

**The Role and Complexities of School-Parent
Collaboration in Reducing School Violence: A Multiple
Case Study**

By

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Humanities in fulfilment of the academic requirements for the
degree, Doctor of Philosophy**

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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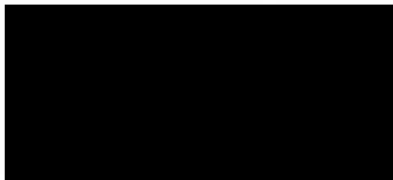
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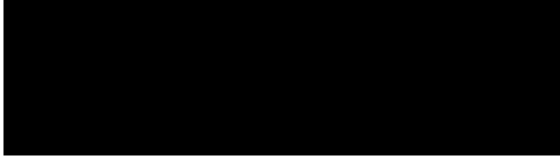
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Project title: School-parent collaboration in reducing school violence in three secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo District: A multiple case study
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This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 14 May 2024 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

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

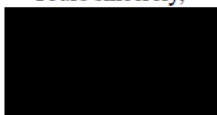
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Yours sincerely,



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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents, my father, Mr Milton Aubrey Dube and my mother Mrs Victoria Gcinile Dube who sacrificed in order to send me to school, and taught me the value of education. My wife, Nozipho, for her support and understanding during my studies. I also dedicate it to my beloved children, Siyanda, Smangele, Andile, Luyanda as well as my grand children. May this study serve as an inspiration that without a dream, determination, sacrifice and hard work, there is no success.

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There are numerous people who contributed in various ways towards the success of this study but in this small space I wish to acknowledge the following:

- My supervisor, Prof T.T. Bhengu for patience with me from the elementary stages of the research until its completion. Ume njalo Ngcolosi, your contribution towards the success of this study is immeasurable.
- The Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal for granting me permission to conduct research in KZN schools.
- The principals and SGB chairpersons, teachers and parents of the participating schools for sharing such vital information about their collaboration to reduce school violent.

Abstract

This research project explored the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, focusing in three secondary schools located in King Cetshwayo District, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This study further explored the manner in which parents and schools can navigate the complexities of school-parent collaboration. Therefore, this study aimed at understanding how the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration reduces school violence. The research questions central to this study were: a) How do stakeholders explain the role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence? b) What are the complexities of utilising school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence? c) How can schools and parents navigate the complexities of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence? The study was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm and adopted a qualitative multiple case design. Semi structured interviews and documents review were used to generate data which was analysed using thematic analysis. Primary documents such as minutes of parents' meetings, staff meetings, grades or phase meetings with parents, one on one meetings with parents were reviewed with the intention to find evidence of teachers reaching out to parents and the reaction from parents which would confirm the existence of school-parent collaboration as reported by the participants. These documents would also confirm the extent of complexities in the collaboration. Participants consisted of principals, SGB chairpersons, departmental heads, teachers and parents.

The findings of the study suggest that collaboration played a role in transforming schools from being dangerous zones to safe institutions with positive climates and also transformed learners' conduct from being aggressive to being disciplined and cooperative. The interaction of teachers and parents was characterised by trust and respect. Although there were complexities in the collaboration, teachers and parents were able to identify and implement strategies to navigate these complexities and ultimately the collaboration succeeded in reducing school violence. The findings affirm the existence of a network of interrelationships with systemic levels between schools and parents as part of the different communities. The study also showed the significance of engaging invitational leadership and social capital where leaders initiate collaboration so that people come together as a social network and work towards a set goal which was the reduction of school violence in this case. Lastly the implications of the findings suggest positive outcomes for both schools and parents if they work together for the reduction of school violence.

Abbreviations

CJCP	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DH	Departmental Head
DSS	Discipline Safety and Security
HOD	Head of Department
HSSREC	Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
KSS	Khanyisa Secondary School
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NEPA	National Executive Policy Act
PSS	Phakama Secondary School
QSS	Qhubekani Secondary School
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South Africa Council of Educators
SASA	South African Schools Acts
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TV	Television
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE

AN ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This thesis report comprises a study that was undertaken between 2023 and 2025 as part of the requirements of a doctoral degree. The study arose from my informal observations and experiences and reports forwarded to me by school principals about violence in their schools while I was a circuit manager in the King Cetshwayo District in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Interacting with some principals about their reports and experiences, I developed an urge to seek further and deeper understanding of this phenomenon. My initial assumptions were that, perhaps, through my interactions with various participants during the study, I might be able to influence schools in bringing on board parents of learners as partners to assist in minimising the long-term social and health effect of violence against children. I had a hunch that many schools did not involve parents as partners, but they had them purely as parents to attend school meetings and pay school fees where they are supposed to do so, and only have contact with them when their children misbehaved. I must hasten to clarify that when I conceptualised this study, I did not intend to challenge the status quo or seek to bring about change in the researched communities as is the case with action research or participatory action research (Bryman et al., 2019). Nevertheless, scholarship (Baruth et al., 2016; Lester et al., 2017; Nyatuka, 2022; Zhu et al., 2021), suggests that school violence has negative repercussions for the learners and their education.

School violence undermines children's rights to basic education, and safety and negatively impacts on their development (Ward, 2017). Although there is literature about parental involvement in dealing with school violence, I found very little literature on the manner in which parents are involved in dealing with school violence (Kantova, 2024). It must be noted that teachers are not taught about the way they must handle their relationship with parents (Dube, 2020), and I have been a teacher for more than 37 years but I do not remember even a single workshop about that aspect. According to one of the theories underpinning this study (invitational leadership theory) teachers are to take the initiative and invite parents to come on board and create an interconnectedness (Purkey & Novak, 1984). This interconnectedness must exist around four cornerstone values for it to achieve the set goal, which is dealing with the

moulding of learners' behaviour and academic performance, and they are trust, respect, optimism and intentionality (Purkey & Novak, 1984). In my opinion, it will be of value to learn about the role of school-parent collaboration, the complexities of the collaboration, as well as strategies used to navigate the complexities from the few schools that collaborate with parents for academic and social development of learners. My exploration of this phenomenon is aimed at adding to the existing understandings of how schools collaborate with parents in reducing school violence, as well as adding to dialogue on this subject.

As this chapter introduces the study, I will present the background of the study, a declaration on the statement of the problem, the purpose and rationale for the study, followed by a deliberation on the significance of the study. Thereafter, I present the aim of the study, research questions, as well as definitions of key concepts. Following this will be the delimitation of the study and ultimately the organisation of the study where a summary of each chapter's content will be highlighted.

1.2 Background to the study

The predicament of South African children in violent schools is perturbing. All forms of media (print and electronic) make daily reports concerning the irregular levels of violence in schools. For example, an article in the Mercury of 26 June 2025, shared a report by the Minister of Basic Education (DBE) in which statistics show that half of the 28 murders that occurred in South African schools in the last financial year (2024/2025) took place in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. By murders we mean cases where learners died. Again, the Mercury of 20 May 2025 published a story of a six-year-old child who was raped in the toilets of Ogobandlovu Primary School in King Cetshwayo District, KwaZulu-Natal. From the media statements issued by the MEC of Education in KwaZulu-Natal, the following school violence activities emerged: on 13 June 2025, a grade 12 learner at Woodview Secondary School in Umlazi District – Kwazulu-Natal stabbed two fellow grade 10 learners and ran away; on 23 August 2025, a 17 year old male learner from Trenance Secondary School in Pinetown District – Kwazulu Natal, was stabbed and a knife was stuck in the back of the neck; on 29 August 2025, at Glenover Secondary School in Umlazi District, a violent confrontation among learners broke out and five learners were stabbed (4 African learners and 1 Indian learner). One of the characteristics of schools nowadays is the carrying of all kinds of weaponry to school by learners (Kent et al.,

2022). Among these weapons are knives, guns, bush knives and other sharp-edged objects. These violent activities in schools show what our communities experience. Violence is not new in South Africa. During the era of Bantu Education, the youth of South Africa took to the streets. They struggled because of the obstacles they faced at that time. Those challenges gave rise to the 1976 Soweto uprising. This was a time when the youth of South Africa experienced cruelty in schools in the form of rape, assault, murder, abductions and other cruel, violent activities (Kent et al., 2022). This cruelty did not stop in 1976 as it is highly prevalent in many schools today. In other schools, violence is perpetuated by teachers through corporal punishment even though it was banned more than twenty years ago (Chonco, 2019). Such a state of affairs compromises school functionality and teaching and learning in general (Dube, 2020). It must be noted that teachers were only trained to teach but indiscipline and violent situations in schools cause them to take up roles as police officers, psychologists, nurses and prosecutors (Dube, 2020; Sitoyi, 2020; Sibisi, 2021; Mahaye et al., 2023).

The critical role played by schools in the education and socialisation of learners demands offering safe environments by schools so that quality educational processes can take place (Mwanza et al, 2023). The South African government has, for multiple instances, tried to be part of the battle against school violence (Dube & Hlalele, 2018). Unfortunately, some of us had the wrong impression when the country's constitution was passed in 1996; we thought that we had a tool to resolve all our country's problems (Baruth & Mokoena, 2016). Furthermore, the South African Schools Act (henceforth, the SASA) was established in 1996 to make clear provisions for governance and management of public schools in the country. The SASA (RSA, 1996b) drew its power from the supreme law, the constitution, which aimed at "protecting the rights of people in the country" and, therefore, the South African constitution (RSA, 1996a) in conjunction with SASA (RSA, 1996b), entrenches the right to equal access to quality basic education and the right to safety and security for all its citizens. To accomplish this, the South African constitution (RSA, 1996a) mandates school governing bodies (SGBs) to formulate a learner admission policy and learner code of conduct among other policies. One of the reasons for the formulation of these policies was to assist schools in maintaining learner discipline (RSA, 1996b). However, even the implementation of SASA (RSA, 1996b) is not helping to curtail the problem of school violence (Mngomezulu, 2020).

Literature suggests that safe environments can only be possible if schools involve stakeholders, especially parents as major stakeholders in moulding their children's experiences and outcomes (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2021; Caridade et al., 2021; Kaluma, 2021). A study conducted by Barrera-Osorio et al. (2021) found that giving knowledge to associations of parents highly improved the outcomes of education and decreased disciplinary activities by 24% in schools. Internationally, research has consistently shown that when parents are actively engaged in their children's education, learners tend to perform better academically, exhibit improved attendance and behaviour, and demonstrate higher levels of motivation and self-esteem (Eden et al., 2024; Hameed, 2023; Raza & Iqbal, 2023). This is an indication that the interconnectedness of parents and teachers can bring about positive results concerning performance and behaviour of learners. This, therefore, suggests that in dealing with school violence more can be gained through school-parent collaboration hence this exploration of their role and the complexities of collaboration. Collaboration is an association of two or more parties with the aim of working together for a particular goal. This association must be dominated by trust for it to be successful (Edsource, 2019). Botha (2021) postulates that it is conspicuous that children in schools are vulnerable to many threatening risks to their welfare. As a result, the King Cetshwayo district is encountering several forms of school violence, for example, sexual harassment, bullying, murder, property destruction and assault (Dube, 2020). The prevalence of violence in schools develops untenable fear to attend school by learners and sometimes teachers as well. This violent conduct also results in schools postponing teaching and learning, among other things. School violence has a ruinous effect on the functionality of schools as well as our schooling system generally (Botha, 2021; Caridade, et al., 2021; Dube, 2020; Mabasa et al., 2019). It is for this reason that this study explores the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Section 24 of the South African Constitution states that everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to his or her health and well-being (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). This means that learners have a constitutional right to receive education in a safe school environment. Sub-section 1 of Section 16 of the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996), taking its cue from the South African Constitution mandates School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to formulate and facilitate the adoption of school policies on learner admission and learner

conduct in consultation with educators, parents and learners (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). This is the first step of managing learner behaviour in schools. In this case, the Schools Act is clear about the involvement of parents in dealing with learner behaviour. Kent et al. (2022, p. 67) posit that “existing evidence shows that parental engagement is one of the most effective educational intervention and most parents care, and wish to engage with their children’s education and safety”.

However, in my observation many schools do not involve critical stakeholders like parents of learners in dealing with school violence. This exclusion is probably the reason that outcomes expected from the implementation of policies, programmes and strategies on school violence are not realised. I acknowledged that schools were armed with legislation and policies such as South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996, of which Section 8 (1) empowers School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to adopt a learner code of conduct after consulting with learners, teachers and parents (RSA, 1996b). Section 8 (2) of SASA (RSA, 1996b) explains the functions of a school code of conduct for learners which includes creating a disciplined and safe environment that is conducive for quality teaching and learning. Section 9 of SASA (RSA, 1996b) stipulates procedures of suspending and expelling learners from a public school. There are also KZN Circulars No. 55 of 2001 and No. 90 also of 2001. Circular No.55 explains the formation of Discipline, Safety and Security Committees (DSS) in public schools and also discusses duties and responsibilities of these committees. KZN Circular No. 90 of 2001 provides policy guidelines on Discipline, Safety and Security Committees in public schools, however, my view is that schools have not succeeded in using these to their advantage.

Discipline policies, challenges are on the rise in schools (Chonco, 2019). Although there is literature on parental involvement in dealing with school violence, the literature does not clarify the manner in which schools can involve parents in this regard. It must also be noted that teachers in South Africa are not trained on how to deal or work with parents, hence the need for literature to contribute to this discourse. This is the gap that needs to be closed for school violence to subside. According to UNICEF (2021), close to 150 million children aged 13 to 15 years old report experiencing peer to peer violence in and around schools. Violence by teachers towards learners is also widely reported (Botha, 2021). The third dimension of violence that is also widely reported is learner to teacher violence. In a study conducted by Botha (2021), one of the findings was that teachers experience a lot of learner-on-teacher violence, which had

different impacts on them. School violence impacts negatively on the functionality of schools; hence the need to explore a meaningful way that parents may be involved in dealing with school violence.

1.4 Purpose and rationale for the study

The rationale for engaging in this study arises from my informal observations and experiences while I was executing my duties as a circuit manager in the King Cetshwayo District. My informal observations entailed reading reports from schools which suggested that learners' conduct in some schools led to unsafe school environments and violence. Salley and Rosli (2019) point out in their research that the involvement of parents along with teachers has obviously made a positive mark on the behaviour and performance of learners. They further state that in Malaysia, the Department of Education issued Circular No. 8 of 2001, which emphasised the importance of involving parents in managing learner conduct in schools.

“To ensure the success of Malaysia’s Circular No. 8 of 2001, parents were asked to provide cooperation by giving behavioural information, and not keeping problems faced by children under wraps” (Salley & Rosli, 2019, p. 914). This would assist teachers to take necessary actions in collaboration with parents. Reflecting on this literature and my interactions with some principals and reports from schools, I thought about influencing schools to bring on board parents of learners as partners to assist in minimising the long term social and health effects of violence against children. This desire was also premised on my understanding that learners are at school (primary and secondary) for only 13 years under normal circumstances. Before and after that, teachers are not responsible for the learners’ safety but parents and the society are (Dube, 2020). The question that occupied my mind was “why do schools not involve parents because seemingly, they share the responsibility of raising children in all their totality with schools?” This study focuses on secondary schools that have been observed to be involving parents in reducing school violence to learn from them and possibly multiply the good practice. Marymount University (2023) confirms the importance of having safe environments for effective teaching and learning when they say researchers have found that while unsafe academic environments lead to stress, poor attendance and lower academic performance in students, schools deemed to be safe are linked to good identity development, positive learning experiences and a greater sense of self-worth in students.

1.4.1 Observed and reported disciplinary problems

My experience as a circuit manager exposed me to violent school environments. I would receive telephone calls from mostly secondary school principals, alerting me to fights that had broken out among two learner factions at schools. This would take a number of days as one faction would not come to school but stay in hiding the following day so that they could ambush the other faction when going home after school. School disturbance would take up to approximately weeks as other learners were afraid to return to school after witnessing some gruesome incidents. This confirms that school violence undermines children's right to basic education as well as safety and negatively impacts on their development (Ward, 2017). Teachers also feared going to classrooms as they would have seen learners at their most unruly carrying all sorts of weapons including bush knives, assegais, knives, sticks with bolts as heads, tomahawks and others. According to Mngomezulu (2020), secondary school teachers admit having problems when dealing with learners who are disruptive. Out of nine secondary schools under my supervision, four of them had constant faction fights but all nine experienced other violent activities like bullying, sexual harassment, rape, verbal abuse, intimidation, corporal punishment, vandalism, as well as murder in two instances. These are global forms of school violence (UNESCO, 2019). Learner performance in these schools started to deteriorate as learners were beginning to absent themselves from school due to fear of victimisation. When these matters were reported to me, they would also have been reported to School Governing Body (SGB) members who would summon parents of the perpetrators to school. At that point, most parents came to school with the sole aim of defending their children from being suspended or expelled which did not help alleviate the problem of ill-discipline. I felt that it was crucial to embark on this study so that we could explore how school-parent collaboration assists in reducing school violence in the King Cetshwayo District. School violence is a serious hazard to the success of teaching and learning (Ward, 2017). Many schools have been turned into battle fields by this violent behaviour. Both learners' and staff members' safety are at risk. It is for this reason that I engage in this study to explore how school-parent collaboration assists in reducing school violence. The underlying assumption is that if parents are fully involved, the ferocity of school violence may be minimised.

1.5 Significance of the study

It is very important to have in mind the contribution and prominence of a study in the field of knowledge prior to its exploration (Ngidi, 2018). The reason for undertaking this study was to seek better and deeper understanding of school violence and the manner in which the involvement of parents can assist in reducing it. Secondary school teachers have declared that they experience problems in teaching unruly learners and feel demoralised and too weak to deal with disruptive learners (Mngomezulu, 2020). Teachers have further called stakeholders to be involved as schools are gradually becoming battle fields (Dube, 2020). The literature confirms that schools with greater parental involvement have reduced levels of violence (Dlungwane, 2017; Kambouri et al, 2021; Mabasa & Muluvhu, 2019; Plumtre, 2023) hence, the need to explore their experiences and perspectives on school-parent collaboration. Therefore, this study is conducted to come up with a profound understanding of the role school-parent collaboration plays in reducing school violence. Hopefully, such an understanding might present some clues about how the collaboration between schools and parents can contribute to addressing the challenges posed by school violence, and also how school violence can be curtailed. The generated knowledge might assist to pinpoint possible policy gaps thereby helping to influence new policy direction.

Many researchers concur with the idea that the reduction of school violence enhances academic processes (Masingi, 2017; Sitoyi, 2020; Sylaj, 2020). This means that for the establishment of an academically focused environment, standards of admissible conduct must be encouraged (Mngomezulu, 2020). Possibly, responses to the questions of this investigation will add enlightenment in the field of leadership and management and assist in better comprehension of the struggle schools face in managing learner discipline and curtailing school violence. The findings of this study will further provide insights about how schools can meaningfully involve parents to intervene and manage violence in schools. Among others, the following stakeholders will benefit from this study: parent associations; SGB associations; circuit managers who can use findings as references when advising other schools; school management teams which can also develop or strengthen their strategies using this study's findings; academics can use this study as a point of reference for future studies on school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence.

1.6 Aim of the study

This study aims to explore how the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration reduce school violence in secondary schools of King Cetshwayo District.

1.7 Questions to be Asked

This study was guided by one main research question and three subsidiary questions, and these are listed below.

Main research question

- How does the role and complexity of school-parent collaboration reduce school violence in selected secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo District?

Subsidiary questions

- How do stakeholders explain the role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?
- What are the complexities of utilising school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?
- How can schools and parents navigate the complexities of school-parent collaborations in reducing school violence?

