE TYPE QUESTIONS INCLUDED:

What kinds of violent behaviour have female learners been engaging in:

The categories below include examples of relational aggression as well as physical violence. This has been explained in chapter two.

- A. Bullying
- B. Fighting: physical acts of violence
- C. Arguing
- D. Throwing temper tantrums
- E. Hurling threats
- F. Being rude and disrespectful towards other learners
- G. Being rude and disrespectful towards educators
- H. Carrying or possessing weapons
- I. Assaulting other pupils
- J. Other- Explain

Some questions used rating scales. These allowed the respondent to register different degrees of response. The use of rating scales was useful as it enabled the participants to grade their responses across a continuum. Examples of rating scales are as follows:

Would you say there has been an increase in violent acts committed by girls in your schools?

- A. Agree
- B. Agree strongly
- C. Disagree
- D. Disagree strongly

How frequently do acts of violence by female learners take place in your school?

- A. Not at all
- B. Seldom
- C. Very seldom
- D. Often
- E. Very often

The closed-ended questions limited responses to specific options and were much easier to analyze. This was not true of the open – ended questions which were included to solicit the opinions of respondents on issues which were not suited to a closed-ended format.

“It is the open-ended responses that might contain the ‘gems’ of information that otherwise might not have been caught in the questionnaire” (Cohen and Manion, 2001, p255).

Examples of an open-ended question are:

1. How are your school's policies geared to respond to this problem?
2. What do you understand by the term violence?

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

Excessive variation of responses can create confusion and can result in unreliable information being recorded. Formulation of questions had to

be done with much consideration. The researcher took precautions to avoid including the following in the research tool:

- Questions that can be threatening
- Questions that can be leading
- Questions that can be sensitive
- Questions that can be ambiguous
- Questions that can be biased
- Questions that can be unclear or difficult to interpret
- Questions or response categories relevant to the inquiry could have been excluded.

THE ACTUAL RESEARCH PROCESS

ADMINISTERING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaires pertaining to this study were hand delivered to schools. One teacher assumed responsibility in each school for the distribution and collection to teachers regarding the questionnaires. A covering letter accompanied each questionnaire explaining the purpose of the study. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire in a specified time, which was two weeks. The respondents were given an idea as to how to enter a response either by underlining, circling, ticking or providing explanations. The respondents were also made aware of the due date for the completion of the questionnaire. The researcher went to the schools at the end of the fortnight to collect all completed questionnaires.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis involves organizing, accounting for, and explaining the data, after it has been collected. It involves explaining participants' definitions of the situation. According to Parlett and Hamilton (1976) the researcher will have to sift, sort, review and reflect on the data collected. By doing this, the important aspects of the research emerge.

ANALYSIS OF DATA PERTAINING TO THIS STUDY

Every researcher has to embark on some kind of strategy in order to analyze data. "By subdividing and disaggregating data through coding it - the opposite of text interpretation - we can see it in a new light" (Lecompte et al, 1992, p140). In this study fifty questionnaires had to be analyzed.

The researcher analyzed and interpreted the data as follows:

1. Each sub- issue was dealt with separately which meant that the data was presented issue by issue.
2. Different responses to open-ended questions, which had multiple perspectives, were all combined.
3. Responses to close-ended questions were presented collectively.
4. Opinions were recorded separately from facts and figures.
5. Cryptic answers and inconsistencies in questionnaires were not recorded since it would interfere with the validity of the study.
6. In some instances responses were recorded under themes.

PARTICIPANT'S BACKGROUND

All of the participants were teachers who had gained some or a lot of teaching experience. Since the study aimed at acquiring teacher perceptions on violence exhibited by females at school, the researcher pursued the line of investigation, which entailed asking teachers to complete a questionnaire.

PARTICIPANT BIAS

One possible limitation of this method of investigation is that some of the participants could have been guilty of gender stereotypes. This could mean that violent acts perpetrated by female learners could have been overlooked or went unnoticed because some teachers would have thought that violence is a boy's domain.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

"There are inescapable ethical considerations in any intervention in people's

lives and it is essential that very effort be made to avoid harmful consequences for participants” (Bailey, 1987; Rubin& Babbie, 1989 in Veeran, 1999, p56). No research is free of difficulties. Researchers that conduct surveys see confidentiality of information supplied by participants as a prime concern. Researchers are obliged to take ethical aspects into consideration as they can be detrimental to the researcher and the research project if ethical considerations are ignored.

Each respondent was given the assurance that the research would not harm him or her. They were also guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity in this research. The researcher ensured that the questions were not biased. The researcher also tried to avoid any questions that were offensive, misleading or impertinent. Questions that seemed to be ambiguous also did not appear in the questionnaire. The researcher presented a questionnaire to respondents that did not entail leading questions, which would have presented the idea to respondents that there was only one acceptable answer. (Cohen and Manion, 2001, p248).

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Since this was a small study, the researcher encountered minimal problems.

RESPONSE RATE: PARTICIPANTS RESPONSES

There were sixty questionnaires that were distributed. Of these sixty questionnaires, fifty questionnaires were returned. Some participants did not return their questionnaires to the researcher on time and this delayed the process of collection of questionnaires by handing in their questionnaires late. Some teachers did not return the questionnaire at all.

Although the researcher made efforts to alert participants to the time frames associated with the completion of the questionnaires, some respondents did not return the questionnaires to the researcher. There may

be several reasons why the participants did not answer the questionnaire.