1.8 Definition of key concepts

In this section I define key concepts in this study, and they are school, school violence, parent and collaboration.

1.8.1 School

A school is a division of the schooling system consisting of students comprising one or more grade groups or other identifiable groups, organised as one unit with one or more teachers to give instructions of a defined type and housed in one or more buildings (Nyatuka, 2020). According to SASA (RSA, 1996b), school means a public school or an independent school which enrolls learners in one or more grades from Grade Zero (0) to Grade Twelve (12). For the purpose of this study school refers to a secondary school which enrolls learners from Grade

Eight (8) to Grade Twelve (12). These secondary schools may be located in rural, semi-urban or urban areas.

1.8.2 School Violence

There are multiple complex and competing explanations and assimilations of school violence (Burton & Leoschut, 2010; Cowie & Jennifer, 2007; De Wet, 2007; Parkes & Chege, 2010). These researchers maintain that the multiple assimilations and contestations of the definition of school violence has resulted in different definitions which may be restricted or broader sometimes. De Wet (2007) mentions three dimensions of school violence, the first dimension being learner-to-learner violence, the second one being teacher-to-learner violence and thirdly violence by learners towards teachers. She continues to state that among dire acts of violence are murder, suicide, rape, assault, vandalism and extortion. On the other hand, Miller and Kraus (2008, p. 15) define school violence to include its physical nature as well as acknowledging its psychological nature when they postulates that:

School violence includes but is not limited to such behaviours as child and teacher victimisation, child and/or teacher perpetration, physical and psychological exploitation, cyber victimisation, cyber threats, fighting, bullying, classroom disorder, physical and psychological injury to teacher or student, cult-related behaviour and activities, sexual and other boundary violations and use of weapons in the school environment.

It is of interest that as much as Greene's (2008, p. 12) definition of school violence is similar in various ways to views cited above, he also includes the school violence locality:

.....as violence that occurs on school grounds, on school-supported transportation and at school sponsored activities. It is an intentional form of behaviour in which one person threatens, attempt to harm or does harm another

person. Aggression is generally defined as a low-level violence that includes verbal, physical or gestural behaviour that is intended to cause minor harm, psychological stress, intimidation, or to induce fear in another.

As indicated above, Green (2008) mentions two school violence localities and their differences. Those are school for school-based violence and society for societal-based violence. Green (2008) further accepts that in many cases violence that occurs within school premises is because of conflicts taking place in the community. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002, p.5) has this definition of violence:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.

Considering the above definitions, I define school violence as violent, frustrating and terrifying events that take place at school, or school-related events on the way to or from school. These occurrences may directly or indirectly impact on both learners and staff members, they may be intentional, unintentional, emotional, physical or sexual and may originate from inside or outside the school, and may be committed by either learners or staff members.

1.8.3 Parent

Martinez (2015) defines a parent as including not only biological parents, but stepparents, grandparents, guardians, and any other concerned person who may carry the primary responsibility for the child's development, education and general well-being. Brown and Gordon (2009, p. 161) concur with Martinez (2015) when they posit that "the term parent has expanded and broadened to include not only those individuals who are raising their own biological children, but also those who are raising the children of their family members". SASA (RSA, 1996b) defines a parent as (a) a parent or guardian of a learner (b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner or (c) person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to in the above-mentioned definitions towards the learner's education at school. Although all definitions of "parent" mentioned above are correct in my understanding, for the purpose of this study I adopt the definition by SASA (1996b), more especially because this is the act that regulates education in South Africa through the creation, organisation, governance and funding of the country's schools.

1.8.4 Collaboration

Collaboration is the process of working together to achieve a common goal. For the purpose of this study the common goal is the reduction of school violence. Emslie (2009) defines collaboration as putting together resources and strategies by interested individuals or groups to enable success. The success envisaged in this study is the reduction of school violence in King Cetshwayo district secondary schools. Mitchell et al. (2020) state “Although the term ‘collaboration’ is used to mean many different things in literature and in practice, a common thread is the notion of working together towards a set objective or objectives”. Alozie et al. (2024) indicate that a definition of collaboration has three main elements, which are two or more people, working together, helping each other and a common objective. This is similar to the other two scholars’ definition of collaboration. The use of collaboration in this study is applicable to all thoughts contained in these scholars’ conceptualisation.

1.8.5 School-parent collaboration

Family, as the main biosocial community, and school, the environment of cognitive, social and affective context, represent the field where parents and teachers work on the development and formation of the child’s personality. Family is considered a reference framework where the child acquires the first experiences that form the starting point for the overall development of an individual. School on the other hand is a sphere of influence that seeks to achieve defined outcomes of development and social and academic achievement of learners. School-parent collaboration is the cooperation established between the family and the school which can benefit both sides, in different ways, to meet their roles by improving the general school climate, providing support for family development and parenting skills by improving teachers’ work (Milak, 2020). Jelic and Stojkovic (2021) postulate that the cooperation between parents and school is related to the establishment and sustainment of communication which is much more than a simple exchange of information. Cooperation between parents and school implies the participation of parents in school activities through various forms of individual and group cooperation. According to Malatji (2021), the parent-teacher relationship is paramount to improving the performance and social conduct of learners in schools. This therefore simplifies the parent-teacher collaboration as a parent-teacher working relationship.

1.9 Delimitation of the study

The delimitation of the study, also known as the demarcation of the study involves the setting up of study boundaries by the researcher (Horberg, 1999). In this study's context, the research was limited to the King Cetshwayo District, and it was conducted in three secondary schools. This means secondary schools outside the King Cetshwayo District were not part of this study. Similarly, all primary schools, irrespective of the district they are located in, were also excluded. The three secondary schools were chosen because of their experience of school violence and this meant they were better able to offer the required data when responding to the study's critical questions.

1.10 Organisation of the study

Below is the summary of the chapters of this thesis. The thesis has nine chapters. Each chapter focuses on a single aspect of the thesis

Chapter One

The scene of the study is set in this chapter. As this is the introductory chapter, I introduce the study and carry on presenting the background. I also highlight the statement of the problem which is one of the key components of the study. I further present the rationale for the study, followed by the significance of the study, the aim and objectives as well as research questions and definitions of key concepts. Next, I present the delimitation of the study. The last two components are the organisation of the study and conclusion.

Chapter Two

In the beginning of this chapter, key concepts relating to the study as well as fundamental debates in relation to the topic 'School-parent Collaboration in Reducing School Violence in Three Secondary Schools in the King Cetshwayo District: A Multiple Case Study' are defined. This is done through the presentation of a comprehensive local and international literature review on school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, which involves themes linked to the role of school-parent collaboration, the complexities of utilising school-parent collaboration, as well as navigation of school-parent collaboration complexities.

Chapter Three

The theoretical framework which underpins the study on school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence is presented in this chapter. The focus is on school contexts and perspectives of school-based participants as well as the debates on the involvement of parents. Detailed discussion of theories underpinning this study are provided in this chapter.

Chapter Four

In this chapter I present the research design and methodology that I identified for the role that school-parent collaboration plays in curtailing school violence; I also present the justification of my choice of the research design and methodology. I firstly declare the paradigm and highlight its epistemology, ontology, methodology and axiology. I explain a multiple case study within a qualitative design. Data generation methods used are semi-structured interviews and document review. The language used in interviews is IsiZulu to have all participants expressing themselves freely. IsiZulu is a commonly used language by all participants in the selected schools especially parents.

Chapter Five

In this chapter, I provide and discuss the findings from parents and educators of the first secondary school. In discussing these findings, I am guided by the research questions. Additionally , the key issues that emerged from the semi-structured interviews are discussed.

Chapter Six

In this chapter, I also provide and discuss the findings from parents and educators of the second secondary school. In discussing these findings, I am guided by the research questions. Additionally, the key issues that emerged from the semi-structured interviews are discussed.

Chapter Seven

In this chapter, I further provide and discuss the findings from parents and educators of the third secondary school. In discussing these findings, I am again guided by the research questions. Additionally, the key issues that emerged from the semi-structured interviews are discussed.

Chapter Eight

In chapter eight, I discuss the cross-site analysis. Patterns in the data are portrayed in this analysis. Key themes that came out from the analysis of findings from my study's three groups of participants are identified. My first attempt was to extract some similarities and differences between schools as sites, participants and the communities in which the schools are found. Thereafter, the perspectives of parents and teachers concerning the issues of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence are presented.

Chapter Nine

The chapter is the thesis of this study. An outline of every chapter in the study is presented. Conclusions reached after analysing findings from different participants are presented. The pattern of the presentation is again guided by the research questions in this chapter. Implications of the findings for various stakeholders are also presented. Lastly, I conclude.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter tapped into the most important aspects, which are the need, the problem statement and the significance of this study. This study was undertaken because of the need to curtail or reduce the ever increasing violence in our schools through schools working with parents. The problem is that it seems difficult for schools to reduce violence alone and therefore the collaboration with parents cannot be avoided and scholarship has proven that there are positive results when parents are involved (Malatji, 2021; Milak, 2020; Sitoyi, 2020). I introduced the study in this chapter, thereby, setting the scene. I also presented the background to the study, the statement of the problem and the significance for undertaking this study. After that, I presented the rationale that influenced me to engage in the study followed by the significance of the study. Thereafter, I presented the aim, objectives (main and subsidiary) and research questions (main and subsidiary). After that, I presented

the definition of key concepts and thereafter I presented the aim of the study, objectives and research questions in order to contextualise the study. Then, I briefly discussed the key concepts to contextualise the study. After that, I discussed the delimitation, as well as the organisation of the study. In the following chapter, which is the literature review, I will discuss the issues of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE ROLE AND COMPLEXITIES OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION IN REDUCING SCHOOL VIOLENCE

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One provided a summary of the thesis, and the disposition and contents of all chapters. The focus and introduction of the study was also discussed in the previous chapter. The purpose of research, major concepts as well as the introductory part of school violence and parental involvement, were also discussed. This chapter reviews literature on the involvement of parents in the reduction of school violence. According to Creswell and Creswell (2005), a review of the literature is a written summary of journals, articles, books and other documents that describes the past and current state of information, organises the literature into topics and documents a need for a proposed study. Supporting Creswell and Creswell (2005), Fink (2019) states that a literature review is a structured and clear course of action for recognising, analysing and synthesising documented and concluded research about a particular phenomenon. In this case, the literature review is a comprehensive summary of previous studies on the involvement of parents in reducing school violence. This chapter will also review some studies on school violence to understand its effects on learners and the schooling system hence the need for parental involvement in dealing with it.

The chapter will present perspectives on the following topics: Historical development of violence in South Africa. This section will shed light on how violence was inherited, as apart from schools; the whole of South Africa is ravaged by violence. The next topic will be causes of school violence. This section will present the root causes or factors contributing to school violence. I will present the nature and extent of school violence, and a legal basis for safety of learners in the South African context. The review will cover the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996), a history and background of parental involvement in South Africa, legislative frameworks for parental involvement, the significance of parental involvement, perspectives of parental involvement from African countries, perspectives of parental involvement from developed countries, the role of school-parent collaboration, characteristics of effective school-parent relationship, complexities of school-parent collaboration and strategies to navigate school-parent collaboration complexities.

2.2 Historical development of school violence in South Africa

A crucial part of learning and development is the feeling of safety (Sibisi, 2021). However, this is not the case in most schools in South Africa as violence is a common problem (Harber & Mncube, 2022). School violence has numerous root causes and has negative and sometimes grievous consequences for learners (Sitoyi, 2020). This study explores the manner in which school-parent collaboration assists in reducing school violence. I believe that different minds, skills and experiences, aligned with a common goal will put schools on the road towards being the safe havens that they should be.

Chapter 17 of Education Rights in South Africa states that violence was used by oppressors during apartheid as a tool of oppression in South Africa and ultimately the oppressed also used it as a tool of resistance. It is unfortunate that when South Africa was democratised in 1994, violence did not vanish with apartheid but is still tormenting us, in schools in particular. As we had oppressors and resisters, we have perpetrators and victims in schools. Political violence subsided and gave way to widespread social violence which has streamed over to schools. I agree with Dube (2020, p. 22) when he says, “Violent legacy of apartheid in South Africa places a heavy burden on the current education system”. I agree because it was apartheid that led to the Soweto uprising in 1976. This was when the oppressed youth started to resist apartheid’s ruthlessness by using force as a tool against violence perpetrated by callous oppressors. This was a major turning point in South African history.

The culture of violence became deeply rooted in our society and led many to adopt an ideology of violence. Gould (2014, p. 34) states “we have to look back to our history to understand the context for crime and violence in South Africa and in particular South Africans’ attitude to the law, policing and criminal justice”. This has a bearing on our schools as I observe that many of them have policies and school rules in existence but learners do not respect these rules and policies and in some cases even some parents do not encourage learners to abide by school rules, as some parents relate rules to oppression (Dube, 2020). Maybe parents can see the need to influence positive behaviour in their children if schools bring them closer and expose the academic and social harm caused by the gap between schools and parents. This may cause teachers and parents to speak with one positive voice against indiscipline and school violence. According to Dube (2020, p. 23), “South Africa is a multiple traumatised, wounded and mourning country”. In the same vein, Ramphela (2012) puts

forward woundedness as the reason for South Africans being violent. This, therefore, is an indication that learners are born into and looked after by a wounded society and in turn solve their own problems violently; hence, the need to involve parents as part of society in solving the problem of school violence. I believe that violence obtaining in schools today is because of societal violence emerging from the time when violence was believed to be the sole way to make the opposite side see the seriousness of the other side (Du Preez, 2013). This is still occurring in our societies as I observe that protests by the community or workers pronounced to be peaceful, end up being violent with injuries, looting and destruction.

2.3 Nature and extent of school violence

2.3.1 Global nature

The global nature of school violence will be discussed in this section before focussing on the South African nature of school violence. Globally, violence directed to learners in schools is amazingly high, the estimation is that more or less 1 billion learners aged from 2 to 17 have had physical, emotional or sexual violence or neglect experiences (Ferrara et al., 2019). Kim (2023) states that school violence patterns move according to changes in socioeconomic and cultural moves. Cyberbullying is one kind of school violence that moves according to socio-economic patterns because only learners with smart phones and internet can perpetuate or be victims of this form of violence. Kim (2023) continues to say that this movement of school violence patterns according to socio-economic and cultural shifts makes it difficult to deal with the issues of school violence, regardless of the number of years spent on doing research about the phenomenon of school violence, many countries are still battling to address it. Bullying as a form of violence is found in many countries. For example, in Asia, it is physical bullying whereas, in Sweden and other Nordic nations, it is psychological bullying that is highly prevalent (United Nations, 2022). Sheldon et al. (2022) defines cyberbullying as using technology in harassing, threatening, embarrassing and targeting another person. This is done online through aggressive, demeaning and rude posts or messages. It is any posted online thing meant to offend or perturb someone else. Psychological cyberbullying affects the mind or emotions whereas physical bullying affects the body. The United States of America has cyberbullying as the most prevalent form of school violence as well as murder and physical violence due to escalated shooting incidents in schools (Kim, 2023).

Generally, the nature or forms of violence prevailing globally mostly prevail in each country that is experiencing school violence although the extent may not be the same. Because school violence assumes different forms; it becomes complicated to identify and address some of them, for example, it may be easier to identify physical bullying than psychological bullying. Many studies (Crowley, 2019; Jia et al., 2023; Sharkey, 2018; Turanovic et al., 2019; van der Ploeg, 2020; Watts et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019) indicate that forms of violence prevalent in one country are also frequently observed in other countries and South Africa is no exception to this.

2.3.2 South African nature

The nature of school violence in South Africa is characterised by poverty in most schools in the country, both primary and secondary schools (Juan et al., 2019). Juan et al. (2019) also found that incidents of bullying are a lot higher in South African non-fee schools in comparison to fee paying schools. This is an implication that school violence is better managed in economically viable public schools and private institutions. Khumalo (2019) justifies this finding when he says poverty give rise to school violence as in his study it was found that hungry learners steal other learners lunch boxes. School violence in South Africa prevail in the forms of bullying, corporal punishment, physical violence, murder, sexual assault, cyberbullying and vandalism.

2.3.2.1 Bullying

Menesini and Salmivalli (2017) state that bullying has been one of the most prevalent exhibitions of violence in schools. They further confirm the long-time prevalence of bullying in schools by stating that research on bullying started more than forty years ago. Dlungwane (2017) defines bullying as negative doings which might be physical or verbal, have antagonistic intent, are recurring overtime and involve a power differential. Similarly UNESCO (2024) defines bullying as a harmful social practice that is marked by power imbalances. It is repeatedly performed and is an offensive social behaviour between learners causing physical, social and emotional damage. Despite some arguments about the definition of bullying, most scholars agree with Dlungwane (2017) in that bullying involves the intent to harm and power imbalance between the perpetrator and the abused (Farrington, 1993; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Olweus, 1993). Dube (2020) postulates that consequences of bullying for the victim include loss of self-confidence, anxiety, truancy, focus

problems, responsive hostility, stress, serious emotional problems and even suicide. These studies also found that most bullying activities happen during break time in schools.

2.3.2.2 Corporal punishment

As far as the United Nations Committee on the Rights of a Child is concerned, corporal punishment is any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, no matter how light it is. The definition of corporal punishment emphasises physical administering of pain to learners, causing unpleasantness and disregarding the psychological consequences thereof (Reyneke, 2018). This is confirmed by the Department of Basic Education (2000, p. 06) when they also stress the infliction of pain in their definition: “any deliberate act against a child that inflicts pain or physical discomfort to punish or contain him”.

South Africa is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). All state parties to the UNCRC are obliged to ensure that children are not subjected to cruelty, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Assuming the obligation, South Africa banned corporal punishment in schools in 1996 under section 10 of SASA (RSA, 1996b). It is more than 25 years since the banning of corporal punishment in South African schools but teachers are still convicted of assaulting learners by courts of law. The latest incident was that of a girl learner who was assaulted by a male teacher on 24 April 2023, the girl’s four right hand fingers are not working since then. The court case was opened at Ndwedwe Police Station (Opera News, 17 July 2023, p. 3). This validates the concern of the Department of Basic Education that teachers continue to administer corporal punishment although it was banned 25 years ago (Pyatt, 2017). Chonco (2019, p. 6) argues that “recent research shows that up to 70% of primary school and 50% secondary school learners are subjected to corporal punishment”. He further states that corporal punishment in some cases has led to grave lacerations and even the demise of learners who sometimes commit suicide because of a fear of punishment or anger after punishment. Stoltz (2022) states that the forceful administering of corporal punishment is a huge problem because there were 169 complaints of corporal punishment lodged with South African Council of Educators (SACE) between 2020 and 2021. In addition, Stoltz (2022) indicate that the greatest number of occurrences of corporal punishment happened in South African rural schools. Lester et al. (2017) note that the practice of corporal punishment creates school violence. Linked with this view, Hoosen (2022) found that

learners develop feelings of humiliation, resentment and helplessness when corporal punishment is executed on them at school.

2.3.2.3 Physical assault

Turanovic et al. (2022) conducted a study on the causes and consequences of school violence and one of their findings was that assault in the form of stabbing, fighting and shooting is a major problem in schools. On the other hand, Cloete (2022) agrees with Turanovic et al. (2022) as he states that in their study on violence in South African schools, assault was found to be the second most prevalent form of violence. There is growing fear about physical assault in the classrooms. For instance, in June 2022, an assault episode occurred in KwaZulu-Natal where the school principal was knifed in the shoulder by a learner, and a week earlier another incident was documented where a teacher died in hospital after being shot in the head (Cloete, 2022). In March 2018, a male teacher at Bergylam High School in Mpumalanga was attacked by a learner in the classroom where he suffered injuries to the head and eyes and had his ribs fractured (Broughton, 2022). Burton and Leoschut (2012, p. 23) define assault as an “incident where learners and staff members may have been attacked or hurt physically, using any kind of weapon or hands without having any of their belongings taken”. I endorse this definition but feel that assault is assault even if belongings are taken, the only difference is that if belongings are taken that is assault and theft at the same time. Burton and Leoschut (2012) wanted to separate assault from theft, but I feel there is no need to separate the two if they take place simultaneously. Inflicting pain is assault and taking belongings without permission is theft.

2.3.2.4 Murder

A number of schools in the country are reporting violent deaths on an almost monthly basis. Dangerous weapons including illegal guns are brought to school to commit these murders. Berman (2022) legally defines murder as an intentional killing that is unlawful (not legally justified) and committed with “malice aforethought”. Malice aforethought does not mean that a killer must have acted out of spite or hate. It exists if someone intends to kill a person without legal justification or excuse. It can also exist if the killer intentionally inflicts serious bodily harm that causes the victim’s death or behaves in a way that shows extreme, reckless disregard for life and results in the victim’s death. The Daily News (4 March 2010, p. 5) reported “violence in south Africa is seven times the

norm”. I agree with this, based on the fact that just in January 2022 a number of murders in schools were reported in the print and electronic media. To mention a few: On 14 January 2022, a Grade 10 learner shot another learner and thereafter turned the gun on himself and also died in Daveyton–Gauteng (EWN, 14 January 2022); a female educator–Deputy Principal was gunned down at school in Thembisa – Gauteng (Sowetan Live, 23 January 2022); a 15 year old Grade 9 learner was stabbed by a Grade 11 learner from another school and the perpetrator was also stabbed to death by the community (IOL, 24 January 2022). Some of the murders that happened in January are not mentioned here. In the study ‘Prevalence of school violence and weapons in schools’ by Schonfeld (2006) it was found that in US schools there were 253 murders from the year 1994 to 1999. Of these, 172 were learners and the rest were staff members. This is a strong indication that South Africa is not facing this outbreak of violence alone.

2.3.2.5 Sexual assault

The rates of sexual violence and rape in South Africa are alarming (Hoosen et al., 2022). Bhana (2021) shed light on sexual assault statistics in South Africa as she says that 2019/2020 annual crime statistics shows that over 24 000 children were sexually molested in this country. Bhana (2021) further reveals that more than 160 cases of sexual offences committed by male teachers on learners were declared to the South African Council of Educators from April 2020 to July 2021. Sexual assault is an occurrence where the perpetrator makes contact with the private parts (genitals) of the victim, using any of his body parts or causing the victim to do the same to him (Department of Basic Education, 2016). Mayeza and Bhana (2021) acknowledge that these sexual assaults on young girls take varying forms like rape and sexual harassment and they further say that these take place in different parts of the school, for example, school corridors and unused buildings. It becomes difficult for young girls who have been victims of sexual assault to report these cases due to patriarchy, power imbalances and South African socio-economic conditions (Hoosen et al., 2022). It is noted with considerable concern that the risk of unwanted pregnancy and sexual diseases increase as a result of sexual violence (UNESCO, 2017).

2.3.2.6 Cyberbullying

According to a Pew Research Centre (2022) study, cyberbullying is the utilisation of electronic media to hurt, harass, threaten or humiliate another person. Cyberbullying involves sending hurtful messages or emails, posting mean texts or rumours online. According to Youth Risk Behaviour Surveillance System (YRBSS), 16% of school learners were victims of cyberbullying in 2018. Cyberbullying is very dangerous and can cause anxiety, depression and can sometimes lead to suicide. Zhu et al. (2021) maintain that out of all internet users one third are children and adolescents under the age of eighteen years. They (Zhu et al., 2021, p. 1) further state that “the increasing rate of internet adoption worldwide and the popularity of social media platforms among young people have worsened this situation with most children and adolescents experiencing cyberbullying or online victimisation in their lives”. This victimisation is sometimes experienced by teachers when learners post mean things about them.

2.3.2.7 Vandalism

Vandalism is a purposeful, vicious destruction of property (Senjaya, 2023). Many schools suffer this form of violence where vandalism acts are committed by learners as well as irresponsible community members. In most cases community members vandalise with the intention of gaining entry to school premises or school buildings for the purpose of stealing. Learners in most cases vandalise property such as school fences so that they cannot be identified when they are late for school or when they play truant or if they want to avoid being searched at the gate. According to Dube (2020, p. 47), school vandalism occurs in different forms “from writing in books to writing on desks, from cutting up school seats to tearing furniture apart”. My argument, as has been mentioned before, is that vandalism in schools is not carried out by learners only, but the community also plays a big role in vandalising schools. Sometimes vandalism involves arson. There is a great need to educate the community about protecting schools as vandalism also has financial implications when repairs must be done or schools rebuilt.

2.3.2.8 Faction fights

This is a contextual type of school violence as it is traditional and occurs mostly in rural areas

(Mncube & Steynmann). In most cases, it emanates from community gatherings or functions (Dlungwane, 2017). These fights can be initiated by young men quarrelling over girls or they may be due to a long-standing grudge between different *izigodi*. Chingarande (2019) states that there are sometimes feuds which have long been there which play out violently in schools and sometimes compel the closure of schools. Dube (2020) confirms what is said by Chingarande (2019) when he says this type of violence is commonly prevalent in traditional communities and it emanates from traditional functions that spill out into schools. The strategy to curb this type of violence is to involve traditional leaders as they command respect and have authority over rural communities (Mngomezulu, 2020). Traditional leaders in their status as custodians of the culture and norms of their communities have ways of dealing with such fights and their voice is respected by traditional communities (Matsiliza, 2024). Traditional leaders also assist in other behavioural situations in schools using either reactionary or ad hoc approaches (Mngomezulu, 2020). This has implications for school-parent collaborations because, if the school does not work hand in glove with parents and/or members of the community, the intervention of traditional leaders might also suffer.

2.3.3 Global extent of school violence

UNESCO (2017) indicated in their report that more than 246 million children in the world are affected by school violence. UNESCO (2019) reaffirmed their 2017 report findings by shedding the light on prevalent forms of school violence in the world as well as statistics to that effect. Globally, physical attacks, physical fights, sexual violence, bullying, corporal punishment, gang related violence and violent attacks on schools are the most commonly occurring forms of violence. The report continues to state that in Caribbean countries physical fights are the most prevalent form of school violence at 38.3%. In North America, the most prevalent form is bullying at 31.7%, in Europe it is bullying again at 25%. The most prevalent form of violence in the middle East is physical fights at 42.8% and physical fights again in Central America at 25.6%. In South America it is physical fights at 31.3% and physical fights again in North Africa at 46.3%. In Sub-Saharan Africa it is bullying at 48.2%. UNESCO (2019) concurs with Kreifels and Warton (2018) by saying school violence is an international problem and South Africa is no exception. I feel it is not possible for any country in the world to achieve quality education and successfully prepare children to be responsible adults while experiencing high levels of school violence as indicated by previous studies. Ferrara et al. (2019) also agree with Kreifels and Warton (2018) in that the global levels of

school violence are amazingly high, and they even gave the estimation of one billion children between the ages 2 and 17 who have been physically, sexually or emotionally victimised.

2.3.4 Extent of school violence in South Africa

A report released by Statistics South Africa known as ‘Children Series Volume 1 Children exposed to maltreatment’ (2021) reports that the most common form of violence in South Africa is corporal punishment administered by teachers to learners. In South Africa there were 13 million learners aged 5 to 17 years, and of the 13 million, 1 million were found to have experienced violence at school. Out of 1 million, 84% encountered corporal punishment by their teachers. Verbal abuse was experienced by 13.7% of South African learners in 2019. This was teacher on learner verbal abuse. Teacher on learner physical violence was experienced at 10%. Learner on learner verbal abuse grew from 18.1% in 2009 to 24.1% in 2019. The report also indicates that corporal punishment was experienced more by female learners than by male learners from 2009 to 2019. In 2009, 90% of female learners experienced corporal punishment which went down to 85.5% in 2019. Similarly, 87.3% of male learners experienced corporal punishment in 2009 which also went down to 82.3% in 2019. The total number of learners experiencing violence in 2009, which equated to 18.5% was reduced by almost half (8.2%) in 2019. This indicated a decline in school violence. This decline contradicts the finding by Kreifels and Warton (2018) that the overall South African school violence victimisation rate was 22.2% in 2018. It must also be noted that this report did not give the extent of other forms of school violence prevalent in South Africa, for example, murder, sexual assault, vandalism, bullying and cyberbullying. This therefore might be the reason for the noted contradiction.

The report also indicates that learners in rural areas experienced more violence in comparison to learners in urban areas in 2009. According to the report, verbal and physical abuse were more prevalent in urban schools than in rural schools in the period 2009 to 2019. In rural schools, corporal punishment and other forms of violence were more prevalent than in urban schools within the same period which was 2009 to 2019. This indicates that even in primary schools, school violence is a problem as the age range of learners the report refers to is 5 to 17 which consist of primary and secondary school learners. Below is the graphical report:

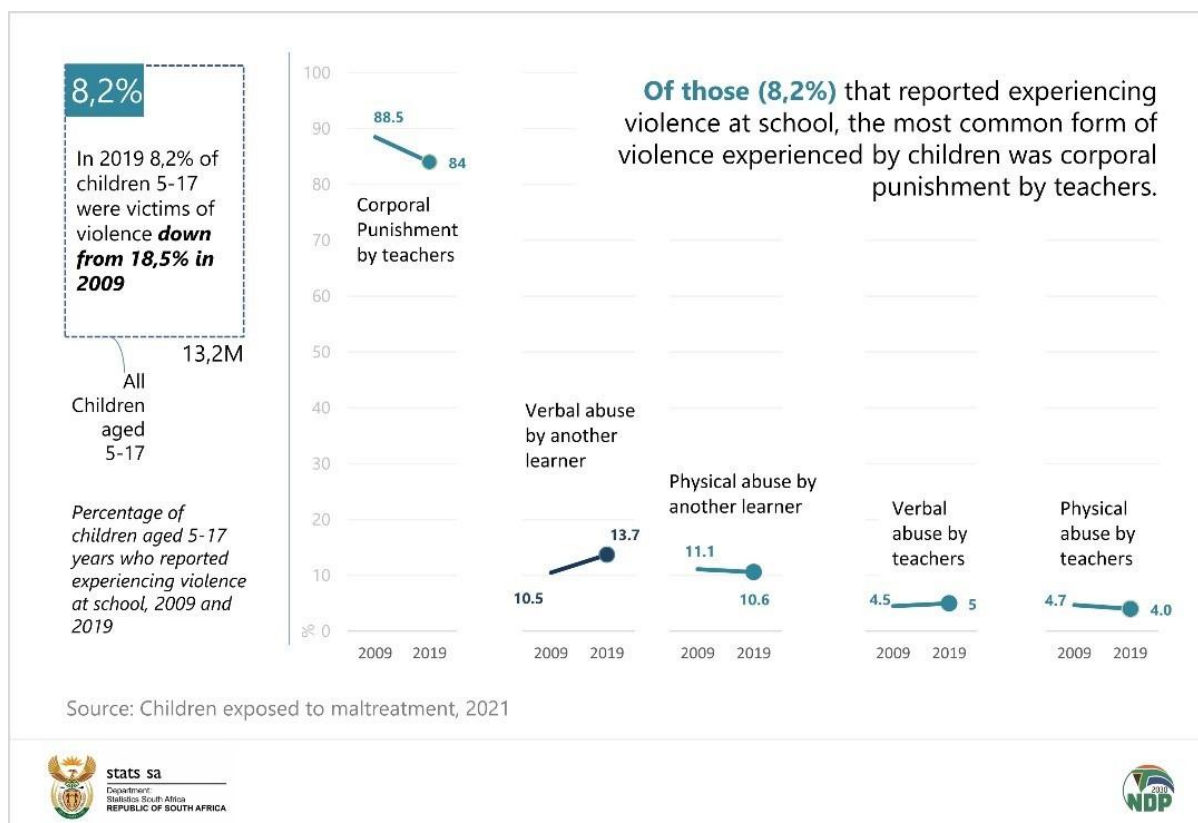


Figure 1: Percentages of learners experiencing different forms of violence in South Africa (Borrowed from Statistics South Africa)

It is critical that the extent of other forms of violence that were not catered for in the report is also highlighted so as to give the complete picture of the extent of school violence in South Africa. De Wet (2024) in his study suggests that 21% of the participants agreed to having experienced sexual harassment and 8% of them were sexually maltreated by teachers. Bhana (2021) postulates that the yearly Crime Statistics Report indicates that in the year 2019/2020 22.3% of learners were sexually abused in South Africa. Cloete (2022) agrees with Boxer (2022) that sexual violence rates are high in South African schools although not all sexual assault incidents are reported. In terms of cyberbullying, the Centre for Community Impact – CCI (2023) states that the indication of statistics for a number of years in South Africa is that cyberbullying persists as a problem with girls experiencing it at a higher rate than boys. Girls experience cyberbullying at 43.4% at home and 33.1% at school in comparison to boys who experience it at 42.4% at home and 29.3% at school. To support this, girls experience cyberbullying at a higher rate than boys, as indicated by a study conducted in Port Elizabeth by Guide to Cyberbullying (2022), with 1594 primary and secondary school learners revealing that 33% of girls compared to 28 percent of boys experienced cyberbullying. These rates show that the extent of cyberbullying in South Africa is high.

I also agree with these researchers as violence brings about a lack of safety, fear, inequality and physical, psychological and emotional victimisation for learners and staff members. This impacts negatively on the education of learners. CJCP (2012) confirms what Kreifels and Warton (2018) suggest, that South Africa is no exception to school violence as their study found that in South Africa the overall violence victimisation rate was 22.2%. Dlungwane (2017) also agrees with the high levels of school violence prevalence in South Africa as he postulates that Jamaica leads with the number of violent incidents in schools and is followed by South Africa. I also agree with the reporting of high levels of violence prevalent in South Africa as hardly a day goes by without media reports on school violence. However, the comparison between Jamaica and South Africa is not well placed as Jamaica is a Caribbean country and not an African state. According to Masinga (2019), South Africa is number 136 out of 162 countries with the most school violence in the world.

According to the Council of Europe – Children’s Rights (2022, p. 1): “violence in schools create insecurity and fear which harm the general school climate and infringe pupils’ rights to learn in a safe, unthreatening environment”. Schools cannot execute their responsibilities to provide quality teaching and learning and prepare learners for healthy socialisation if children are not in a violence free environment. Burton (2008, as cited in SACE, 2011) agrees with the Council of Europe – Children’s Rights (2022) findings when stating that “schools are generally seen as mechanisms to develop and reinforce positive citizens with pro social attitudes and sites where individuals are prepared for the role they are to play in society at large”. This suggests that society should have an interest in the education of its children as they are being prepared to serve the very same society, hence the need to bring on board the society through stakeholders, especially parents as major stakeholders in approaching school violence collaboratively.

2.4 The legal basis for the safety of learners in the South African context – South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996

Numerous laws guard against the abuse of South African learners, staff members and all other stakeholders. Section 12 (1) of the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996a) confirms the democratic right of all people to be safe and protected against torture, abuse including cruel, inhumane, vicious and shameful punishment. Section 28 (1) (d) protects all children from neglect, maltreatment, degradation and abuse. Section 10 declares that all people have human dignity that

they were born with, and this dignity is protected by the constitution as per their right. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) postulate that learning under harmless and secure atmospheres is a right enshrined in the South African constitution. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) continue to say that the Bill of Rights, incorporated into the Constitution, assures all South Africans the right to human dignity, freedom, equality and security. Section 10 (1) of the SASA (RSA, 1996b) confirms the abolition of corporal punishment by stating that any person administering corporal punishment is a criminal who can be charged for assault. Corporal punishment in schools was also banned by the Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act of 1997. SASA (RSA, 1996b) declares that no dangerous objects or weapons may be permitted on public school premises and nobody may be allowed to cause any form of violence or trouble which can have a negative impact on any public school activities.

SASA (RSA, 1996b) mandates all principals of schools to protect learners, staff members and other stakeholders from injurious acts like assaults (physical, sexual and emotional) and unjust treatment. SASA (RSA, 1996b) further decrees that all SGBs lead the establishment of learner codes of conduct for the regulation of learners' conduct. A code of conduct must be developed in consultation with parents, learners and teachers, it must be corrective, understood and acknowledged by them. It must declare transgressions as well as correctional procedures. According to the SASA (RSA, 1996b) schools must establish tribunals to handle hearings. SASA (RSA, 1996b) Section 9 (1) stipulates that "subject to this ruling and any other provincial ruling, the governing body of a public school may, subsequent to a just hearing, give suspension as a correctional measure to a learner for no longer than one week, or pending the expulsion decision by the provincial HOD". The number of suspension days must not exceed 14. Section 9 (2) of SASA (RSA, 1996b) states that the expulsion of learners can only be done by the provincial head of department (HOD) subsequent to a fair hearing. The Department of Basic Education in KwaZulu-Natal also produced circulars to assist in maintaining safety and security in schools. These are KZN Circulars No. 55 of 2001 and No. 90 of 2001. Circular No.55 explains the formation of Discipline, Safety and Security Committees (DSS) in public schools and also discusses duties and responsibilities of these committees. KZN Circular No. 90 of 2001 provides policy guidelines on Discipline, Safety and Security Committees in public schools. Further acts protecting learners from violent behaviour or maltreatment are:

- Children's Act, No.38 of 2005 which declares "Any behaviour that would inflict injury on a child, whether it is physical or emotional, is not allowed."

- The Employment of Educators Act, as amended, No.76 of 1998, distinguishes between transgression and serious misconduct, and grants diverse penalties.
- The National Education Policy Act, No. 27 of 1996 which mandates the introduction of control and correction policies for learners for misconduct. This introduction was done by the Minister of Education.

Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) maintain that learner discipline in schools demands a solid teacher-parent collaboration. The way different role players execute discipline in the school and the prescriptions of the National Discipline Policy in South Africa (learner code of conduct) are critical. In line with Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), the focus of this study is on how schools work in partnership with parents to create safe environments and curtail school violence. It is therefore imperative for them to understand legislation on learner discipline so that their endeavours are within the prescribed law.

2.5 Parental involvement in their children's education in South Africa

In discussing the topic of parental involvement in South Africa, I present it from three different angles. The first is a historical background of parental involvement. The second is a legislative framework and the third focuses on the significance of their involvement for their children's education, as well as for the prospect of reducing school violence.

2.5.1 Historical background of parental involvement in South Africa

For the last three decades parental involvement has been an interesting topic in education (Ngwenya, 1996; Shezi, 2012). The effect of parents on the development of their children's education process is recorded in psychology and education (Fan & Williams, 2010). A parent is a primary educator of a learner, and has the responsibility to promote the growth of values and the child's identity (Narain, 2005). Additionally, support, guidance and motivation are needed by children from parents (Narain, 2005). The message sent to learners by parental involvement is that their parents have an interest in seeing them develop (Hango, 2007). This signifies that parental involvement is significant to the child's emotional and psychological development. Parents have been taking care of their children's informal education for ages (Ngwenya, 1996).