Possible reasons may include:

- Disinterest in the study
- Time did not permit for answering of the questionnaire because teachers had other issues to deal with.

Mention need also be made that some participants did not return their questionnaires and that some participants returned their questionnaires with it being partially filled in.

CONCLUSION

This research project is based on data collected by questionnaires distributed in 5 Durban schools. Fifty teachers completed the questionnaire. These were Indian male and female teachers. The data collected covered a wide spectrum of questions and included quantitative and qualitative responses. In the next chapter, the data is presented and analyzed.

CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS

This chapter will reveal the findings to this research. The results are actual opinions and observations of teachers regarding female violence. Statistics have been included in the form of tables or graphs. In some instances, information will be indicated on range of variation. In this chapter, the results will be placed into logical segments by using subheadings.

"For a girl, being more boyish means being more powerful in the world. For a boy, to be more female is to be less powerful. The pursuit of equal rights with men has inadvertently confirmed the preeminence of traditional masculinity by seeking to emulate it. In doing so it has actually narrowed the options available to boys. To be better than a girl a boy has to be more of a man. The only way out of being a masculine man seems to be becoming a failed masculine man or separating yourself from notions of normality"(Phillips, 1993, p59 cited in Millard).

"Opposite identities like men/women and hetero/homo are not only constructed in relation to each other, they always carry, in their inner configurations, some version (fantasy, image, imago) of the Other (Johnston, 1997a, p12 cited in Millard).

INTRODUCTION

The recognition of behavioural problems in the classroom is of utmost importance for the academic growth and personal success of children and warrants the closer examination of violence in schools. Cultural dispositions, roles and attitudes suggest more appropriate activity for one sex than the other. For example, in some cultures, sitting quietly and becoming absorbed in a book is the activity that one would expect female learners to be engaged in (Millard, 1998, p20). However, this image of girl behaviour does not fit all circumstances and all times and this dissertation is particularly interested in girl behaviours that do not fit this stereotype. "Girl's aggression traditionally has been perceived as non-existent or abnormal" (Christin, 2002, p3). Boys' aggression is always encouraged with the cliché, "boys will be boys". Aggression amongst males is always acknowledged as

being natural even though it is anti-social behaviour (Christin, 2002, p3). Yet when girls manifest their anger violently, then this is seen as abnormal.

The reasons for the above is due to the fact that the media reinforces the stereotyping of men and boys. Masculinity is often associated with being macho, independent, competitive, emotionally detached, aggressive and violent. In fact, boys and girls are polarized by the portrayal of the image of children. For instance, advertisements show girls as being endlessly preoccupied by their appearance, above all, with a fascination for dolls and jewellery, whilst encouragement is given to boys to play sports and occupy themselves with war play and technology. Young children are especially vulnerable to the teachings of media because they lack the critical capacity ,which is essential to distinguish between what is a fantasy, and what is real. Due to the above, they are unable to identify persuasive intent, to understand irony and disregard stereo- types (Graydon, et al, 1994, p2)

This chapter reflects the perceptions of teachers concerning female violence in schools, which have mixed gender settings. Recent reports in South Africa have indicated that there is a level of violence perpetrated by learners in South African schools. An article entitled 'Schools study to tackle violence in the classroom' in the *Sunday Tribune* dated 14 November 2004, discusses a research project on gender violence undertaken by the University of Kwazulu-Natal's Education Policy Unit (EPU) and the Centre for Education Policy Development in Gauteng. "Our objective is to identify and describe different forms of violence prevalent in schools and the nature of their impact. Second we want to develop community and school-based strategies for monitoring and preventing school violence". This was according to project leader Sandile Mbokazi (*Sunday Tribune*, 2004, p4). The EPU project is in response to high levels of school violence captured, for example, in a recent *Sunday Tribune*, news story (7 November 2004) titled "School shooting, pupil brain dead".

However, obtaining a clear picture of the issue of violence in schools depends on collecting valid and reliable data, rather than relying on media reports. Observations of school violence by teachers are valid. On the 5 November 2004,

two female learners from my class were called to the office for their involvement in violence. It was apparent that both had been physically assaulting each other on the playground and out of school as well. When the problem seemed to get out of control, the principal intervened. Scars on the faces of learners were evidence of the fights. This is just one observation by the researcher, which is an indication, that female violence does exist in some schools.

In South Africa we don't have statistics on girls' violence – this is an indication that girls violence is not considered a problem. In this survey, teachers in general were also not inclined to attach great seriousness to acts of violence by girls in schools. Teachers were inclined to regard boys' violence in their schools as being very serious and, at the same time, generally disregarded girls' violence. Simone De Beauvoir's interpretation of feminism is that 'one is not born a woman, one becomes one' (Millard, 1998, p19). One early explanation states that girls and boys separate out in the early years of schooling. This was seen as sex-role stereotyping. Before children enter school, "different models of the kind of behaviour that is appropriate to their role are given to boys and girls, both by the adults who surround them, and by their friends who willingly police the boundaries of gender difference (Millard, 1998, p19).

A geographically–stratified random sample of teachers provided information regarding their opinions of girls' violence in schools. The findings of this study do not provide statistics but rather opinions from teachers from a few South African schools regarding female violence. With so little knowledge on female violence in schools in South Africa, it is imperative that researchers delve into this issue to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon at hand.

The findings of this study will be presented in a variety of ways, including text, tables and graphs. Most importantly is that the data is presented in context. Relevant information will be presented in tabular form or graphs to show variation in data. Simple data will be presented in tables and the more complex data will be presented in graphs. The findings will be presented in absolute form as well as percentages. The findings will be presented according to the various themes as contained in the questionnaire.

COMPOSITION OF SCHOOL POPULATION

The schools in this research project comprised mainly of black and Indian learners. Some schools indicated a very small percentage of coloured learners whilst white learners were non-existent in all of the schools.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

As already indicated in Chapter Three, the sample comprised of fifty educators from the greater Durban metropolitan region. Of the fifty participants, thirty-two (64%) were female and the remaining (36%) were males. The male/female ratio of this study is representative of the overall demography of the teaching profession.

AGE RANGE OF PARTICIPANTS

There were five categories according to which participants were grouped. Table 1 below provides an indication of the age range of participants.

TABLE 4.1.

AGE GROUPS	NUMBER	%
A. 21 – 30 years	9	18
B. 31 – 40 years	17	34
C. 41 – 50 years	19	38
D. 51 – 60 years	5	10
E. Other	0	0

The age range 41-50 comprised the highest percentage (38%) of teachers, while the group between 51-60 the least (10%).

DURATION OF SERVICE OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study were found to have a significant amount of teaching experience. Most of the participants in this research have been teaching for more than fifteen years. The statistics are as follows:

1. Thirty-eight teachers (72 %) taught for more than fifteen years.
2. Twelve teachers (24%) have had teaching experiencing ranging between two and nine years.

GRADES THAT PARTICIPANTS TAUGHT

The following table represents the grades that the participants taught:

TABLE 4.2.

FOUNDATION PHASE (GRADES 1-3)	SENIOR PRIMARY (GRADES 4- 7)	JUNIOR AND SENIOR SECONDARY (GRADES 8 –12)
9 (18%)	20 (40%)	21 (42%)

It is evident from the above data that the majority of the participants taught in the junior/secondary phase. An almost equal percentage of participants taught in the senior primary phase and in the secondary phase. Eighteen percent of participants taught in the Foundation Phase. Of significance is that all phases of teaching were represented. According to teacher's perceptions of female violence, female violence seemed to be more likely to be taking place in the senior primary phase as well as in secondary schools because the bulk of the responses came from the two phases.

RACE OF PARTICIPANTS

All of the participants in this research were Indian teachers.

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

In tables where percentages do not add up to 100% this is due to multiple answers, or to the exclusion of, 'Don't know' or 'no response' categories.

PARTICIPANTS' DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE

Participants provided a wide range of responses to the question asking them how they defined and understood the concept, 'violence'. Most participants interpreted 'violence' as being physically abusive. This included aggressive behaviour, which took the forms of kicking, hitting, stabbing, raping, fighting and making use of weapons. Some of the responses provided were:

1. *When one individual inflicts bodily harm on another person deliberately.*
2. *Physical contact causing bodily harm.*
3. *An act of physical aggression lashed out at an individual.*
4. *Aggressive behaviour with the intention of harm to another.*
5. *Violation of ones physical being*
6. *An act of physical aggression imposed on another*
7. *Any act using physical/bodily action that causes harm.*
8. *To show outrage either premeditated or impulsive in the form of aggressive behaviour.*

In all of the above responses, physical harm was perceived to be the critical factor in the occurrence of violence. Teacher definitions of violence did not include reference to the relational aggression favoured by girls. Relational aggression involves:

1. "Purposefully ignoring someone
2. When angry (giving the "silent treatment")
3. Spreading rumors about a disliked classmate
4. Telling others not to play with a certain classmate as a means of retaliation." (The Ophelia Project, 2001, p1).

Teachers do not think that relational violence should be defined as 'violence and yet it can result in a variety adverse effects on those at whom it is directed. By not acknowledging the range of behaviours which can have damaging and destructive effects upon others teachers negate the existence of forms of violence, other than physical. The perceptions of violence are, therefore, limited to primarily the observations of physical violence by the participants and lack a broader definition.

GENDER AS A FACTOR IN VIOLENCE

Of the fifty participants, 20, that is 40 % of the participants viewed violence by and among girls as a problem whilst 20, (40 %) did not see it as a problem. Presumably the other 20% were undecided. This means that basically half the

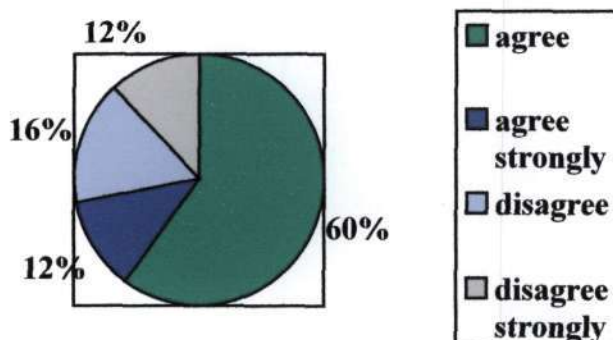
teachers viewed girls' violence as a problem and half did not. Most teachers, however, said that they had witnessed acts of female violence. Forty-four participants (88 %) witnessed females engaging in violent behaviour and only six teachers (12%) did not witness females engaging in violent behaviour. Teachers who had witnessed girls' violence did not consider this a problem presumably because violent acts were always associated with boys. Boys were persistently seen as troublemakers in schools.