Parental involvement was a very critical element in children's education in ancient times, before the evolution of writing records (Berger, 1981). Rules and regulations from predecessors were taught to children (Hango, 2007). Children were also taught different skills of obtaining food, hunting, cattle herding and crop production. Parents have always been referred to as primary teachers because of their involvement in their children's education from birth (Martinez, 2015). Primitively, there were no schools; the only teaching institutions in the society were families. Parents depended on instincts and their experience when teaching the young ones (Frost, 1966). The telling and showing method was used by parents when teaching their children (Frost, 1966). Punishment was administered to those children who failed to meet set standards. As time went by, formal education emerged, and parents started to send their children to schools to be taught by teachers who were known as secondary teachers.

Historically, in the apartheid government, the state involved parents in the governance and administration of schools by means of the Bantu Education Act (1953). This means that parents were used by the government to promote its education policies that were discriminatory. Parents were expected by the then government to be silent and submissive partners in their children's education (Mbatha, 2018). The historical evolution of this phenomenon has influenced the comprehension, ideas, beliefs and perceptions about parental involvement nowadays hence the importance of a historical overview (Mbatha, 2018).

2.5.2 Legislative framework for parental involvement

The history of education tells us that parents worldwide have been informally partaking in their children's education (Berger, 1981). Children were taught what to do and what not to do as a family member. This is the reason why parents are referred to as primary teachers. Formally, during the apartheid era, parents in South African public schools had little or nothing to say about their children's education except paying school fees and attending meetings where principals dictated and instructed them what to do (Hango, 2009). It was in 1996 when the status of parents was reformed (Selolo, 2018). The Constitution of the Country (RSA, 1996a) democratised education to give strength to the partnership and cooperative governance by all education stakeholders. The South African Constitution (RSA, 1996a) (through Chapter 2) anticipates parents to be in the forefront of children's rights and protection. Among other things, the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996a)

wants parents to make sure that they participate in creating a conducive and fruitful teaching and learning atmosphere, partner with other stakeholders in education and be fully involved in the education of their children. The constitution further gives parents the right to be part of policy determination in their children's schools and make appropriate contributions with regard to a well-ordered school administration (Mbatha, 2018).

As happens in other countries, South Africa has its legislation that governs education in South African schools. This legislative document is called SASA (RSA, 1996b). This is the document mandating parents to exercise their right through partnering with schools for the sake of their children's education. SASA (RSA, 1996b) explains the parents' cardinal responsibilities, and requires schools to keep parents informed about their children's academic and social issues as well as providing parents with the opportunity to be represented in School Governing Bodies (SGBs). The involvement of parents will help schools and teachers specifically to understand the learner in his or her totality, that is learning barriers, social deficiencies, capabilities, and/or the lack thereof, as well as other necessary information. Teachers also have a duty to appreciate and understand learners' families in order to keep the school-home link healthy and effective.

SASA (RSA, 1996b) regards parents as significant partners to participate in the governance of schools. Schools are mandated to fully involve them as they may be discouraged if they are not fully involved. The principal has a duty to workshop and explain policies and procedures to get parents on board and make them enjoy being included, especially illiterate parents. As far as Section 3.4 of the National Executive Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996, is concerned, parents are required to involve themselves in their children's education including the supervision of their work, assistance with homework and motivation as well as correction of deviant conduct. Parenting at a distance limits parent-child and teacher-parent involvement and might have unpleasant consequences. The relationship of a child with parents and teachers must be distinguished by support and protection (Selolo, 2018). This study accentuates what the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996a) and SASA (1996b) present about parental involvement through exploring how school-parent collaboration assists in reducing school violence, the role of school-parent collaboration, the complexities of school-parent collaboration as well as navigation of school-parent collaboration complexities by schools and parents.

2.5.3 Significance of parental involvement

Parents are a highly important component in children's development (Milak, 2020). The authority and skill they possess to shape and grow youngsters into inspired and tolerant people with their direct participation in their children's learning activities, makes them the most significant component in their upbringing (Selolo, 2018). Naite (2021) postulates that parental involvement consists of their (parents) attitudes, activities, style, occurrences inside and outside the school environment in order to bolster the academic and behavioural success of their children in their schools. Primarily, parents who do not involve themselves in the children's school academic and social activities are considered to be irresponsible and their passiveness demoralises and discourages their children. This negatively impacts on children's achievement and behaviour. According to Abdul-Adil and Farmer (2006, p. 6), "parents active involvement in their children's education has a positive and noteworthy impact on children's lives, including their development, behaviour, motivation and academic performance". Naite (2021) states that learners whose parents involve themselves in their school activities have regular school attendance, act and do well academically and socially from pre-primary to secondary school. Parental involvement clearly tells children that their parents are interested in what they do and sends a clear message that school is important (Selolo, 2018). Parental involvement makes it possible for parents to be part of policy development in their children's schools and that puts them in a better position to channel their children's behaviour in line with the expectation of the school and society (Naite, 2021). This eliminates situations where learners become violent to one another or to their teachers. I therefore feel that the significance of this study cannot be over emphasised as literature is clear on the importance of school-parent collaboration for children's development (Epstein, 2018; Milak, 2020; Milosaviljevic et al., 2022). Milosaviljevic et al. (2022, p.1) further states that "Family is a living and social environment and is considered a reference framework in which the child acquires first experiences that form the starting point for the overall development of an individual. School is where education takes place and family is not excluded from it".

2.5.4 Global perspectives of school-parent collaboration

Reformation of education has been happening in various countries around the world for the reinforcement of parental involvement in their children's schooling life. School violence is a global pandemic, and all countries want to see it gone as it brings destruction of the nation's future as it

targets the academic and social lives of youth. Irrespective of any differences in the perceptions of stakeholders, all countries agree that parental involvement has a positive effect on learners' academic success and behaviour (Anastasiou & Papagianni, 2020). This study will focus on two developing countries in Africa, and two Asian countries.

2.5.4.1 Perspectives of parental involvement from African countries' context

In this section I present a discussion about parental involvement from the perspectives of English-speaking countries of Southern Africa. I selected only two countries, Tanzania and Kenya.

2.5.4.1.1 Tanzania

Tanzania's educational system lacks parental involvement as parents do not take part in the education of their children (Kambuga, 2017). As long as they have paid school fees, they do not mind other issues including the behaviour of their children at school (Mbanga, 2020). Regardless of the Tanzanian's government attempts, cases of indiscipline and violence in many secondary schools are uncontrollable (Kiwale, 2017). This necessitates collaboration between teachers and parents. Kambuga (2017) declares that discipline is the significant challenge experienced by teachers in Tanzania. Due to enormous learner disciplinary cases in Tanzanian secondary schools, teachers spend more time dealing with the correction of learner behaviour than teaching. (Mbanga 2020) states that teachers in Tanzania start dealing with disciplinary issues as soon as they arrive at school in the morning. These disciplinary issues include selling drugs, smoking drugs, sexual assaults, bullying, truancy, physical fights, theft and abusive communication. According to Kiwale (2017), a Tanzanian, all these problems are a result of environmental and home influences. In Tanzania, learners mistreat teachers, absent themselves from school, damage school property, boycott classes, fight and attend clubs and discos (Kiwale, 2017). All this chaotic behaviour is happening despite the fact that corporal punishment is not yet banned in Tanzania although the Republic of Tanzania is against it but its prohibition is still to be achieved. The study by Mbanga (2020) recommends that stakeholders, particularly parents, should take part in disciplining their children in schools. This is indicative of the fact that parents play a significant role in moulding the academic and social behaviour of children. If they are not significantly involved, learners' behavioural problems become uncontrollable. Because of low parental involvement in Tanzania, schools are experiencing huge behavioural problems.

2.5.4.1.2 Kenya

Kenya has increasing cases of indiscipline among learners (Ngare, 2014). This has become a thorn in the flesh of education stakeholders (Ngare, 2014). Machakos Sub County education office reported that eleven schools had students rioting and destroying school assets and refusing to write examinations in 2018 (Chiuri et al, 2020). In 2016, eight learners were found with petrol and match boxes ready to burn their school (Nyatuka, 2020). Likewise, ten schools were closed in 2015 due to riots, arson, and violence. Despite policies and intervention strategies introduced by the government of Kenya to decrease indiscipline, the challenge continues (Nyatuka, 2020). A study conducted by Kadama (2016) on assessment of teachers' and parents' role in promoting discipline among learners found that collaboration between teachers and learners needs to be strengthened, even though principals and parents do work as a team to implement agreed upon decisions concerning learner discipline, parents are part of teacher-parent meetings when their children are involved in critical disciplinary matters. Kadama (2016) in his study, found that principals in Kenya involve parents through their associations to enhance education domain and defend policy on discipline and administrative issues. In most cases in Kenya, schools work with parents through parents' associations. In the study by Ngare (2014), it was established that parents were not in a position to monitor the progress (academically and socially) of learners, as a result parental involvement has no impact on learner discipline. It was further found that most principals do not involve parents when learners have minor disciplinary cases. In his study that ran from 2013 to 2022 in Kenya, Asael (2022, p. 37) notes that "this study has shown that parents are enablers, motivators and facilitators of their children's education in all levels of schooling". This study introduced a training programme for parents and this initiative was based on the fact that teachers cannot do everything. The programme enhanced communication between teachers and parents and improved monitoring of learners' work by parents, as well as dealing with social problems experienced by children. Unfortunately, the initiative was implemented in only two formal settlements, Korogocho and Viwandani, as a result it could not make any noticeable impact in the whole of Kenya.

2.5.4.2 Perspectives of parental involvement from selected Asian countries

A large portion of the literature review of parental involvement reflects the perspectives of either developed countries of Western Europe and the United States, or that of developing countries, largely in the African continent, including South Africa. In this section I present perspectives from

two powerful countries in Asia, and those are China and Russia. I am aware that Russia is also categorised as a European country as well because it has some parts that belong to that continent.

2.5.4.2.1 Taiwan in China

The Chinese culture views teachers as highly respected people and parents should not interfere with teachers' work in terms of asking anything about what they teach or how (Wu, 2016). Traditionally in Taiwan, which is a province of China, teachers were equated with the lords. The emphasis on parental involvement is new in Taiwan, and it has become a worldwide phenomenon. Educational reforms have been taking place for more than two decades in Taiwan. One of the reforms is decentralisation (Tian et al., 2023). Decentralisation has increased the levels of parental participation in the education of their children (Wu, 2016). It has also offered more power to teachers to make decisions about their teaching. In Taiwan parental involvement is mandated by law, specifically the Education Fundamental Act of 1999 (Han et al., 2020). Article 8 of this Act mandates parents to guide their children, choose the form and content of education to be received by the child and be involved in the education of their children for the sake of children (Han et al, 2020). In 2006, regulations that compelled all schools to interact with parents and give them the opportunity to take important decisions about the education of their children were made. These regulations further empowered parents to look after their children's rights and interests. The nature of parent-teacher interaction has largely improved in Taiwan.

2.5.4.2.2 Russia

Russia differentiates between formal and informal educational involvement in learners' education (Prakhov, 2020). Russia welcomes and encourages parental involvement but draws a line between formal and informal support. Parents, according to the Russian government should only intervene informally; hence, the statement by Prakhov (2020, p. 7), "the family is an informal institution of education, since parents can invest time and money in their children's education, but this process is not regulated". Russia wants parents to intervene and make a difference informally but not interfere with schools as they are regarded as formal institutions and therefore, interventions are done formally through formal rules and procedures. Russia acknowledges that both school and family have an influential role to play in learners' education but maintains that roles should be played separately; parents should take good care of the informal support and schools take care of the formal

support (Avanesian et al., 2021). Other scholars (Castro et al., 2015; Ma et al., 2016; Matveev, 2012) maintain that parental informal involvement can maintain the formal involvement by schools. Prakhov (2020) postulates that parental involvement may work as mechanism for providing informal support for the formal education to improve the symbiotic impact of teachers' and parents' input on academic gains. Therefore, in Russia, parents intervene informally but effectively so that formal intervention by schools will not be weakened by the gaps left by informal intervention (Avanesian et al., 2021). Parental involvement is prevalent in Russia but is implemented informally by parents who do not cross the boundary to the schools' formal side. Russian parents have nothing to do with learners when they are at school (Prakhov, 2020). Parents only assume responsibility of their children after school hours. In 2012, Russia had no school violence; hence, the declaration by Vavilova and Matveev et al. (2012) that in Russia, school violence was not a serious issue. Avanesian et al. (2021) found the prevalence of bullying in Russia and measures directed at eliminating negative consequences of bullying were put in place but implemented by the school as a formal institution.

Since the study will be internationally accessed, I could not limit perspectives on the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration to African countries. The inclusion of Asian countries was for the achievement of a global or transnational perspective. My understanding is that different countries have different cultures and therefore their inclusion in the study helps in understanding how different cultural factors influence the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration to reduce school violence. For example, in Taiwan, teachers are equated with lords and no parent can just go to school and confront a teacher about his or her work. This does not mean that parents have no right to be involved in their children's education but everything concerning school-parent collaboration is governed by law and the law is very clear on how this should be done, hence much improvement has been achieved in Taiwan as far as school-parent collaboration is concerned. If you compare the respect given to teachers in Taiwan to respect given to teachers in South Africa there is huge difference, yes, teachers used to be highly respected in South Africa but that has eroded. Even learners beat up teachers when they feel like it and their parents support them in some cases. If you look at other African countries like Kenya and Tanzania, the situation is almost the same as in South Africa, teachers still spend more time dealing with disciplinary issues than teaching and learning. Many schools in Kenya are said to be excluding parents in matters that concern their children especially discipline issues (Ngare, 2014). In Tanzania some learners mistreat teachers, engage in violent boycotts and even burn schools, many parents are not involved in their children's

education whilst in Russia parents are involved in their children's education but there is a line drawn by government where a parent has to take care of a child's education matters at home and teachers do the same at school, this means parents have to intervene informally at home and not interfere with schools. In both these Asian countries school-parent collaboration is governed by law and schools and parents respect the law governing this collaboration hence they have successful school-parent relationships. There is also legislation on parental involvement in the other three countries, but I believe education of communities about the benefits and how they should be involved in their children's education as well as praising those schools and communities who are already engaged in these collaborations should be our priority. In the study conducted by Myende and Nhlumayo (2022), parents understood and accepted that their involvement in their children's education is important but indicated that they needed to be educated on how to collaborate with teachers and schools in general.

2.6 The role of school-parent collaboration

Education is a learning process aiming at making better the cultural, moral and intellectual qualities of an individual learner, as well as community members (Yigzaw, 2019). The learning process is understood as moral coaching for learners through which the development of their capabilities takes place (Sitoyi, 2020). The characteristics of the culture are implanted in them, and the people's culture is communicated to the next generation (Yigzaw, 2019). Through it very good citizens can be developed to change an unreasonable community into a reasonable (Yigzaw, 2019). Yigzaw, (2019, p. 31) states "However, in preparing the ideal citizens, the role of parents is pivotal because family is the first agent of socialisation to inculcate the conscience of good and bad". I am therefore, of the opinion that the collaboration of schools and parents propels the shaping of learners' behaviour, thus decreasing the opportunities for being violent. Moreover, school-parent collaboration places a crucial role on the implementation of the operation of the system of education (Ravitch, 2016). School-parent collaboration plays a pivotal role in the lives of the school and its processes, the teachers, learners as well as the parent as they benefit from the collaboration (Sitoyi, 2020). The role of school-parent collaboration is as follows: it propels the shaping of learners' good behaviour, that is, they exhibit better conduct and discipline; it improves academic performance of learners; learners have the potential to complete high school education, it enhances learners' self-esteem; improves parent-child and parent-teacher relationship; parents develop positive attitudes towards school and teachers; it motivates parents to further their education/develop; it enhances

contentment in teachers and transform the school climate and improves cooperation in learners, for example, completing homework and regular school attendance.

2.6.1 School-parent collaboration propels the shaping of learners' good behaviour

Yigzaw (2019, p. 31) states that “the role of parents is pivotal in preparing the ideal citizens because family is the first agent of socialisation to inculcate the conscience of good or bad”. The school-parent collaboration allows the parent to continue with the inculcation of social values leading to learners' acceptable conduct at home and at school while teachers mostly take care of the academic part of the learners' development, which the parents also support. Yigzaw (2019) continues to say that parental involvement is perceived as any gesture by a parent which is anticipated to enhance the learner's academic performance and behaviour. This happens when a child is at school, and the teacher is working hand in hand with the parents for the academic and social support of a learner (Malatji et al., 2021). In this regard, the following scholars (Cameroon et al., 2020; Hargraves, 2019; Jigsaw, 2019; Ravitch, 2016) agree that learners whose parents are involved in their (learners) education are inclined to have less behavioural problems.

2.6.2 School-parent collaboration improves academic performance of learners

Malatji et al. (2021) postulate that a learner whose parents are passive as far as the schooling issues are concerned, has the potential to redo grades or is categorised as the lowest attainer in comparison to learners whose parents are active in the education of their children. Although some parents may be passive because of some barriers that prevent them from associating with the school and teachers of their child, but the fact remains that once the child is out of school, no follow up or support is rendered to him/her while other children are supported at home by their parents. The supporting parents even communicate and hold meetings with teachers of their children and thereby, learners stand a better chance of excelling in their schoolwork. Malatji et al. (2021), sharing similar views with Kent et al. (2022), posit that school-parent collaboration is one of the most effective educational interventions as in his study he was found that since the school started to invite and involve parents in their children's education, the academic performance of learners had dramatically improved at the school. Myende and Nhlumayo (2020) also feel that strengthened school-parent collaboration makes learners attain better grades, which ultimately, results in improved achievement academically. This is the case globally, and as a result, in some countries there are policies that compel schools to

collaborate with parents, for example, Malaysia, Russia (especially in foundation phase), United States of America and others (Caridade, 2021; Ferrara, 2019; Mabasa & Muluvhu, 2019; Salley & Rosli, 2019).

2.6.3 Learners have the potential to complete high school education

School dropout is an international challenge. In his study ‘Does lack of parental involvement affect school dropout among Indian adolescents’, Goli (2021) claims that the ratio of enrolment of Grades 6,7 and 8 in Indian children is soaring at 91% each year but also the rate of drop out is soaring. Paul et al. (2021) further state that researchers from other countries (Cameron et al., 2020; Desai et al., 2019); Sethi, 2018; Thapa et al., 2019) have indicated the benefits of school-parent collaboration in the education of their children as dropout rates are reduced. In a study by Dube (2020), it was found that the rate of dropout was high in one secondary school and the level of school-parent collaboration was very low indicating that no one accounts for the learners that have dropped out as there is no communication between the school and their parents.

2.6.4 School-parent collaboration enhances learners’ self-esteem

When learners realise that their parents, as well as their teachers, work together in supporting their development through academic and social activities, somehow, they attach value to themselves, seeing their parents caring about them to the extent of teaming up with teachers (Armila, 2023). According to Moneva (2020), self-esteem is the feeling of being respectful and respected as well as having abilities. Moneva (2020) continues to say in this study that academic performance of learners is affected by self-esteem, and the higher the self-esteem in a learner, the high the confidence and vice versa. Moneva (2020) also asserts that it has been proved that there is a correlation between self-esteem and parent-school collaboration. Therefore, it is highly valid that school-parent collaboration enhances learners’ self-esteem (Armila, 2023; Moneva, 2020; Omoyemiju, 2023; Zangmo, 2021).