Forty-one (82 %) participants selected 'yes 'as their response in contrast to nine (18 %) who selected 'no' when they were asked about their opinion regarding girls' opinions being expressed as violently as many boys do. This is a surprising finding. Most gender studies suggest that boys more rapidly take up violent and aggressive positions than girls. The finding in the Durban context may indicate that violence generally is more common in local schools than in overseas schools, or it may point to the fact that constructions of femininity among school girls differ from those elsewhere and legitimately include the performance of violence.

THE GROWTH OF GIRLS' VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

The graph beneath is an indication by teachers of their perception of the increase in violent acts committed by girls in school.

GRAPH ONE
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE INCREASE IN VIOLENT ACTS



Most teachers believe that female violence is on the increase. They reflected so because what was unheard of in the past seemed to be apparent now. It is quite possible that levels of violence differ from school to school and that some of the variation in opinion among teachers may be explained by differences in their teaching contexts. Most teachers believe that girl violence is now increasing. This means that up until recently girl violence wasn't considered to be an issue that South African schools had to deal with. Girls have always been portrayed as the victims of violence perpetrated by boys. In the opinion of teachers, gender change in schools may be altering the picture and placing girls at the centre of violence rather than at the periphery.

TABLE 4.3.
TYPES OF VIOLENCE

KINDS OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS (TEACHERS) WHO STATED THAT GIRLS ENGAGED IN A PARTICULAR ACTIVITY	RESPONSE IN PERCENTAGE
A. Bullying	43	86
B. Fighting : physical acts of violence	32	64
C. Arguing	43	86
D. Throwing temper tantrums	28	56
E. Hurling threats	33	66
F. Being rude and disrespectful to Other learners	45	90
G. Being rude and disrespectful to Educators	33	66
H. Carrying or possessing weapons	10	20
I. Assaulting other pupils	23	46
J. Other – Explain	3	6

This survey instrument listed nine types of aggressive activity, which progressed from name-calling to physical attack with a weapon. Teachers were asked to

identify the different types of violence that girls displayed in their schools. It must be noted that C, F, and G, in the table are not types of physical violence but they are non-physical behaviour. According to Rigby (1996) physical intimidation is often accompanied by verbal abuse. One is used to reinforce the other. For example a child can be beaten and called names at the same time. Although most individuals associate violence with physical acts of violence, sometimes violence can be non-physical as well.

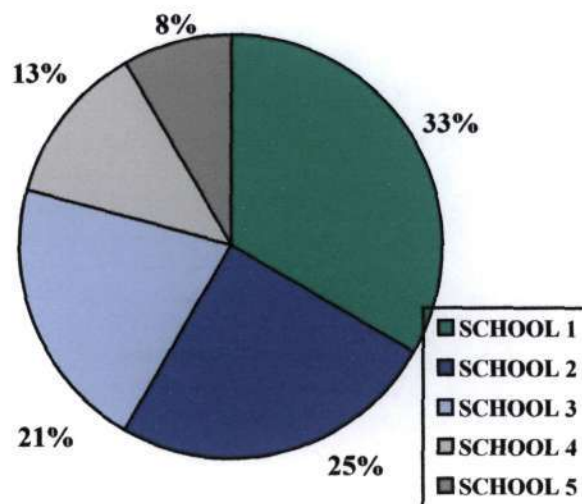
There were four participants (8%) who chose 'other' as a response.

The educators' responses were as follows:

- A. *Intimidating*
- B. *Stealing money*
- C. *Swearing*
- D. *Use of inappropriate language*

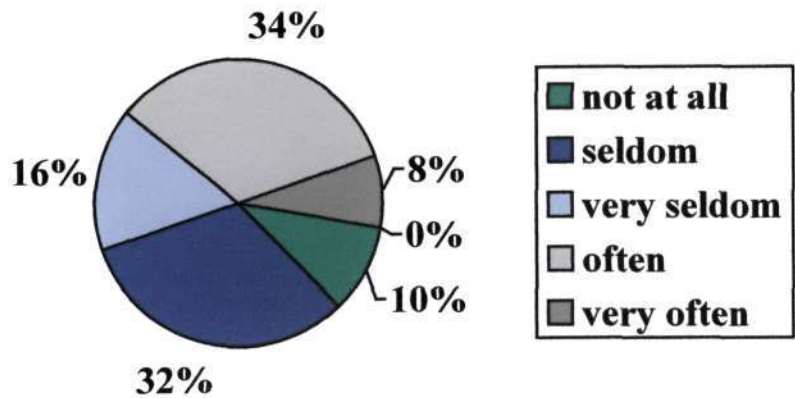
We tend to associate the above practices with the male gender because girl aggression has not been taken seriously. The role of the 'good girl' was always visible but it is incidents like the above that indicate to us another image of girls. These may not be violent tendencies but they certainly are not in keeping with the stereotypical image of girls.

GRAPH TWO
DIFFERENT LEVELS OF VIOLENCE (OR PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE
AT DIFFERENT SCHOOLS).



The level of violence differed from school to school It was evident from the respondents' responses that those teachers from schools which were situated in the lower socio-economic areas, reported to have witnessed more acts of violence than those teachers who taught in middle class or affluent areas. The tables and graphs below offer further information in relation to female violence.

GRAPH THREE
NATURE / OCCURRENCE OF FEMALE VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS
Frequency of acts of Violence by Female Learner



Most teachers do not consider various forms of girls' (violent) behaviour to be frequent or a problem. This can mean that girls are generally not seen as those learners who threaten, abuse or attack teachers or because levels and frequency of girls' violence are still well below that initiated by boys. In the above graph, seldom means once in a while, very seldom means hardly ever, often means occurring many times and very often refers to continuously taking place.

GANG ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS
EXISTENCE OF GIRLS 'GANGS' IN SCHOOLS

TABLE 4.4.

ARE THERE ANY GIRLS' GANGS' THAT YOU KNOW OF IN YOUR SCHOOL?

The table below is an indication of the participants responses to the above question.

YES	NO
20 (40 %)	30 (60%)

#

Gangs were always thought of as a male phenomenon, and were seen as confined to the neighbourhood. However female gangs, is now of some concern. The degree to which female gangs are operational in South African schools however, cannot be compared to schools abroad. Youth gangs can be linked to serious problems. According to the data, the little female gang activity is likely to take place in secondary schools than primary schools. There may be a fear that gang activities in school can be taken out of school into the neighbourhood or brought from the neighbourhood into the school. Its effects can be detrimental. Like bullying, targets for gangs could be innocent children. Another fear of gangs operating in school could be that gang members might begin to recruit or attract individuals that are of a violent nature or have the potential to be violent. Hence the escalation of school violence.

Whether an incident of violence is gang related or not, is not easy to decide. "A gang is usually defined as a group whose primary purpose is to engage in criminal activity"(Hawley, 1997, p1). There are different levels of gangs and many different types of gangs. Recognizing a gang can be difficult because of the diversity mentioned above (Hawley, 1997, p1). "Youth surveys consistently show that delinquency rates of female gang members are lower than those of male gang members but higher than those of non-gang females and even non-gang males" (Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993; Bjerregard and Smith, 1993; Fagan, 1990). (Justice Bulletin, 2001, p2).

Here the pattern of responses tended to be to the lower side of the seriousness spectrum. Before any statistics are given about gang activity in schools, the researcher would like to define the term 'gangs'. Gangs comprise of learners who share common interests and engage in activities, which in most cases are unacceptable. The responses of teachers make very little mention of the existence of gangs in schools. Gangs in schools are more likely to occur in schools abroad than in a South African context.

Teachers in this survey returned responses about female learners who have engaged in gang activity.. Most teachers don't think that gangs are a problem or even active. Those who mentioned that girls belonged to gangs stated the following:

1. *The gangs operate normally after school hours and outside school.*
2. *They steal and fight with younger learners.*
3. *They single out a learner and intimidate them by threatening them .*
4. *These 'female gangs' seem to have a ringleader who makes the decisions for the rest of the gang.*
5. *A lot of bullying takes place. Other learners are bullied for their lunch or money.*
6. *The gangs operate secretly. Nobody knows of their existence but they are operating.*
7. *Attacks on other gang members.*
8. *Taking money from non-gang members for the protection*
9. *Extorting money from learners for the use of school facilities.*
10. *Vandalism at school.*
11. *Disruption in the classroom.*
12. *Fighting within gangs on the school premises and outside the school is prevalent.*
13. *Attacks on learners going to and from school.*

WITNESSING OF VIOLENCE EXHIBITED BY GIRLS ON THE SPORTSFIELD AND IN THE CHANGEROOMS

Classrooms seem to be the places where much of the learners' misconduct is observed. This project would like to establish whether forms of violent behaviour are evident elsewhere on the school premises as well. This would help to see whether the passive learner is being aggressive elsewhere. There were 22 participants (44%) who did not respond to this question. An extremely important response to the question above is that 0% of the participants stated that violence by female learners did not take place very often on the sports-field and in the change-rooms. Many teachers do not think that this is a 'problem'. Actually, teachers' responses seem to acknowledge some level of girls' violence but these levels appear not to be very high and not all girls seem to be affected. There may be some 'trouble-makers' that are identified as violent. The view may be that most girls are actually passive most of the time.

GRAPH FOUR

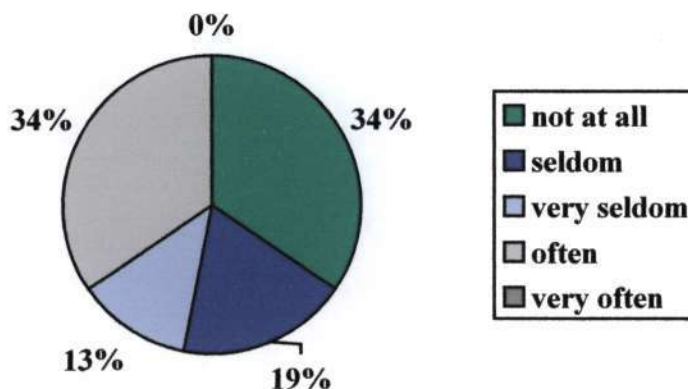


TABLE 4.5.
SERIOUS OFFENCES CARRIED OUT BY FEMALE LEARNERS AND WHICH NEEDED THE INTERVENTION OF POLICE AND SOCIAL WORKER

YES	NO
17 (34 %)	33 (66 %)

Schools cannot successfully address every issue that has its roots in the wider society, so the ability of staff to contain violence must be matched by other efforts outside the school namely the police and social workers. The above table is indicative of the fact that not many schools needed outside intervention to help curb school violence. This can mean that offences committed by female learners are not of a serious nature and can be successfully handled by school personnel. However there were a few schools which needed intervention of the police and the social workers.