2.6.5 School-parent collaboration improves parent-child and parent-teacher relationships

Yigzaw (2019) asserts that school-parent collaboration involves actions that assist a learner to reach or exceed the standards or anticipations of a learner's role and incorporates parent-child and parent-teacher relations. Paccaud et al. (2021, p. 64) stipulate that there is always "a positive relationship between a parental involvement and better communication between parents and children and parents and teachers". Sukhbaatar (2014) concurs when he describes parental involvement in three dimensions, which are 'parent to learner communication (helping with homework and social issues), school-based activities (attending school events) and parent-teacher communication (talking with the teacher about homework and child behaviour). It is clear that as parents and teachers, and parents and learners communicate, the relationship and trust grows.

2.6.6 Parents develop positive attitude towards school and teachers

Yigzaw (2019) states that school-parent collaboration helps parents develop positive attitudes towards the school and teachers. As a teacher myself, I concur with Yigzaw (2019) because once the parent sees that the teacher has an interest in the development of his/her child, the parent develops trust and feels free to communicate things that will assist towards the holistic development of a child thus, developing positive attitudes towards the school and teachers. When the parent is not aware of the systems and processes of the school and nobody cares to bring him/her closer or invite the parent to be part of the team, the 'me' and 'them' attitude develops. There was a generally high level of satisfaction and renewed trust which led to some parents indicating their wish to further their studies so that they could be able to assist more vigorously, having more knowledge (Yigzaw, 2019). Definitely, the satisfaction in parents boosts the self confidence in teachers as they realise that parents' expectations are met and they develop contentment as well (Omoyemiju, 2023).

2.6.7 Motivate parents to improve their education / develop contentment in teachers

Hargraves (2019) sums up these two issues when he says that during school-parent collaborations, parents can gain more conviction and contentment in parenting, as well as extended interest in improving their education. On the other side teachers feel content by the support and recognition due to improved school-parent collaboration. In a study conducted by Paccaud et al. (2021), titled 'Satisfaction with the collaboration between families and schools – The Parents View', it was found

that after exploring the experiences of parents as far as the school-parent collaboration was concerned, they experienced high levels of satisfaction and renewed trust which led some parents to indicate their wish to further their studies so that they could be able to assist more vigorously with more knowledge. Definitely, the satisfaction of parents boosts the self-concept in teachers as they realise that parents' expectations are met and they develop contentment as well (Omoyemiju, 2023).

2.6.8 School-parent collaboration transforms the school climate

The main aim of reducing school violence is the creation of a safe environment for learners and staff members (Paul, et al., 2021). It is only when the climate has changed from being negative and hazardous, to being positive and healthy that the school can realise its goals (Caridade et al., 2020). It is difficult for schools only to create this climate as it needs collaboration with parents as well. Caridade et al. (2020) further postulate that a decline in the positivity of school climate relates to higher behavioural problems on the part of learners. Secondary school teachers confirm that they have a problem in dealing with school violence. Literature reveals that planned and effective school-parent collaboration decreases deviant behaviour, enhances school climate and increases academic achievement (Caridade et al., 2020; Myende & Nhlumayo, 2020; Naite, 2021).

2.6.9 It improves cooperation by learners (better attendance and completion of homework)

Naite (2021) states that learners whose parents involve themselves in their school activities become cooperative, that is, they act and do well academically and socially. For example, their attendance is good and the rate of completing their homework is high. Parental involvement clearly tells children that their parents are interested in what they do and clearly sends a message that the school is important. In that regard, Casey (2022) states that learners whose parents are involved in collaboration with teachers have good school attendance, good conduct, good academic performance, show healthy social skills and cooperate fully with the school and their parents. Therefore, Chiuri (2020); Curry et al. (2019); Ratty (2023); Ofsted (2022) agree that a successful school-parent collaboration results in learners cooperating well at school and at home.

“Parent involvement in various studies is defined as representative of school or home-based behaviour and practices which include parental aspirations, expectations, attitudes and beliefs of parents in relation to child education” (Sylaj, 2020, p. 29). Sylaj (2020) emphasises the importance

of parental inclusion in the development of a child as parents are on the side which is taken as the first education institution for a child and as a result, they understand the experiences and behaviours of a child before teachers do and they continue witnessing and understanding these experiences even when the child is at school. The exchange of such information between school and family serves as the basis to enhance strategies for moulding the learners' academic and behavioural aspects (Ratty, 2023). Sylaj (2020) declares that as learners' negative individual and family experiences escalate, their levels of school engagement and social interaction with other learners and teachers decrease. This, therefore, makes them more susceptible to being violent (Sylaj, 2020). It suggests that if between the two sides (family and school), there is no communication about the learner and his activities, whether good or bad, the learner is subjected to a bleak future as no corrections are done in his life. The open communication between the two sides guarantees correction and proper guidance which leads to improved academic and social strengths as far as the learner is concerned. This also becomes a win-win situation for a family and a school. Sylaj (2020) postulates that strong positive viewpoints of teachers about parents correlates with growing prosperity in school-parent collaboration.

2.7 Characteristics of effective teacher-parent relationship

It is critical for teachers to acknowledge the significance and value of an effective teacher-parent association. Beginning and sustaining effective relationships with learners' parents needs a lot of time as it is a long process of motivation, honesty, experience, rigour, tenacity and open interactions. Teachers' personal and professional maturity can play a vital part in ascertaining how successful a relationship will be (Masucco, 2021). However, for an effective teacher-parent relationship, teachers must display genuine preparedness, admire parents and their families and exercise effective communication. Practising explicit, consistent dedication to the process of parental involvement is central. Parents' self-concept is enhanced when increased parent-teacher collaborations are done (Epstein, 2017).

According to Jeynes (2018), a collaborative relationship is when parents and teachers frequently share rights and responsibilities, and make equal contribution to the process of learners' holistic development. In addition, learners observe and appreciate the smooth relationship between their parents and teachers, striving together for their success as children (Masucco, 2021). Successful communication between parents and teachers generates a meaningful partnership that propels the

academic achievement of a child (Epstein, 2018). Positive communication from school to parents is known to fully influence the involvement of parents and their collaboration (Epstein, 2018). Edsource (2019) explains that parents are convinced of teachers' interest in the collaboration if parent-teacher communication is consistent. It is correct that parental involvement needs consistent communication, but the greatest aspect that teachers must experience is acquiring original trust from parents. Trust is essential for effective existence in human relationships. When parents trust teachers, they become willing and confident in working with them (Edsource, 2019). The goodness of open, truthful, respectful and credible communication from teachers makes parents want to connect and team up with teachers (Epstein, 2018). This is confirmed by Brown (2019, p. 99) when he states, "recently research has shown the importance of parent-teacher relationship, mutual respect and social trust that must take place to establish improved parental involvement and enlisting a parent as a partner, not a client". I believe that for successful partnership between parents and teachers communication, trust and honesty are key.

2.8 Complexities of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence

For centuries, the relationship between schools and parents has always been of huge interest to many scholars (Mazmishvilli et al., 2019). Various scholars have often stated different positions in this regard (Kambouri et al., 2022; Mazmishvilli et al., 2019; Rizo & Bajovic, 2016). Mazmishvilli et al. (2019) further state that education is considered to be the cornerstone for normal social relations. The huge role in bringing up people who are pillars of a society is the responsibility of school and the home. While Rizo and Bajovic (2016) posit that raising teachers' as well as parents' consciousness about their role is of critical importance for the effective implementation of the education process. Parents must be assisted by teachers, as well as the Department of [Basic] Education as it will also benefit from this collaboration. Kambouri et al. (2022) state that school-parent collaboration has its benefits which must be recognised, but acknowledging complexities as well is highly important.

Rebout et al. (2021, p. 1) state that "While there is no consensus about the definition of complexity, it is widely accepted that the ability to produce uncertainty is the most prominent characteristic of complex systems". According to Morkov et al. (2021) complexity has to do with challenging and difficult situations. Morcov et al. (2021) further state that there is a connection between complexity, risky underperformance and high rates of failure. One of the objectives of this study is to identify

some complexities that might affect school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence. Complexity, therefore, in terms of this study, refers to difficulties or challenges that might lead to failure of school-parent collaboration. These complexities, as identified by the review of literature are: power imbalance; teachers not trained to work with parents, bad experiences of parents about school; wrong expectations by parents; poor coordination and communication; parents' personal conflicts; poverty and unemployment; lack of knowledge on the side of parents; teachers' negative attitude; confusing school operational structures; lack of friendly school environment; lack of trust; parents' hectic work schedules; language of communication, lack of constant communication and lack of psychological support and motivation on the side of teachers.

2.8.1 Power imbalance

Power imbalance is the ability to control or direct the conduct of the other party in a relationship. It does not end by being dominant or submissive, but it has power to influence the other person or party (Bell, 2020). Kambouri et al. (2022) state that power imbalance is one of the most common limitations in the school-parent collaboration. They further state that research indicates that teachers have the benefit of more power in the collaboration emanating from their professional understanding of the development of a child. Kambouri et al. (2022) also state that parents complain that their total knowledge of their children's attributes is neither valued nor paid attention to by teachers. Kambouri (2022) further states that some teachers consider parental knowledge about the child as ignorant and not grounded in child development knowledge. The problem here is the probability of some parents withdrawing from collaboration or maintaining a distance as they feel their presence is not valued by teachers.

2.8.2 Teachers not trained to work with parents

Alatawi (2023) postulates that the most necessary skills that teachers should have for school-parent collaboration to offer learners well blended support are collaboration skills. Alatawi (2023) further states that schools should organise training on development of collaboration skills for teachers. In developing training manuals or programmes, schools should also consider the fact that sometimes, learners come from different cultures, languages, ethnic and social environments (Alatawi, 2023). Kambouri (2022) shares similar views with Alatawi (2023) and argues that training teachers about working with parents is critical and skills sought from the training could go a long way to enhancing

communication between teacher and parents. Kambouri (2022) further states that in his research study, “if you have a fragile partnership only one harsh comment can potentially turn the relationship around for a long time” and therefore, he suggests that training for all teachers would be advisable. This point is very important and central to this study given an established fact that the invitation to parents should emanate from the school side.

2.8.3 Bad experiences of parents about the school

Some parents attended school but did not finish primary or secondary school education due to having negative experiences about school (Weduc, 2024). Weduc (2024) continues to say that such parents are less motivated to be part of their children’s education; to them, anything to do with school, be it activities or messages, is threatening and overwhelming. It is, therefore, important for schools to know and be mindful of the fears and frustrations of parents. Some parents may have struggled to move from one grade to the other due to several issues and therefore, they do not have confidence in assisting their children and they may also believe that they do not have the right qualifications like teachers (Alatawi, 2023; Baker et al., 2016; Cotton, 2019; Liu, 2022).

2.8.4 Wrong expectations by parents

In modern educational environment teachers and parents sometimes find themselves in two different parts of the world (Aouad & Bento, 2020). This may be due to unclear and incomplete information given to parents by schools (Aouad & Bento, 2020). Schools should discuss their visions and goals with parents to have the same standpoint. Myende (2022) states that parents appreciate the need of their involvement but need schools to empower them maximally, using modern communication methods and thus communicate the school’s vision and expectations distinctly. Not only personal development and education possibilities are promoted by school-parent collaboration, but also assistance in the realisation of the set goals, either at home or at school (Bashir et al., 2023). This will make both schools and families to pull towards the same correct direction.

2.8.5 Poor coordination and communication

Sometimes poor coordination and communication may be because some teachers do not take parents as equal team members and therefore, they choose to have less involvement with parents in their

work (Bashir et al., 2023). This causes parents to find themselves pressured to agree to programmes and agendas that they were not part of developing but which are predetermined by teachers only. Owen (2016) disagrees with this situation and stresses that for the enhancement of collaboration, teachers and parents must acknowledge each other's uniqueness but strive to make equal contributions to the education of children. A close relationship has been identified between full participation of parents in the improvement plans of schools, successful parental involvement methods, a well-planned coordination a healthy, frequent communication on the one hand, and improved results of school-parent collaboration on the other (Borup et al., 2019; Cotton, 2019; Liu et al., 2022). This suggests that for an improved school-parent collaboration to occur, their participation in the above-mentioned activities should happen.

2.8.6 Parents' personal conflicts

Hornby and Blackwell (2018) argue that parents are also human beings and therefore, we may not expect them to be without personal challenges. Hornby and Blackwell (2018) further refer to these personal challenges as social anxieties. For example, some parents are divorced and that alone changes the life of a parent. In the situation of a divorce, it could be that the other parent was earning a salary, and after a divorce, that financial support is withdrawn. Such social anxieties lead to stress (Borup et al., 2019). Such stressors decrease the interest of involving oneself in the education of one's children (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Lucas-Thompson et al., 2017).

2.8.7 Poverty and unemployment

A lot of South African parents are impoverished and unemployed. Gould et al. (2023) believe that there is a correlation between poverty and unemployment. This affects the child's performance at school, and also impacts negatively on parents' self-esteem as they struggle to support their children with educational necessities. Such parents feel inferior and anxious to participate in their children's education due to their poor status. Gould et al. (2023) further state that parents who are struggling with poverty issues are likely to leave their children unsupervised. Similarly, Blackwell et al. (2019); Oranga (2022) and Sign (2019) agree that poverty leads to low self-esteem and a feeling of being inferior and valueless, and as a result, parents fear to take a lead in the academic and social development of their children.

2.8.8 Lack of knowledge on the side of parents

Some parents wish to be involved in their children's education but develop fear due to not knowing what parental involvement is all about and what will be expected from them (Sign, 2019). In a study by Liu et al. (2022), where the target population was new teachers in China and the study was about their perceptions of parental involvement in children's education, one of the findings was the lack of cognitive and intellectual preparedness for taking care of the children's growth. In the same study, 20% of the participants felt that the failure of parents to involve themselves in their children's education is because they lack general education and 33% of the participants felt that parents lacked knowledge about education or schooling and therefore, were unable to take part in their children's education. It is of paramount importance for the school to come forward and support such parents to understand their responsibilities in the partnership (Maluleke, 2014).

2.8.9 Teachers' negative attitude

If parents do not feel welcome at school, they feel whatever they may advance as their contribution in the partnership is less important. Such parents believe that the school may not be interested in the knowledge they have (Goud et al., 2023). According to Oranga et al. (2022), some teachers view parents as bringing problems to the school and as a result, they do not regard them as valuable to the school's progress. Agam et al. (2023) suggest that there is a correlation between demographic variables of teachers and their perspectives about school-parent collaboration. Agam et al. (2023) continue to state that young and highly educated teachers have better positive attitudes in comparison to the older and less educated teachers. In line with this thinking, Lusse et al. (2019); Smith et al. (2018); White (2021) share similar views, arguing that teachers become scared of noteworthy school-parent collaboration because of the unavailability of policies and programmes to guide them in working with parents; hence, their feeling of being threatened and not guided.

2.8.10 School operational structures

The approaches used by some schools may confuse parents. If the school approach is not invitational, the operational line is not clear (Maluleke, 2014). For example, this may result in a situation where parents do not know who to approach concerning certain issues and they end up moving from pillar to post due to uncertainty about who does what at school. In some schools, the

structure does not advance teaching which means that teachers are not committed (Maluleke, 2014). In such situations, parents get discouraged and take a back seat. Balli (2016) postulates that school procedures and practices should be made known to parents and further, parents should be invited to form part of structures. Involving parents in decision making, policy formulation, procedures and practices through orientation gives parents a sense of responsibility and makes clear the system of operation used by the school (Inman et al., 2019; Nhek, 2021; Sothan, 2018).

2.8.11 Lack of friendly school environment

Bashir (2023) reports in his finding that the schools that were part of his study were seen as not performing well in terms of creating an inviting school environment that would promote school-parent collaboration. The development of an intentional environment requires the implementation of intentional practices regarding people, places, policies, programmes and school processes (Fretz, 2015). This contributes to intentional invitation into the organisation and makes all role players feel well received (Naidoo, 2021; Stein 2007; Yin, 2008).

2.8.12 Lack of trust

Teachers and parents should have faith in one another by showing an unwavering trust in each other's abilities (Naidoo, 2021). This will make them work well with each other and it will result in learners achieving personal and academic success (Naidoo, 2021). Trust is significant for effective relationship. When two sides trust each other, the willingness and confidence to work together develops (Edsource, 2019). Scholars such as Brown (2019); Epstein (2018) and Massuco (2021) agree that for effective collaboration between schools and teachers, trust and honesty are key.

2.8.13 Parents' hectic work schedules

In a study conducted by Berry (2019) in Farmington, United States, one of the findings was that parents expressed one major problem; they said that they have hectic work schedules which do not allow them to have time to be part of their children's education. In another study by Hornby and Blackwell (2018), it was found that 70% of parent participants highlighted their hectic work schedules as a barrier to their active participation in their children's school activities. These

participants went further and stated that in some cases, both parents are workers and there is little or no time at all for other activities (Baker et al., 2016; Berry, 2019; Kang et al., 2017).

2.8.14 Language of communication

This study is conducted in the King Cetshwayo District of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The dominant language of communication in three secondary schools sampled in this study is IsiZulu and this language is also spoken by the majority of parents, if not all. It is, therefore, not a complexity in three secondary school but, it can be in private schools and public schools where there are teachers whose first language is not spoken by most parents of the learners. According to Watson et al. (2015), language is a barrier that prevents parental involvement, often requiring translation, as not many teachers are bilingual. While this may not be a problem for the participants in the current study, it is significant factor to be acknowledged.

2.8.15 Lack of constant communication

Epstein (2015) declares communication as fundamental to effective collaboration. Epstein (2015) further postulates that channels of communication between schools and parents should be clear in order to develop successful collaboration. Malatji (2021) points out that teachers mostly communicate with parents when there is something negative done by a child, and when giving out academic reports at the end of each quarter without discussing anything. Malatji, (2021) continues to say that communication should be continuous on all occasions, meaning both when the child does something good or bad and also during planning sessions for further development. Epstein (2015) states that teachers must conduct meetings once a year with each parent and follow-up meetings may be held if there is need. Parents feel free to present any challenges they observe in their children's growth that might hinder their school progress if constructive communication exists between them and teachers (Cabus et al., 2016; Malatji et al., 2021; Ndebele, 2015).

2.8.16 Lack of psychological support and motivation on the side of teachers

Participants in a study by Aouad and Bento (2020), state that the process of collaboration was a learning experience for them. It is only unfortunate that what they learnt, they could not share organisationally. They only shared it with a few colleagues close to them, but their experiences were

not taken to meetings and workshops for the whole organisation to share although it could be helpful especially to teachers who are new in the field. As a result, one of the findings in Aouad and Benton's (2020) study was the lack of psychological support and motivation that many teachers were experiencing. This indicates that the experience that some teachers gained from their interaction with parents of learners was not considered during meetings about policies and practices in certain circumstances. During these meetings teachers were also not given opportunities to share their experiences about collaborative relationships with parents.

Comprehending and developing school-parent collaboration is significant for boosting educational accomplishments and the outcomes of learners. Paccaud et al. (2021) allude to the fact that school-parent collaboration is viewed as crucial in education, with a huge effect on outcomes of learning. Paccaud et al (2021) further postulate that there are potential tensions in school-parent collaborations caused by the variety of ideas and anticipations about the objectives, proficiencies and roles of partners. This section of the study assists in identifying acknowledged difficulties in maintaining school-parent collaboration. The next section will present strategies to be applied in navigating school-parent collaboration complexities.

2.9 Strategies to navigate school-parent collaboration complexities

For teachers and parents to be able to navigate through complexities of school-parent collaboration, both parties need to understand how collaboration should happen. Paseka and Schwab (2020) postulate that in the process of collaboration, routes merge, meaning that teachers and parents aim at amalgamating their viewpoints and support actions. Because they come from different directions, they meet at a particular point which is called a boundary. They meet and exchange information and knowledge which is referred to as boundary crossing which leads to acquisition and modification of information known as knowledge transformation (Paseka & Schwab, 2020). Working towards common objectives, teachers and parents establish an inclusive identity known as 'we-identity' which signifies that they become a team. As far as Brattstrom and Bachmann (2018, as cited in Gerdes et al., 2020), are concerned, "in this situation trust moves to the more profound and personal level of trustworthiness as objectives become intertwined and the level of independence increases, partners have to be trusted not to threaten each other's interests". In a collaboration, team members aim at transforming information and practice, they need to perform complementary agency. They need to be connected and be available at more personal status (Gerdes et al., 2020).

As has been previously mentioned one of the complexities in the school-parent collaboration in the power imbalance. Gerdes et al. (2020) state that the performance of responsibilities in collaboration relates closely to equality. Gerdes et al. (2020) continue to say that in school-parent collaboration, equality cannot be taken for granted. One of the parents in this study expressed his experience of inequality from his son's school by saying "It is not like I have a say in it (...). It is them who dictate, it is them who decide". What this parent is saying signifies an imbalance of power. It is, therefore, critical that all members of the in group (members of the collaboration group) embrace the concept of condition and its various levels (Barker et al., 2016). These levels are: equal access to resources, expertise recognition, expertise and authority acknowledgement. It is mainly the task of the school to organise workshops where complexities and interventions are discussed. Teachers should be capacitated on these equality concepts and their various levels to minimise challenges related to power imbalance as these might cause parents to withdraw from the collaboration.

Involving parents in their children's education is done with the purpose of benefiting learners academically and socially (Mbatha, 2018). This study focuses on parental involvement in dealing with school violence. When learners become violent at school, teachers do not have a way to control them. Mngomezulu (2020) states that secondary school teachers confirm that they have a problem in dealing with unruly learners. Literature reveals that planned and effective involvement of parents decreases deviant behaviour, enhances school climate, and increases academic achievement (Caridade et al., 2020; Myende & Nhlumayo, 2020; Naite, 2021). Families are the first institution to educate learners, especially about social skills and therefore, parents know their children better than teachers. It is, therefore, significant that both parents and teachers work as a team in developing learners academically and socially. I believe that if one party lacks, gaps are created in the life of a learner. For example, if the parent lacks, the child is not motivated since parents do not show interest in him and what he is doing and that may result in a change of behaviour on the child's side. On the other hand, if the teacher lacks, the academic part of the child's development suffers (Naite, 2021). Communication is core in parent-teacher collaboration. Communication between the two parties should embrace trust and respect. Parents will only feel free to participate in the partnership if they feel that they are trusted and respected by teachers (Edsource, 2019). Schools should have a clear policy on communication (Sheldoh, 2011). This policy should be given to parents as an indication that the school welcomes their ideas, questions, input and any constructive suggestions. The following strategies are to ensure strengthened goal oriented and successful school-parent

collaboration: scheduling meetings, communication, workshopping parents, parents-teachers conferences, parenting and principal's visibility to the school community. Intervention strategies should be context based.

2.9.1 Scheduling meetings

Meetings allow for engagement on different issues affecting learners (Mbatha, 2018). Parents get an opportunity to seek clarity on issues they do not understand as well as sponsor ideas and solutions where there are challenges. The atmosphere during these meetings should be calm, friendly and highly welcoming as parents may be passive if the atmosphere is tense or intimidating (Mbatha, 2018). The language of communication should be that which parents understand well so that discussed issues are well understood and well implemented (Mncube, 2010). Convenient days and times should be discussed and agreed upon by both parties, especially parents so that these do not become barriers to attending meetings. Mutual respect is very important for hospitable relationships.

2.9.2 Communication

Communication is the most basic requirement of school-parent collaboration (Govender, 2021). Nothing starts or moves without communication (Govender, 2021). This implies that the lines of communication between parents and the school must always be open, healthy and friendly. The school must always inform parents about school activities and developments. Platforms such as reports, memos, newsletters, events, flyers, letters, notices, social networks and one on one meetings may be used for the establishment of a two-way communication. A study conducted by Ntuli (2017) reveals that communication is the most important and impactful strategy for successful collaborations. School goals cannot be realised through a single person isolating other members and therefore healthy communication is a pre-requisite for goal accomplishment in schools. According to Epstein (1995, as cited in Govender, 2021) communication is a critical element in developing reliant and lasting relationships. Govender (2021) postulates that parents should constantly receive updates from schools concerning the development of their children. Govender (2021) continues to say that schools should ensure that parents are involved in every step taken by the school concerning their children's academic and behavioural issues. It is my opinion that this will cause parents to own their children's education and suggest further strategies to sustain their relationship with schools.

Parents may end up referring other parents to enrol their children in their school due to cooperation, professionalism, trust and the respect they enjoy from their partnership with teachers.

2.9.3 Workshopping parents

Selolo (2018) submits that policy makers and schools as implementers should focus on initiatives that develop the whole child, that is, academically, socially and emotionally. For these initiatives to be successful, schools need to have training teams. The team in a school will be responsible for all trainings that concern parents. The training team needs to be well capacitated through the principal employing the services of the district officials (teacher development, governance and curriculum sub-directorates). The Department of Basic Education (2001) states that schools should develop a three-year plan for parental involvement and schools must select teachers responsible for promoting parental involvement. The selected teachers will form the team alluded to above which will organise workshops to train parents on how to be involved in their children's education. The same team must be well capacitated about SASA (RSA, 1996a) specifically, the sections that have to do with admission of learners, language of instruction at school, establishment of the SGB and its roles and responsibilities and developing a learner code of conduct. After the development of a learner code of conduct, this team should take it to groups of parents to discuss and allow parents who were not part of its establishment to have input before the SGB takes the code of conduct to a parents' meeting for approval. Parents will, therefore, be able to understand and will have contributed to the development of the learner code of conduct as legislation mandates, before they approve it. This will be a good start in disciplinary matters as parents are involved in the first step of managing learner discipline, which is the development of a national disciplinary policy (learner code of conduct) in schools. In many schools, teachers, parents and learners deny having seen or signed a learner code of conduct (Dube, 2020) which makes it difficult for both the learners and the parents to accept corrective measures imposed on a child after transgressing. If the school is big, for example, and if it has more than fifteen (15) teachers, two training teams may be identified so that one may focus on curriculum issues and the other on school climate issues (having to do with learner discipline, school safety and violence). These teams are not to interfere with duties of legislated committees and sub-committees at school as they will only be training teams (DBE, 2001). In my opinion, these teams, especially the one dealing with school climate issues can be warmly welcomed by parents if the school may offer them the opportunity to identify one or two parents to be part of the training team. The requirements or qualities of such parents should be explicitly presented so

that relevant people are identified. This identification can be done through the SGB or through a parents meeting. Teams should, therefore, develop plans so that no team members will be inconvenienced by short notices, especially parents if teams include them (DBE, 2001). Reports on disciplinary issues and all violence related matters should be made available to the school climate training team so that the team can be empowered to come up with preventive and countering measures together with parents (DBE, 2001).

2.9.4 Parent-teacher conferences

At least one parent-teacher conference per school calendar year may further strengthen the closeness and working partnership between parents and schools. A parent-teacher conference is not a general or normal meeting. In this gathering, reports need to be tabled by the school, for example, on curriculum related activities and learner attainment, on issues on learner behaviour including late coming, absenteeism as well as suspension and expulsion cases, if any are in progress. Any suspected or foreseen threats that might negatively affect the functionality of the school must be brought forward for the conference to discuss and resolve. Resolutions taken in this conference must have time frames and responsible people to execute them (Mbatha, 2018). Both teachers and parents must be active. Schools must remember anything that makes changes in parents' lives will encourage them to be active participants and develop more trust and respect for their children's school, for example, the school must organise some personal development sessions for parents like parental skills, surviving as a single parent, gardening skills, establishing a cooperative businesses and other skills that might make a difference in the lives of learners' families (Mbatha, 2018). These sessions can be done through sister governmental departments without the school paying a cent. Sometimes a session might form part of the conference agenda, if possible or be done as a stand-alone programme.

2.9.5 Proper parenting

Parenting skills can be improved by schools through sharing information about the child. Schools can help parents through the provision of sufficient support for learners by holding meetings, training and assisting in the creation of a favourable environment at home (Newman et al., 2019). The school should give parents information about its activities as schools can develop greater understanding of the home environment and learning conditions if parents are engaged in their

children's education (Walker, 2017). Again, Newman et al. (2019) describe parenting strategies in their study as the school assisting and providing support to the families by setting good home conditions that support children, understand children and adolescent development. When parents are updated by schools about their children, they become curious and assume their positions as parents of children (Ali, 2019; Walker, 2017).

2.9.6 Principal's visibility to the school community

The likelihood of parents becoming involved in school activities is when they feel that they are welcomed at school (Anicama et al., 2018). This feeling can be caused by the visibility of the principal or school personnel. When parents feel that they are not welcomed or they are threatened by the school staff, they may not wish to be part of the activities of that school (Anicama et al., 2018). Principals must set aside times in the morning and afternoon and allow parents to come and see them. This will help decrease the feeling of being unwelcome (Lawson, 2018). Relationships and trust are built by being visible, and as a result parents get used to the principal and trust between them and the school develops (Quintanilla, 2024). The principal must make sure that he/she attends events on school or off school premises to allow the community to approach him/her. Principals have a duty to ensure that parents know that they are important in the education of their children (Quintanilla, 2024). On the other hand, parents will appreciate that the principal and the school values them. This will lead to closeness and sharing of information needed by each side in a team spirit.

2. 10 Conclusion

This chapter presented a review of scholarship about school violence and parental involvement. Through reviewing scholarship in this chapter, I have corroborated that school violence is a global challenge. However, literature reviewed in this chapter highlights the fact that parental involvement is significant for improved academic and social development of learners. Caridade et al. (2020) postulate that once the school climate becomes positive, learners' academic achievement improves and learner deviant behaviour decreases. It is clear though that there are still challenges in the implementation of school-parent collaboration. In many cases schools do not regard parents as fit to deal with education matters and in other schools parents are traditionally involved, that is, attending meetings as invited, helping with homework, coming to school to check learners' work,

collecting reports and paying school fees where schools belong to quintiles four and five, that is, fee paying schools according to SASA (RSA, 1996b). In such schools, parents are never offered an opportunity to be part of decision making and to be involved in each step of their children's education. This situation probably results in uncontrolled learner indiscipline which in most cases lead to violence. This study will therefore generate data from those schools which involve parents in the education and socialisation of their children to get lessons to be shared with more schools to enable them to start collaborating with parents concerning the academic and social life of their children. Scholarship has revealed that the South African context is similar to some of the Sub-Saharan African countries. This chapter has comprehensively discussed these issues. The next chapter focuses on the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE AND COMPLEXITIES OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION TO REDUCE SCHOOL VIOLENCE: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Literature and related repeated debates on the collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence were put forward in the preceding chapter. Even though each country has its own context accounts on this topic point at the indispensability of the collaboration between schools and parents to maintain discipline of learners in secondary schools (Mbigi, 1997; Msila, 2008). Chapter Two also indicated through various scholars that school violence cannot be reduced by schools alone (Chikwature et al., 2016; Dube, 2020; Mncube & Steynmann, 2014; Ngidi, 2018). Schools and parents need to complement one another in harmonious relationships in different approaches (Sheridan, 2016). For me to be able to make well informed conclusions about non-formal observations and empirical data that has been generated, I chose a theoretical framework that is appropriate to this study. The framework is made up of two theories. A discussion about invitational leadership and social capital theories is presented in this chapter. This discussion will begin with invitational leadership theory and will be followed by social capital theory, as well as the integration of the two theories to give guidance to the analysis of the study.

3.2 Conceptions of a theoretical framework

Some scholars including Grant (2014); Varpio et al. (2020); Osanloo, (2014) and Kivunja (2018) have emphasised the ability of theory to give the researcher a clear direction and to go beyond suspicion to a solidified foundation to understand and conceptualise the topic within the context of the study. This is possible because a theory is perceived as a generalised statement of ideas that explain, assert or predict the relationship or connections between the phenomena within the limits of critical bounding assumptions (Kivunga, 2018). A theory is developed by experts in a particular field after engaging in empirical research using a grounded theory methodology (Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Kivunja, 2018). It is then used by scholars to frame their research studies.

As far as Imenda (2014) is concerned, a framework in research is a structure that provides guidance as the study's research questions are prepared, data generation methods are chosen and data analysis

is planned. Imenda (2014) further stresses that once data has been generated and analysed, the framework will then be utilised as a mirror to check on the consistencies, inconsistencies and disparities between the former and the findings. Considering these points, I can say that the framework is like the yard stick that is used by researchers to compare the generated research data with the former. In this case two theories, which are Invitational leadership theory by Purkey and Novak (1984) and Social capital theory by Putnam (1995) were consolidated to guide this study.

3.3 Invitational Leadership Theory

The main proponents or champions of this theory are Purkey and Novak (1984). According to Purkey and Novak (1984), the aim of Invitational Leadership theory is to invite all stakeholders with interest to come and succeed. This ‘inviting’ has to do with giving constructive messages to stakeholders making them feel important and of value, capable, responsible and useful. The second aim of Invitational Leadership theory, according to Purkey and Novak (1984), is to deliberately develop collaborative and harmonious cultures in schools with a focal point on human relations, human evolution and development. Curry (2009) and Steyn (2001) support the above aim by Purkey and Novak (1984) when they say that Invitational Leadership theory is a theory of attitudes (philosophy) and actions deliberately building a positive climate at school. According to Eagley and Jones (No year), Invitational Leadership theory is different from other leadership theories that stress the utilisation of power in the process of influencing others. Invitational leadership encourages collaboration and respect for individuals involved in the collaboration. Inviting practices done by the school principal enhances the school climate (Asbill, 1984; Purkey & Siegel, 2008; Schmidt, 2007; Smith, 2015).

3.3.1 The evolution of Invitational Leadership Theory

William Watson Purkey introduced the ideas of Invitational Leadership theory. Betty Siegel, former President of Kennesaw State University made contributions, as did two Professors, John Michael Novak and Peter Wong, both co-founders with Purkey at the (IAIE) which is the International Alliance for Invitational Education (Egley, 2003). Purkey was employed at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro as Professor Emeritus and he had many publications on school improvement. John Novak and Peter Wong were members of the faculty in the same university, and they also contributed to the development of Invitational Leadership theory (Egley, 2003).

In 1968, two young Professors from the University of Florida applied for funding to conduct workshops for teachers on invitational education. The funding was received for one summer from Noyes Foundation of New York (Egley, 2003). The workshop was highly successful in such a way that funding was continued for the next eight years. Invitational education began to emerge during the eighth summer workshop where more than 300 teachers were in attendance. They, together with Dr Siegel and Dr Purkey wrestled with Invitation theory and made great contributions to what became familiar as Invitational education. As has been mentioned, many people made contributions to the theory but this study will be based on the Invitational Leadership theory of Purkey and Novak (1984).

Purkey and Novak (1984) define leadership as the capability to influence a group of people to harmoniously work together to achieve set goals. This is supported by Northouse (2010) who also defines leadership as a process of influence by one person on a group of individuals to achieve a particular goal. I strongly agree with the fact that in leadership people are convinced or influenced by the leader's views or ideas; hence, the attitude of a leader is highly intentional. People, policies, programmes, practices and school environment are used by the leader to send messages to people and other institutions (Bhengu & Svosve, 2018). Leadership practices are not inflexible, they are adjustable and have to do with the capability to recognise what is efficient at a particular condition (Bhengu & Myende, 2016). In the condition of this exploration, focussing on the reduction of violence through the collaboration of schools and parents, invitational leadership became crucial and is used to close the gap between communities and schools (Bhengu & Myende, 2016). Communication is at the centre of invitational leadership; hence, Bath (1991) states that improved communication between teachers and parents is critical in the process of school climate improvement.

According to Purkey and Siegel (2003, p.1), when practised, invitational leadership takes care of the complete environment in an organisation. They continue to say, "As a theory put into practice, it is a powerful process of communicating caring and appropriate messages intended to summon forth the greatest human potential as well as for identifying and changing those forces that defeat and destroy potential". This is indeed a relevant theory to guide this study as the study is about collaboration of schools and parents which involves communication and respect for collaboration to sustain it. The school climate should mirror a sense of joy and contentment for learners, teachers

and parents (Strahan & Purkey, 1992). Invitational leadership is about invitational engagement by the school and the correlation between the school and parents (Purkey & Novak, 1984). This, therefore, means that the school takes the initiative and invites parents to be part of the collaboration for the academic and social development of their children. The positive correlation between the school and parents enhances the feelings of trust, respect and satisfaction and impacts positively on school climate through accomplishments and the behaviour of learners (Asbill & Gonzales, 2000). According to Asbill and Gonzales (2000), literature on leadership currently reflects a move from power-based styles of management, which are bureaucratic and controlling from the top, to human dignity respecting leadership styles that include collaboration in the process of decision making. Consistent with this new trend is invitational leadership. This consistency with current leadership trends gave support to the rationale as used in the framework of this study.

3.3.2. Invitational Leadership Domains

The focus of invitational leadership in education is on communication by people, places, policies, programmes and processes (Purkey, 2008). These are also called invitational domains, and these domains are outlined by Asbill and Gonzales (2000); Purkey and Novak (1984); Steyn (2010); and Steyn (2014) in the invitational leadership theory, as existing in all areas that have a contribution to prosperity and non-success of people's attempts. These domains are also known as Powerful Ps. The invitational domains develop a habitat for the individual's existence. Each domain is outlined in the table below.

People	Places	Policies	Programmes	Process
Staff (both teaching and non teaching)	Physical attributes of the classroom and school	Written and unwritten rules regarding procedures. This includes policies on grading and discipline	Curriculum and content for learners. This includes programme of wellness and parent participation.	Examines how the other four Ps are conducted

Table 1: Outline of Powerful Ps

3.3.3 Invitational Leadership Fundamental Concepts

Purkey and Novak (1996) identified three fundamental concepts on which invitational leadership is based. These concepts are democratic ethos, perceptual tradition and self-concept. The democratic ethos is about a shared life dominated by dialogues and respect. This concept promotes collaboration as it implies that decision making should be shared by all affected by it (decision). The perceptual tradition implies that people, through their cultures have their way of perceiving events. The invitational approach focusses on understanding people's perception so that they can be accommodated in working towards common purposes. Self-concept is about personal belief, that is, how people understand themselves and their spaces. Through invitational leadership people (teachers and parents) can reach their full capacity through collaboration.

3.3.4 Invitational leadership core values/principles

The road for invitation to manifest in the school can be paved by including and embracing the core values of invitational leadership theory (Purkey & Novak, 1984). Asbill and Gonzales (2000); Purkey and Siegel (2003); Schmidt (2007); and Smith and Hunter (2007) are in agreement with Purkey and Novak (1984) as they postulate that respect, trust, optimism and intentionality as core values of invitational leadership should be in existence in all schools and must be appreciated and practised by all teachers as well as extended to parents as this forms the baseline of teacher-parent relationships.