NATURE OF SERIOUS OFFENCES

School policies regarding violence do not distinguish between boys and girls. In a sense they are gender-blind, even though there is a perception that boys are primarily responsible. Girls' violence in schools is not considered by teachers to be serious and is not considered by teachers to be a problem and yet a third of respondents described instances of serious girl violence. This creates conflicting opinions.

Girls' violence in schools is not serious and is not considered by teachers to be a problem and yet a third of respondents described instances of serious girl violence. This creates conflicting opinions. Due to the fact that violence by girls is not stereotypical of them in South African schools, teachers have expressed their opinions likewise. Girl violence has not received national attention like the way violence exhibited by boys has. Reference has been made of this in chapter two.

TEACHERS STATED THAT SOME FEMALE LEARNERS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- A.** One learner assumed the role of a foster mother and took away pocket – money and lunch from children on a daily basis. The intervention of the social worker was needed here.
- B.** A learner (female) assaulted a boy. He bled around the eye. The parents of the boy called in the police to intervene.
- C.** There were assaults and threats against other learners that needed outside intervention.

- D. Girls fought over boys and cigarettes.
- E. Fights that broke out after school, outside the school gate needed the intervention of the police.
- F. Some senior girls were found consuming liquor in school.
These events occurred at more than one school. These are collective responses of teachers.

A SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

There exists compelling but indirect evidence that violence perpetrated by female learners is more complex and more severe than might be expected. There were indications by teachers that female learners had expressed violent as well as non-violent tendencies i.e. psychological warfare. Little reporting of violence was due to the fact that this is a small scale research project. According to the literature review, only a small percentage or number of female learners constituted the sample regarding violence. Further to this, teachers teaching in different socio-economic areas reported differently. Even though the number of violent incidents appears small in percentage, it is nevertheless significant. The key finding from the report is that teachers believe that girls are involved in the perpetration of violence in schools. At the moment violence perpetrated by female learners is less than a moderately serious issue. Teachers in the higher grades, according to their perceptions recorded a higher incidence of violence than those teaching the lower grades.

Not all teachers see the violence in the same way – this may be because they define violence differently or because the violence is more common in some schools than others. However, the data does show that girls' violence may be a bigger issue than hitherto recognized and it would be appropriate for more research into this phenomenon because this study is only small and exploratory.

THE DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

The kinds of violence differed from school to school. Some teachers from some schools stated that concrete interventions were used to help to curb violence by and against children. However this depended on the kinds/extent of violence that

was taking place at their schools. In affluent areas the violence that took place was mild to moderate with very few incidents. Some teachers confessed to not witnessing any acts of violence by girls at all. In schools, which fell into the lower socio-economic groups, violence was taking place more often and some of these acts were committed by girls. Some schools have identified / recognized the problem and tried to take measures in order to minimize or alleviate the problem.

The table (4.6.) below gives a clearer picture:

TABLE 4.6

NOTHING WAS DONE ABOUT FEMALE VIOLENCE	SOMETHING WAS DONE ABOUT FEMALE VIOLENCE	A LOT WAS DONE REGARDING FEMALE VIOLENCE
42 (84%)	3 (6%)	0%

It must be noted that 5% of the responses fell into 'don't know' or 'no' response category.

WHAT IS THE IMPLICATION OF THIS STUDY FOR FUTURE REFERENCE?

As young girls make their way into womanhood, they are faced with the task of proving themselves in a world in which the feminine is defined as docile and weak. This study provides a benchmark study for the collection of data on female violence.

While international research has already established the existence of female violence in schools, the same has not yet been conceded in South Africa. This is indicative of the fact that further research in this field is needed.

According to the perceptions of teachers, female violence was not considered sufficiently common or serious to require schools to take drastic action. Nevertheless some of the teachers did say that they in the past they had intervened in cases of violence involving girls. Their actions had taken the following forms:

1. they had informed parents/ guardians of any serious misdemeanor carried out by their child/children
2. used the misconduct book to record the above
3. looked into causes of violent acts
4. found solutions/ ways of taking punitive action against disruptive learners counselled learners.

7 NOTIFYING PARENTS OF THOSE FEMALE LEARNERS WHO HAVE EXHIBITED VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

TABLE 4.7.

YES	NO	NIL RESPONSE
38(76%)	8(16%)	4(8%)

There were four participants who failed to respond to this question. The above responses are also a clear indication that schools have made endeavours to notify parents' of female defaults and that there are measures taken by the school personnel to solve problems.

SCHOOLS INVOLVEMENT TOWARDS THE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS

The participants testified that some parents were already involved in dealing with school violence. Their activities took a number of forms.

1. Some parents responded to the school's call about their daughter's behaviour.
2. Some parents volunteered to work with the educator to alleviate the problem by disciplining their daughter.
3. Some parents admitted / confessed that they themselves were experiencing difficulty with their daughters at home.
4. Some parents have pleaded with the school authorities to be lenient with them and their daughter.
5. Some parents stated that they were taking their daughter for counselling, outside school.

6. On the other hand, there were many parents who showed little interest in their Children's Behaviour at School. Some of these parents did not respond to the school's call regarding their daughter's behaviour.
7. Some parents of defaulters refuse to visit schools until a notice in writing summoning them to make their appearance in school has been given to them.

80% of the teachers said that counselling was offered to the female perpetrators / offenders. It must be noted that most schools have an overall policy regarding violence and therefore almost all defaulters would be brought to book. Those who have indicated 'no' could possibly mean that they do not have a separate policy for 'female offenders'.

HOW DO THE FINDINGS RELATE TO POLICY SURROUNDING THE ISSUE

Since each school is unique each school will devise policies to curtail or minimize acts of violence in the school. According to the data, this is what schools have done. In instances where schools have not formulated policies, teachers have stated that their schools will devise policies regarding the issue of commission of violent acts by female learners.

School intervention is very important when misdemeanors occur at school. Perpetrators of violence must be reprimanded so that there is no recurrence of the problem. The two most important people who can help with a learner who has been destructive or violent are the parent and school personnel.

A clear majority of teachers indicated that female violence is in its infancy or is occurring on a small scale. These were the perceptions of the male and female teachers. This study is representative of only a small sample. The data in this study are not actual statistics but only beliefs of teachers. Further studies on this topic are required.

CONCLUSION:

The majority of teachers who were sampled in this study found that there was some evidence of female violence in school, but that it was not of such severity or

frequency as to constitute a 'problem'. The response of teachers was certainly influenced by their understanding of violence itself. Teachers believed that violence is primarily an act of physical violence and this belief led them to downplay the problem of girls' violence. The violence of girls varied from school to school and seems to be more common in schools that serve students from areas with high rates of unemployment. Many teachers have at one or other time tried to intervene in individual cases of girls' violence and this suggests that the current government emphasis on trying to resolve violence by negotiation and counselling might have paid dividends and possibly suggests that if the problem gets worse, there will already be some experience among teachers to deal with it.

In this chapter, evidence was gathered from one source namely teachers from five different schools. This has enabled the researcher to make interpretations and judgements. Results have been clearly defined and discussed. The findings from this study do not provide insights on high incidents of female violence. However, by considering the findings of this report in the context of other available data on male violence, some conclusions have been reached regarding the general nature, prevalence and consequences of violence in schools. The findings from this study provide data, which encourages further studies on this topic.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

There is a need to recognize the existence of female violence in schools. While the violence may not be widespread or severe this project has shown that it already features as a concern of teachers and should therefore be addressed. An important first step is to avoid assuming that violence is perpetrated only by boys.

The researcher began this exploratory project with the expectation of generating some preliminary indications of girls' violence in schools. The method was indirect – to ask teachers about their sense of this phenomenon. The backdrop to the research was secondary literature generated mostly in developed contexts (schools in the United States of America and the United Kingdom) which showed that female violence in schools was increasing (Weiler, 1999, p2). The researcher intended contrasting this view with the situation in five selected schools in Durban.

The research conducted did indeed provide preliminary data on girls' violence. Some of the findings were:

1. Most teachers seem to be aware that violence occurs, but not often and not involving many learners and not resulting in serious harm.
2. Nearly half the teachers interviewed regard girls violence as a problem.
3. Teachers define violence as a problem only when it involves physical harm. For this reason, many teachers apparently did not consider girls' violence to be a problem, even though they recognized that psychological cruelty and other types of behaviour defined as violent by some theorists, did (and does) occur.
4. Most of the physical violence that occurs in schools is between students.
5. There does not seem to be evidence in South Africa that the problem is of the magnitude as suggested by some of the United States/ United Kingdom writings on this subject.

6. No teacher indicated that female violence had reached alarming proportions in their school.
7. Only a small percentage of teachers had knowledge of female learners Carrying /bringing weapons to school.
8. Most teachers indicated that they turned to a member of the School Management Team for help in dealing with problem students.

This small research project has tried to draw attention to an area of school violence that has largely been ignored. The concern for male violence and the focus upon violent school masculinities has obscured the existence of violent girl behaviours. Very little literature has dwelt on violence committed by female learners in South African schools.

It should be a source of encouragement that this research project found only limited and indirect evidence of girls' violence. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that in some schools, it is a problem of some significance. It is for this reason that researchers need to examine this phenomenon in greater depth to understand under what circumstances girls engage in violence and analyse how such violence is legitimated by particular understandings of femininity.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE

What is important here is that teachers who witness girls engaging in violent acts must not turn a blind eye to it, but take necessary steps to prevent the recurrence of the misdemeanor. A heightened level of attention is needed regarding female violence in schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers must give equal attention to the misdemeanors carried out by female as well as male learners. In those schools in which female violence is taking place, teachers can collaborate to find ways/ methods of counselling these offenders by building a network. Teachers can even develop an explicit school norm that violence of any kind is not acceptable for both male and female learners. Teachers can involve parents or guardians of female offenders in their counselling sessions.

Violence can impact negatively on the lives of girls and young women and for this reason it is important to address the needs of girls who get involved in the perpetration of violence. This involves teachers acknowledging the experiences of violence by girls and notifying their parents and guardians of their behaviour. Programmes and policies at school should enable the female learners to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in order to prevent the recurrence of violence.

More research is needed so that we begin to understand the extent, severity and causes of girls' violence in schools. Further work should examine how violence is located within constructions of femininity as well as survey the position that girls' violence occupies in the minds of school and education policy makers charged with making schools safe and promoting gender equity.