3.3.4.1 Respect

The principle of respect in invitational leadership theory implies that people should be valued, treated with dignity and responsibility (Purkey & Novak, 1984). Respect is important in invitational leadership as it involves mobilising people to move towards the creative, productive and democratic routes without being forced (Purkey & Novak, 1984). In agreement with Purkey and Novak (1984), Waterman and Peters (1988) state that respect is one of the eight indispensable attributes that identify excellent companies. Respect, therefore, is key in the collaboration of teachers and parents in reducing school violence. Respect is important in invitational leadership. It causes leaders to

approach their colleagues and stakeholders respectfully thus influencing them positively and at the end welcoming them into a mutually beneficial relationship.

3.3.4.2 Trust

The principle of trust is built on the assumption that leadership is both a participative and cooperative activity (Purkey & Novak, 1984). It refers to personal and professional aspects of being invitational, which is being personal and professional, first inviting themselves, and then inviting the others thus, exhibiting trust in them (Niemand et al., 2010). Teachers and parents should have faith in one another by showing unwavering trust in the ability of each other so that learners can achieve personal and academic success (Purkey & Novak, 1984). It is the responsibility of the school through its SMT and SGB to initiate the formation of the collaboration and show trust and readiness to accept parents when they accept the invitation. When parents feel they are trusted and considered valuable by the school they respond positively (Fretz, 2015; Purkey & Novak, 1986; Smith & Hunter, 2007).

3.3.4.3 Optimism

Optimism is one of the values of this theory, and it assumes that people possess underdeveloped potential in all domains of development (Purkey & Novak, 1984). The argument by Niemand et al. (2010) is that people who are regarded as valuable develop self-responsibility which further enhances their positive self-concept. This happens through leadership and guidance of others. With regard to leadership, this means that leaders, even of a school or community, attempt to elevate and guide people so that they reach their full potential. If leaders are welcomed and viewed positively by their mentors, they will do the same thing to other people and their environment (Purkey & Novak, 1984). As a result, school principals and teachers as invitational leaders are anticipated to have the determination to invite others for the realisation of human potential.

3.3.4.4 Intentionality

Thoughtfulness and intentionality should be part of all actions in the organisation (Yin, 2008). Intentionality is the paramount factor of all contributory factors for the development of invitational environments (Purkey & Novak, 1984). For the development of an invitational environment, teachers need to be conscious about the school as “Invitational education is not an accidental

incident” (Steyn, 2007, p. 265). In order to facilitate inviting environments forming, intentionality should be at the base of the powerful Ps. The development of an invitational environment requires the implementation of these intentional practices for people, places, policies, programs and processes of the school (Purkey & Novak, 1984). The factors of people, places, policies, programmes and processes must be conducive for an environment where people are socially, physically, psychologically and spiritually developed to have an inviting attribute (Fretz, 2015; Niemand et al., 2010; Yin, 2008). This makes all role players feel well received, embraced and taken care of. The inviting atmosphere of the environment is determined by people and other resources, and this atmosphere is affected by the community context, programmes and policies (King & Newman, 2001). People are indispensable portions of life and experience. Communication and the conduct of people develops a trusting, caring, courteous, optimistic, respectful and intentional environment (Smith & Hunter, 2007). The principal vehicle of the people’s domain is communication which can be inviting or disinviting.

Schools often face difficult challenges related to learners’ lack of discipline and these result in violence among learners in most cases (Dube, 2020). Dealing with these challenges becomes a problem if there is no trust and cooperation between teachers and parents. If school leaders do not have inviting qualities, schools find themselves without stakeholders in trying to create positive and healthy school climates (King & Newman, 2001). Invitational leaders effect positive and lasting change in an organisation because they invite all stakeholders to collaborate and cautiously implement decisions in a manner that leads to satisfactory end results (Schein, 2000). Purkey and Novak (1984) assert that teachers and parents should function from a harmonious approach of trust, respect, optimism and intentionality which are four pillars of invitational leadership theory.

3.3.5 Levels of invitation

The invitational leadership theory has four levels of invitation

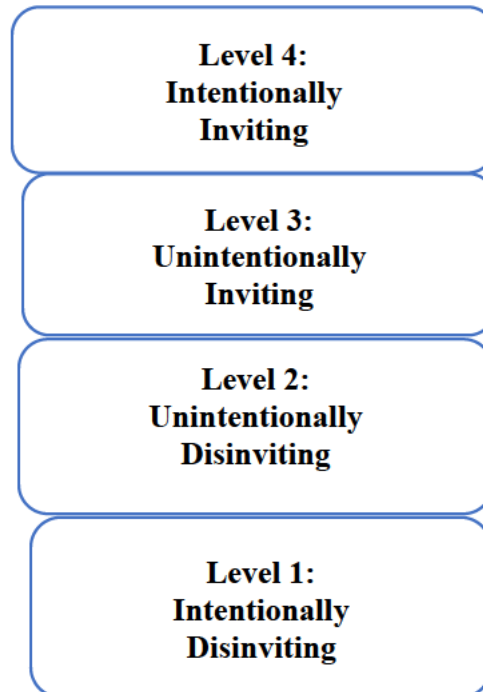


Figure 2: Levels of invitation (Smart, 2019)

3.3.5.1 Level One: Intentionally disinviting

When a school or any other environment is at its lowest level of functioning, it is intentionally disinviting (Smart, 2019). All the powerful Ps in this level are seen as intentionally daunting, demeaning and demolishing (Purkey & Novak, 2015). Intentionally disinviting may be due to a deliberate insulting person in the institution, deliberate unjust policy, a deliberate people diminishing programme or an environment left unappealing, unpleasant and harmful (Purkey & Novak, 2015). Messages that are intentionally disinviting are conveyed infuriatedly or in annoyance although no justification can be given for that (Purkey & Novak, 1984).

3.3.5.2 Level Two: Unintentionally disinviting

Unintentionally disinviting staff members can be identified by inconsiderate, narrow minded and patronising conduct (Purkey & Novak, 1984). Unintentionally disinviting teaching can be distinguished by lack of enthusiasm and mercilessness (Purkey & Novak, 1984). The absence of

directing theory, despite the fact that it is not deliberate, results in an unintentionally disinviting environment (Purkey, 1991). Teachers have a very important impact on the learning territory, if their conduct seen as disrespectful by learners, is gender prejudiced, discriminatory, humiliating or careless it is probably going to be perceived as disinviting despite the good original objectives the teacher might have had (Purkey & Novak, 1984).

3.3.5.3 Level Three: Unintentionally inviting

Environments with teachers who are used to successful strategies but have no knowledge of how these strategies work or how to consistently maintain them become unintentionally inviting (Purkey, 1992). The effective functioning of unintentionally inviting environments is by chance and no explanation for its effective functioning can be given by teachers (Purkey & Novak, 1984). There is a lack of wilfulness in these environments and no intentional plan in developing them (Haig, 2011). The conduct of teachers on this level makes stakeholders feel invited even though they are not aware of the dynamics associated with this (Purkey & Novak, 1984). The absence of intentionality and understanding in successful inviting tactics constitutes a challenge in developing an environment that is consistently inviting. The problem is when this inviting posture stops functioning, no one is able to correct it and to start anew (Purkey & Novak, 1984).

3.3.5.4 Level Four: Intentionally inviting

“Intentionally inviting environments are described as optimistic, respectful and trustworthy as well as empowering, engaging and energizing” (Purkey, 1992, p. 18). The creation of a successful intentionally inviting environment is based on thoughtfulness and consistency of teachers in their actions (Purkey & Novak, 1984). Participants in these environments are positively engaged, free and charged with credence (Haigh, 2011). Intentionality is a significant component when developing an environment that is inviting. It is through “The powerful Ps” that an intentionally inviting environment can be realised. In the best inviting environment, the elements of people, places, policies, programmes and processes must be deliberately welcoming to develop a conducive environment for physical, intellectual and emotional growth of learners (Purkey, 1991). Knowledgeable and proficient invitational teachers may appear to develop inviting environments flawlessly, but it is the output of significant and sustained endeavour. “The invitational leadership theory is a method of practice for communicating, caring and meaningful environment to facilitate

individuals to achieve their full potential as well as a means to identify and address forces which prevent individuals from reaching their full potential (Smith & Hunter, 2007, p. 47)".

3.3.6 Descriptions of inviting communication

Below is the inviting communication table borrowed from Purkey and Novak (1984).

Valuable	Able	Responsible
Teachers at my son's school have changed, they treat us parents as if we are part of them now.	The principal said he trusts me as he can see that I am able to cooperate with the school as far as the education of my son is concerned.	The school social worker asked me to draw the time table for my son's involvement in home chores so that he can get enough time to do school work.
The principal cared enough to invite people to workshop us as parents about proper parenting.	The principal thanked us as parents for the positive change brought by our collaboration with the school.	At the parents meeting we were asked to go and discuss the importance of emotional intelligence with our children.
I was not aware that the principal know my surname and the name of my child.	My son's teacher said I was a good parent because my son's behaviour is very good.	I was asked by the school to share with other parents in parents' meeting how I help my children to behave as good as they do

Table 2: Inviting communication

Positive interactions can cause the environment to be invitational whilst negative interactions can leave parents with the feeling of being valueless, powerless, reckless, humiliated, disappointed and incompetent (Purkey & Novak, 1984).

3.3.7 Descriptions of disinviting communication

Disinviting communication is highlighted in the table below.

Worthlessness	Unable	Irresponsibility
My son's teacher told me that I was the worst parent she ever came across.	My principal showed me to the circuit manager as an example of irresponsible parent	The principal said whenever I am present in the parents' meetings, I want to cause trouble.
When my son's teacher saw me at school, she said to other teachers "I wonder what nonsense he is coming to say today"	The principal said to me in front of other parents "I don't think you can be so irresponsible"	When I went to school to complain about harsh punishment given to my son, the principal said he cannot count on me for anything important.
One teacher said to me "God made a mistake by giving you a child"	The teacher asked me if I have enough sense to see what is wrong in my child's behaviour.	The principal asked me why I bother coming to parents' meetings because I have nothing to contribute.

Table 3: Disinviting communication

The attitude of parents towards school is related to self-perceptions as well as the environment and messages of communication received by parents influence these perceptions (Purkey & Novak, 1984). This kind of communication is important for school leaders to be aware of because they will influence the decision of parents in terms of whether they want to participate in the schools' activities or not.

3.3.8 Justification for selecting invitational leadership theory as part of a framework in this study: School-parent collaboration in reducing school violence

Practically maintaining learner discipline in schools and ensuring that the learning environment is free from any form of violence is a big problem, especially when those who are supposed to take care of it do it in isolation (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). Strategic leaders in schools recognise the necessity of teachers and parents working as a team for the improvement of learner behaviour and academic success (Yulianti et al., 2020). Principals can directly reach out to parents as encouragement for their involvement or invite them through teachers. For an example, school leadership can ask parents to attend an event like "Tea with the Principal" where strong, comprehensive and harmonious communication can be made to parents, teachers and families

concerning the principal's belief that the school is powerful when teachers and parents team up (Heinrichs, 2018). The first thing that school leaders need to do is to professionally develop their staff using programmes that seek to understand the staff's beliefs and suppositions about learners and their families and to vanquish all complexities to parental involvement (Heinrichs, 2018; Marshal & Shah, 2016).

In their study, "School efforts to promote parental involvement: the contributions of school leaders and teachers" Yulianti et al. (2020) found as major weakness that all schools had no written policies on parental involvement, starting from the invitation level. Parental involvement literature suggests that there must be written policies on encouraging parents to take part in the education of their children as well as how should they be involved (Hornby & Witter et al., 2010). According to Friedland (1999); Novak and Purkey (2001); and Purkey and Aspy (2003), invitational leadership is a theory of application aimed at creating and maintaining a compassionate school condition that deliberately and sociably invites stakeholders (teachers and parents in this case) to realise their proportionate limitless potential in all areas of valuable human actions. "Its purpose is to make schooling a more exciting, satisfying, and enriching experience for everybody involved in the education process" (Purkey & Aspy, 2003, p. 147). In the current situation where schools face violence challenges, the invitational leadership principles are to a greater extent more pertinent in assisting schools to reduce school violence thus making an input into a constructive and invaluable society.

3.4 Social Capital Theory

There are many theorists who contributed to the introduction and refinement of Social Capital theory. Some of these theorists are Hanifan (1916); Bourdieu (1986); Coleman (1988); Putnam (1995); Hilado et al. (2013) and Jeynes (2018). For this study, I chose the Social Capital theory of Putnam (1995) as part of the theoretical framework. According to Putnam (1995), social capital refers to "features of social organisations" such as information, resources or shared values allowing different people to work together as a group to successfully realise a common goal. Schools, families and communities are some of these organisations in this case. This idea also describes the ability of members in society to work together harmoniously (Putnam 1995). In support of Putnam (1995), Claridge (2018) states that different things that we want or need may not be produced or made available by us as individuals but may need joint efforts for them to be available. The gains that we

get from joining our efforts could be called social capital. Social capital is about consideration of other people and being generous as well as acting collectively. According to different researchers' definitions, this is a theory with an objective that claims that working together as collaborators or partners gives positive results for the individual, group or community (Bourdieu, 1996; Coleman, 1982; Hilado et al., 2013; Jeynes, 2018). As a result, if the school partners with parents, that helps parents to be aware of what the school is expecting and this results in school-community cohesion whereby parents form collaborative teams among themselves and also partner with the school for the improvement of the school climate.

3.4.1 Aims of Social Capital theory

Social Capital theory aims at enabling the collective of people to effectively work collaboratively towards realising a set objective (Putnam, 1995). It enables organisations such as schools, families and communities to function collaboratively through sharing trust, information, resources and values. Members of the organisation benefit by accessing social resources ingrained in the network of social capital (Bourdieu, 1996; Florin et al., 2003; Putnam, 1995). Secondly the theory aims to comprehend how the outcomes of individuals' work and society are impacted by networks and social connections. Outcomes may incorporate economic, health, education and community engagement favourable results (Claridge, 2018; Putnam, 1995).

3.4.2 Evolution of Social Capital theory

According to Claridge (2004), Social Capital Theory has four evolutionary cycles. These cycles are, Pre-term Foundation (17th and early 20th century), Early use of the Term (early 20th century – early 1980s), Early conceptual Development (early 1980s – early 1990s) and Popular use (early 1990s – current).

3.4.2.1 Pre-Term foundation (17th – early 20th century)

This period was before the emergence of the expression 'social capital' but the central ideas of social associations were deliberated about in politics and sociology (Claridge, 2004).

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3.4.2.2 Early use of the Term (early 20th century – early 1980s)

The term ‘social capital’ began to be used occasionally. Claridge (2018) states that many scholars agree with the fact that Hanifan (1916) was the first scholar to use the term ‘social capital’. Woolcock and Nayaran (2000) explain in detail about Hanifan’s (2016) work saying that the term was utilised to give an explanation of the importance of stakeholder participation in improving the performance of the school. Woolcock and Nayaran (2000, p. 26) state: If an individual comes into contact with his neighbour, and they with other neighbours, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community.

3.4.2.3 Early conceptual Development (early 1980s – early 1990s)

This is when scholars like Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1995) made the concept popular by highlighting social capital’s functions, outcomes and the importance of social participation, trust and values in fostering social capital.

3.4.2.4 Popular use (early 1990s – current)

The term ‘social capital’ acquired substantial traction and extended across different disciplines of social science . “The modern development of the concept came from three key authors, Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam with many other authors contributing to the current multidisciplinary theory” (Szreter, 2000, p. 8).

3.4.3 Types of social capital

Putnam (1995) states that social capital has three types, and these are bonding, bridging and linking.

3.4.3.1 Bonding as social capital

According to Putnam (1995), bonding takes place between people who are in the same social group with cordial, on-going and strong networks. This can be the case with teachers from the same school or sometimes members of the same family, a soccer club or a political organisation. These people

strengthen their social relationships. Sharing similar views to Putnam's (1995), Gittel and Vidal (1998) state that bonding means the relationship among people who are in the same group, having common values and history. Putnam (1995) calls these groups 'homogenous social groups'. In this case people in the group know each other and already have existing relationships.

3.4.3.2 Bridging as social capital

According to Putnam (1995), bridging is social capital that takes place between different social groups. These different groups are called 'heterogenous groups' meaning groups of people with different characteristics or senses of unity (Putnam, 1995). When these groups connect, people within them get a chance to connect with new people which increase or expands their social capital. Bridging also enhance the relationship of the connected groups and influences them to focus on a common objective. Bourdieu (1986); Claridge (2018); Coleman, (1988) share similar views as Putnam (1995) does on the enhancement of the group's relationship and influence to focus on a common realisation. Bridging social capital is on the same wavelength with school-parent collaboration as both parties (teachers and parents) are from diverse social settings but come together for a common cause which is guiding and developing children to contribute to the reduction of violence in schools.

Dube (2020) states that school violence is not a one man show, meaning a school cannot go it alone in reducing school violence and Putnam (1995) states "bridging networks are good for linking to external assets and for information diffusion for the purpose of getting ahead of the status quo". By bridging networks in this case, Putnam (1995) refers to connections between parents and teachers sharing trust, information and resources whilst external assets refer to both teachers and parents where teachers perceive parents as external before collaboration and also parents perceive teachers as external before collaboration and together they want to get ahead of the status quo which is violent occurrences in schools.

3.4.3.3 Linking as social capital

Putnam (1995) explains linking social capital as hierarchical or power-based relationships where people are at different levels or statuses. When an individual, or community members interact with government officials social capital is generated (Putnam, 1995). Aldrich (2012) agrees with Putnam

(1995) when he argues that for things to be done, individuals or communities must interact with people in government. In his book titled 'Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community', Putnam (1995) blames the decline of American social capital on individualisation, technology and modern family structures. In this book he states that Americans spend most of their time as individuals and no longer take part in community affairs like they did before, meaning they have given less to community affairs. Another American political scientist, Fukuyama (2001), postulates that social capital is a necessary institution for the harmonious existence of group members and their wellbeing. The teaming up of parents and teachers causes parents to be more involved and up to date about plans of the school concerning the child's academic outlook and achievement. As a result, this social collaboration has mutuality as there is a sharing of parents' expectations about their children with teachers (David & Rizk, 2018).

3.5 Social Capital theory concepts

The Social Capital theory is made up of three concepts which are networks of relationship, trust and resources or benefits (Putnam, 1995).

3.5.1 Networks of relationship

Putnam (1995) gives prominence to the significance of social interrelations and discretionary relationships as the base for social capital. Putnam (1995) further states that social capital is a broad term that encompasses the values and networks facilitating collaborative actions for mutual benefits. Other scholars share the same sentiments with Putnam (1995) when they postulate that social relations have the potential to facilitate accrual of economic and non-economic benefits to the individuals and on the other end, social capital can be seen to reside in the relations and not in the individuals themselves (Aldrich, 2012; Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Fukuyama, 2001). This can be seen when the school has a strong relationship with parents of learners and the behaviour, and academic performance of learners changes to be better because of collective efforts by teachers and parents.

3.5.2 Trust

Putnam (1995) postulates that Social Capital Theory is about collaboration of a collective to achieve a common objective. This cooperation can only be possible if there is trust among members of the collective. Putnam (1995) rests his argument on the fact that trust or trustworthiness is a significant part of social capital. Putnam (1995) continues to say that in any development or practice, trust is crucial, if there are no shared or common values, there can be no trust between people. Stephenson (2011) agrees with Putnam (1995) that the only glue which keeps networks working is trust and there should exist trust between collaboration members and between the coordinator and collaboration members for the process to be successful. Trust building is entrusted to the coordinator in collaboration. This suggests that without trust between teachers and parents, collaboration to reduce school violence will fail. The Principal or SMT as the coordinator of the collaboration should do all that is possible to make parents believe in the actions of teachers as I believe that once parents trust teachers, collaboration to reduce school violence will blossom.

3.5.3 Resources or benefits

According to Putnam (1995), resources or benefits of social capital are what members of the collective derive from the relationship or network. These are access to information, support, opportunities and trust. These benefits are very important for development, be it personal or professional development. The access to these benefits by members of the collective can result in powerful collaborations, communities and economies. Increased access to benefits of social capital eventually result in enhanced personal and group welfare (Adam & Ronsevic, 2003; Stephenson, 2011; Fukuyama, 2001).

3.5.4 Justification of selecting social capital theory for this study: school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence

Evidence shows the growing influence of the social attitudes and expectations of the learners' family background on learners' school development (Bernstein, 1975; Bloom, 1982; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Coleman, 1990; Davis, 1991; Lareau, 1987; Marjoribanks, 1979, Putnam, 1995). A proposal of different psychological and sociological models has been made to describe the influence of school and home on the schooling of a child. Social capital has come out as a strong theory in explaining

the effect of school and home on the schooling of children as well as showing the significance of live school-family collaboration. Putnam (1995; 1999; 2001) and Coleman (1988) have been using social capital inclusively to indicate the available social resources to assist the educational development of children. Therefore, I feel very strongly that this study will benefit from employing social capital as part of its theoretical framework.

According to Coleman (1988), social capital is available in three social structure forms. Among the three, the most relevant to this study is the one that resides in the existence of closure of a social network between two or more adults who have some intensity of relationship with the child. It is present when only the adults can observe the child's actions in different circumstances, talk to each other about the child, compare notes and establish norms (Symeou, 2002). This is important because the association of teachers and parents, which is this study's focus, develops social capital, and this goes together with shared values both at school and at home and is strengthened by intersecting networks of other groups. When parents actively participate in the education of their children, the activated social capital indicates the affective or normative strength with which parents engage with conduct, which is a factor in their children's education and which favours superior educational outputs (Coleman, 1988, Putnam, 1995). The above discussion strongly justifies the choice of this theory to be part of a theoretical framework guiding this study.

The purpose of the two theories (invitational leadership theory and social capital theory) is to offer the base and lens that will assist in comprehending, explaining and interpreting school-parent collaboration to reduce school violence. In this study's context, the SGBs, school principals and teachers can invite parents and other stakeholders so that they can know their individual and collective potentials in reducing school violence (Purkey & Novak, 1984). This starts with the principal instilling an invitational culture in the school whereby staff members are workshopped on invitational education. This allows the staff to plan and engage in intentional inviting activities and at the same time be aware of disinviting activities and communication. Once the environment is inviting, parents develop trust and respect for teachers as the school climate transforms from negative to positive, meaning a decrease in learner indiscipline or violence and an increase in good conduct and academic performance (Purkey & Novak, 1984). The aim of this study is to explore how school-parent collaboration assists in reducing school violence. For parents to collaborate with schools, the school climate must be invitational or positive for them to do that. The positivity of the school climate will be signified by school leadership inviting parents to be their partners (Purkey & Novak,

1984). The school principal can do the invitation directly or make use of teachers, but this invitation must be supported by the school environment that is also inviting. Once parents have been invited and have accepted the invitation, social capital takes over to develop the relationship between the two parties, as for any development of relationship that provides social support, social capital is critical as it eventually creates co-operation, participation and positive involvement for families, educational systems and the society at large (Putnam, 1995; 2001).

The theoretical framework in this study is related to the aim of the study and its research questions in the sense that the theoretical framework is centred around interconnectedness or partnership which is characterised by values that assist in building trust among other things and leads to the realisation of team members' potential contributing to successful management of learner discipline. The outcome of this study will be influenced by the nature and extent of this interconnectedness or relationship between parents and teachers. Therefore, the manner in which School-parent collaboration assists in reducing school violence will mainly depend on the nature of association between parents and teachers.

3.6 Integration of the two theories

The purpose of the two theories is to purposefully encourage inclusivity of all stakeholders and elevate the community and people in the workplace (Purkey & Novak, 1996). In this study's context, SGBs, school principals and other SMT members can invite parents and other stakeholders so that they can know their individual and collective potentials in reducing school violence. The aim of this study is to explore how the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration reduce school violence, for parents to collaborate with schools, the school environment must be invitational or positive for them to do that. The positiveness of the school environment will be signified by the school leadership inviting parents to be their partners. Once parents have been invited and accepted the invitation, the social capital takes over to develop the relationship between the two parties as for any development of relationship that provides social support, social capital is critical as it eventually creates co-operation, participation and positive involvement for families, educational systems and the society at large (Putnam, 2001).

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is characterised by values that assist in building trust among other things, and leads to the realisation of team members' potential in contributing to the successful management of learner discipline. The role and complexities of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence will be influenced by the nature and extent of this interconnectedness or relationships between parents and teachers. Therefore, the manner in which the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration succeed in reducing school violence will mainly depend on the nature of association between parents and teachers.

3.7 Conclusion

In concluding this section, I summarise my argument of the selected two theories for this study. The consolidative proposal of these theories gives the opportunity to investigate the possible interrelation and alliance between disciplined schools under the leadership of SGBs, principals and teachers, working with parents. Invitational leadership theory offers several values which can be practised by parents and teachers when trying to effect learner discipline. At the centre of this integration of theories is the ingrained firmness of collaboration as social capital theory, but is also about social ties or interconnectedness of parents and teachers and this interconnectedness must be characterised by high levels of trust for it to be beneficial. Its benefits are transferred to learners through the management of their conduct. This suggest that these theories augment as well as overlap each other. The role of parents and teachers can be meaningfully explored within the integrated framework of invitational leadership theory and social capital theory. This association must be dominated by trust which is a common value in both theories and this trust will lead to a positive process, towards a positive product and eventually there will be a positive change in schools.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Two theories underpinning the study were discussed in the previous chapter. The research design and methodological preferences for this qualitative multiple-case study that were adopted to explore how the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence are discussed in this chapter. In my presentation, I will firstly explain my comprehension of and justification for the chosen research paradigm, research design, research methodology, sampling research participants, choice of research sites and participants, issues around accessing research sites, data generation methods, data analysis method, trust worthiness issues, ethical considerations as well as the limitation of the study. The research paradigm, research design and research methodology were all considered appropriate for this study.

4.2 Research paradigm

It is important that a researcher locates his/her study in a specific research paradigm when conducting a study (Cohen et al., 2018). The significance of locating the study in a specific research paradigm is that the researcher can expect philosophical assumptions about the way the world works and the way knowledge is generated in the study (Bryman & Bell, 2019; Kuhn, 1970). Creswell and Creswell (2018) defines a paradigm as an approach to looking at the world and it is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action. Similarly, Mackenzie and Kipe (2006) and Denzin and Lincoln (2018) believe that a paradigm is a foundational set of beliefs that give guidance to research. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) concur when they define a paradigm as the way the researcher sees the social world he/she lives in and wants to live in, as well as his/her interpretations and actions within that particular world. Currently, literature on research methodology (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Rule & John, 2022) seems to agree that there are four paradigms/world views in research. As a result, a theoretical inclination of research can be categorised under various paradigms like positivist, pragmatic, interpretivist, and critical. Each of these paradigms has its own assumptions and differences (Cohen et al., 2011). The paradigm of my choice is discussed hereunder.

4.2.1 Interpretivist paradigm

The interpretive research paradigm holds the view that reality is constructed by individuals, and therefore, the focus should be on the personal interpretations and meanings that they attach to events (Cohen et al., 2018). It is clear that the other research paradigms captured in the preceding sections, are not relevant to this study as my study considers the prevalence of different realities. I adopted the interpretive research paradigm in this study, to clarify my position in relation to how knowledge is generated as philosophical assumptions (Cohen et al., 2018). I believe that the interpretivist paradigm is the right lens through which this investigation may be viewed and analysed. Taking account from various scholars, it is theoretically understood that the interpretivist paradigm allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants (Cohen et al., 2018). In seeking answers for this research, I used the experiences of the participants to construct and interpret my understanding of the generated data. Interpretivist researchers approach reality from subjects, typically from people who own their experiences and are of a particular group or culture (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Epistemologically, researchers in this paradigm maintain that this assumption is about theories of knowledge dealing with what and how we can understand or know the world (Gibson, 2017). Gibson (2017) continues to state that epistemological questions are: (a) what counts as knowledge? (b) how are knowledge claims justified? (c) what is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched? As far as Cohen et al. (2009) is concerned, epistemology is about the form and nature of knowledge.

Interpretivism has a subjective epistemology, meaning that I assembled evidence based on individual views. Interpretivist assumptions make knowledge known through the subjective experiences of people. It was important, therefore, that I conducted interviews in the field, where the participants lived and worked. These are important contexts for understanding what the participants are saying. In this manner I tried to minimise the distance of objective separateness (Guba & Lincoln, 1988) between myself and participants. This, therefore, means I made meaning of the data through my own thinking and cognitive processing, informed by my interactions with participants. Knowledge as to how school-parent collaboration assists in reducing school violence was constructed socially within the natural settings explored (Tracy, 2013). Ontological assumption relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics (Scotland, 2012). Researchers using an interpretivist paradigm embrace the idea of multiple realities.

Different researchers embrace different realities. Because of this I had an understanding that schools had various contextual truths even though they were situated in different communities. My ontological confidence was the prevalence of different truths that were influential to the development of these realities (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The expectation, therefore, was that participants would present various equally critical realities from various perspectives. Evidence of multiple realities includes the use of multiple forms of evidence and the actual words of individual participants in themes, presenting different perspectives. The ontological question is: (a) what is the nature of reality? The interpretivist paradigm has a relativist ontology meaning it has multiple realities or answers, and those realities can be explored and meaning made of them through human interaction between myself and research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this paradigm realities are socially constructed (Grobbler, 2018).

The interpretivist paradigm has a naturalist methodology. The purpose of interpretivist research is to understand peoples' experiences. These experiences can only be known by applying methodological processes. In this case naturalist methodology means that the paradigm generates data through data generation methods which are interviews and document review (Cohen et al., 2018). In this assumption I worked with details before generalising, described in detail the context of the study and continually revising or adding prompts to questions from experiences in the field.

The last philosophical assumption in this paradigm is axiology. In simple terms axiology focuses on what I value in the research as a researcher. I acknowledge that research is value laden and that biases are present. My values as a researcher affect how I conduct my research and what I value in my research findings. Alele and Malau-Aduli (2023) state that research is value bound, the researcher cannot be separated from what is being researched and therefore will be subjective. The outcomes of interpretivist study reflect the values or ethical standing of the researcher which is a balanced axiology (Cohen et al., 2018). My study explored how the role and complexities of school parent collaboration assists in reducing violence in secondary schools of King Cetshwayo District, and the use of an interpretivist paradigm provided a context that allowed me to examine what the participants in this study would say about their experiences and thereafter I would be able to make meaning of the data as is the case of this paradigm's epistemology.

4.3 Research design

It must be noted that sometimes researchers use main research methodological concepts differently. For an example, Creswell and Creswell (2009) use research design and research approach interchangeably when referring to qualitative, quantitative or mixed form of the two designs. Welman et al. (2005) refers to qualitative, quantitative and mixed form as methodologies. I tend to be closer to Creswell and Creswell (2009) as I believe that my approach is closer to design and for the purpose of this study I refer to qualitative research as a research design. According to Nguyen and Tran (2015), qualitative research often comes up with rich reports that are essential for interpretivists to understand their contexts. Therefore, this study sought to explore the qualitative experiences of parental collaboration in schools hence, I opted for the qualitative research design. Qualitative researchers make use of a qualitative design for data generation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As the analysis and findings of this inquiry were carried out by the use of words and not statistical means, a qualitative approach was a relevant and appropriate approach. “Qualitative research provides an in-depth, intricate and detailed understanding of meanings, actions, non-observable as well as observable phenomena, attitudes, intentions and behaviours and these are well served by naturalistic enquiries” (Gonzales et al., 2008, p. 3).

This design offers participants an opportunity to voice their perspectives and experiences about a particular phenomenon and this is what the interpretivist paradigm underpinning this study is concerned about (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). There are no right or wrong responses in qualitative inquiry, but the emphasis is on participants’ individual and subjective experiences. I was very careful in taking a qualitative research stance as I knew that it could result in some disadvantages. For example, Bryman and Bell (2019) state that qualitative research designs are highly subjective as they are over-dependent on the values and ideas of researchers. On top of this criticism, qualitative research designs are also known to be biased as the researcher decides on all processes, for example, who should be a participant, the study sample, what to observe and what to hear during interviews (by probing during questioning) (Bryman & Bell, 2019). In the centre of these criticisms is also the influence of the researcher on data generation and analysis. Mohajan (2018) also states that a lot of time is needed for data generation, analysis and interpretation in qualitative research designs. This can cause significant issues to be overlooked. The experience I gained when doing a qualitative design study during my Master’s degree benefited me to mitigate all the above-mentioned challenges. School violence is a human problem that occurs in a natural setting and is experienced

by participants. On the other side as a researcher, I was interested in the meaning participants gave to their experiences, how they created their world and the importance they attributed to their experiences. This is the reason I believed that a qualitative research design was appropriate for this study.

4.4 Research methodology

A qualitative research design has several different methodologies like grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative research, ethnography and case study (Bryman & Bell, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study used a qualitative design under the interpretive paradigm as well as utilising case study as a methodology. The case study was adopted in this study because “the study is an exploration of a case or cases through detailed, in-depth and intensive data generation methods involving multiple sources of information” (Hlongwane, 2024, p. 96). Although several scholars (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018) present case study as methodology, Yin (2018) presents a case study epistemologically as a method. In terms of the methodological aspect of case study, my view leans towards what the other scholars say (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Yin (2018) lowers the case study to the category of interviews, observation, document reviews and focus group which are used for data generation. Considering that the case study uses these data generation methods to generate its data, it is improper for it to be classified as a method. Noting that methodology is above the research method, the definition offered by Yin (2018) is not considered for this study. Other scholars (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Straus & Curbin, 2008) present case study as a methodology utilising different methods of data generation to gain an extensive perspective and reliable affirmation from cases that are studied. Therefore, according to these scholars, interviews, observation, document reviews and focus groups remain research methods or techniques and not methodologies (Gough, 2000).

Importantly, Rule and John (2011) define the ‘case’ as a situation or problem that needs to be examined. A case can also be a human being, groups of human beings, institution, society, nation, programme or a number of developments that need examination (Rule & John, 2011; Shock, 2020). In this study, cases that were examined were three secondary schools in which teachers and parents of learners were interviewed. These were referred to as cases because they are self-contained systems with their own contexts, characteristics and boundaries and they were identified as having the relevant data for this study. This methodology was suitable for an in-depth understanding of the

experiences of parents and educators of the three secondary schools that were identified as participants in this study. Teachers and parents of learners in three secondary schools of King Cetshwayo District were selected and extensively studied in order to comprehend their experiences of school-parent collaboration to reduce school violence. As a ground breaker in writing about case studies, Yin (2003) separates and defines three types of case studies, and these are explanatory, exploratory and descriptive. Explanatory case study explains what occurs in a specific case or the reason for the occurrence (Rule & John, 2011). On the other hand, exploratory case study investigates what was never investigated before and other studies can extend from it (Rule & John, 2011). A descriptive case study offers a full contextual explanation of the situation (Rule & John, 2011; Yin, 2003, 2018).

For this study, I made use of a multiple case study approach. A multiple case study is where a researcher picks out a number of cases and examines them extensively (Rule & John, 2011). The belief behind a multiple case study is that the studied phenomenon is better understood as the researcher can identify what is similar or different in the generated data of all cases (Creswell, 2007; Rule & John, 2011). Merriam (2009) states that multiple site case studies are also appropriate for comparison and for enhancing the external validity and generalisability of findings. This is confirmed by Yin (2003) when he states that a multiple case study allows the researcher to examine differences within and between cases. This enabled me to examine in detail, sets of commonalities and differences among the participating parents (SGB and non SGB parents), principals and other teachers involved in varying secondary school contexts.

4.5 Population and sampling

Simon and Goes (2012) state that a population is the total group of people or items sharing one or more characteristics from which data can be generated and analysed. The target population of this study was the total number of PL1 educators, departmental heads, principals, chairpersons of School Governing Bodies, and parents (non SGB members) of 208 secondary schools of King Cetshwayo District. In qualitative research, the selection of participants that will help the researcher to understand the problem and research questions is critical (Creswell, 2018; Parker-Jenkins, 2018). I used purposive and convenience sampling in this study to realise this goal, this means selecting information-rich and relevant cases (Patton, 2015). This also means that not all King Cetshwayo District secondary schools had an equal chance to be part of the sample. Parker-Jenkins (2018)

confirms non-probability of purposive sampling when stating that in this type of sampling the researchers choose participants on the basis of their judgement, based on prior information of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought, or because of them being holders of data needed for the study.

For this study, three secondary schools were selected as case study sites. I was interested in exploring the assistance of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence and therefore, only schools involving parents in the education of learners were targeted as part of the sample. Additionally, participants were also selected using convenience sampling. In convenience sampling, the researcher chooses the sample, satisfying certain criterion. In this study the following criteria were considered: (a) Three secondary schools from rural areas (b) Secondary schools that were easy to access (c) Had once experienced disturbances due to school violence but had since improved in managing it due to collaborating with parents or school violence had never been much of a problem due to a strong bond with parents. (d) Had improved in both learner achievement and learner discipline. (e) Were willing to share their experiences and perspectives on how school-parent collaboration assists in reducing school violence. (f) SASA (RSA, 1996b) mandates that school principals must consult parents, learners and teachers when developing learner codes of conduct. The selected schools had to be in a position to share evidence to this effect, more importantly, because this is the first step in dealing with learner behaviour in a school. I interacted with former colleagues (circuit managers and governance officials) to assist me to identify these schools. Circuit managers and governance officials were informed about the importance of confidentiality in research even though their involvement ended in helping with the identification of three secondary schools. They agreed to keep the names of selected schools confidential. They also recommended the inclusion of principals as participants, for them in these school principals were taking a leading role in learner discipline since their schools had been overwhelmed with violence which discouraged and demotivated most teachers. Although deputy principals were responsible for discipline, it had been observed that the change in these schools was championed by school principals.

As previously mentioned in this study, King Cetshwayo District has 208 secondary schools which are located in urban, semi-urban and rural areas of the district. Only eight (8) of these are located in urban areas and they constitute 3.8%; eighteen (18) are located in semi-urban areas (townships) constituting 8.6% and the rest totalling 182 are located in rural areas and constitute 87.5%. Due to the large number of rural secondary schools in the district, I identified all three secondary schools

from the rural areas. These schools were selected because they held information needed for this study because of their experiences of reducing school violence by working together with parents, as well as because they satisfied additional criteria as mentioned before. For the purposes of this study, the categories of participants who were purposively and conveniently selected consisted of three principals, three SGB chairpersons, six non-SGB parents, three Departmental Heads (DHs) and six Post Level One educators, also known as teachers. These participants had in-depth information from different perspectives about the school and its relationship with parents.

SCHOOLS (3)	SCHOOL 1	SCHOOL 2	SCHOOL 3
School Principal	1	1	1
Departmental Heads (DHs)	1	1	1
Teachers	2	2	2
SGB Chair	1	1	1
Parents (non SGB member)	2	2	2
TOTAL	7	7	7

Table 4: Visual representation of interview participants

4.6 Choice of research sites and participants

It