"But today girls become more verbal at an earlier age. Our culture pushes girls to become more and more adult at younger ages. The clothes reinforce this. Girls need to feel in control of their situation today more than they did in the past"(Coeyman, 2003, p 1). Girls and boys have been treated routinely different for years. People expect differently from girls than they do of boys, this is due however to the stereotyping. The image of girls dressed in pink frills and lace was a stereotype, which existed. Today however, we are seeing girls who go against society's traditions. There is documented evidence abroad that girl-to-girl cruelty is the norm. It seems therefore that females are, slowly but surely making inroads into what once seemed to be traditionally, male violent behaviour. It is hoped that studies of female learners in schools, who have violent tendencies, take place so that researchers have a better understanding of female violence.

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**FEMALE VIOLENCE AMONGST LEARNERS IN
DURBAN SCHOOLS**

**EDUCATORS'
PERSPECTIVE**

INTRODUCTION

I am currently studying for a Masters Degree at the University of Natal. It is a requirement of the Faculty of the Education to undertake a research study. The aim of this study is to investigate female violence amongst learners in Durban schools.

The high rate of violence in schools in South Africa is a major concern. This has a negative impact on the learning environment. Educators need to be made aware of the fact that physical violence or violence of any nature is serious.

Violence particularly carried out by females has come under the spotlight recently. Not much insight has been given on the complex issue of girls' aggression and violence. However, girls appear to be involved in substantially more violent crime than they were a decade ago.

The aim of this study is to find out whether educators are aware of violent acts exhibited by girls. Secondly the researcher would like to ascertain whether acts of violence amongst female learners are on the increase.

You can help by completing a questionnaire designed for this purpose. The questionnaire can be easily completed by placing an x in the space provided or by short replies. This questionnaire should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

This questionnaire is completely confidential, as you are not required to fill in your name.

I appreciate your co-operation in completing the questionnaire.

Thank you

J. Virasamy

QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE FURNISH ME WITH THE FOLLOWING DETAILS REGARDING YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL

DETAILS OF EDUCATOR

- 1.1 Are you a male or female teacher? _____
- 1.2 Which age group do you fall into?
- A. 21-30 YEARS__ B. 31-40__ C. 41-50__ D.51-60__ E. Other__
- 1.3 What is the number of years of teaching experience that you have?

- 1.4 Are you a level 1; 2; 3 or 4 teacher?

- 1.5 What grades/levels do you teach? _____

DETAILS OF YOUR SCHOOL

- 1.1 Where is your school located? _____
- 1.2 How many learners are there in your school? _____
- 1.3 How many teachers are there in your school? _____
- 1.4 How many classrooms are there in your school? _____
- 1.5 What is the composition of the school population like?
- Blacks_____ Coloureds_____ Whites_____ Indians_____
- 1.6 What subjects do you teach? /Which learning areas are you involved in?

- 1.7 How long have you taught this subject / this learning area?

1.8. What do you understand by the term violence?

1.9. To what extent is violence by and among girls viewed as a problem by teachers?

1.10. To what extent is violence by girls viewed on the increase in your school?

1.11. Have you witnessed female learners engaging in violent behaviour?

Yes _____

No _____

1.12. In your opinion would you say girls are expressing their opinions as violently as many boys do?

Yes _____

No _____

1.13. What kinds of violent behaviour have female learners been engaging in?

A. Bullying
B. Fighting: physical acts of violence
C. Arguing
D. Throwing temper tantrums
E. Hurling threats
F. Being rude and disrespectful towards other learners
G. Being rude and disrespectful towards educators
H. Carrying or possessing weapons
I. Assaulting other learners
J. Other - Explain

1.14. Would you say that there has been an increase in violent acts committed by girls in your school?

A. agree
B. agree strongly
C. disagree
D. disagree strongly

1.15. Are there any girls' gangs' that you know of in your school?

Yes
No

1.16. If yes, how do these gangs operate or what do they do?

1.17. How frequent do acts of violence by female learners take place in your school?

A. not at all
B. seldom
C. very seldom
D. often
E. very often

1.18. Have you witnessed violence exhibited by girls on the sports-field/change-rooms?

A. not at all
B. seldom
C. very seldom
D. often
E. very often

1.19. Are you aware of instances where females carried weapons to schools?

Yes _____

No _____

1.20. Are you aware of threats made by female learners towards educators in your school?

Yes _____

No _____

1.21. Are there any female learners who intimidate other learners in your class during lessons?

Yes _____

No _____

1.22. Has there been any serious offence which was carried out by a female learner and which needed the intervention of the police and social worker?

Yes _____

No _____

1.23. If yes, state what happened

1.24. Do female offenders target female learners only or both male and female learners?

1.25. What attempts has the school made towards this issue of female violence amongst learners?

1.26. What policies and strategies does the school have in place to deal with female violence amongst learners?

1.27. Have parents of those females who have exhibited violent behaviour been notified?

Yes _____

No _____

1.28. What has been their involvement towards the resolution of the problems?

1.29. Is counselling offered to the female perpetrators / offenders?

Yes _____

No _____

1.30. What kind of counselling takes place?

1.31. Who counsels the female offenders?

1.32. To what extent do girls become repeat offenders after counselling?

1.33. How is your school's policies geared to respond to this problem?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION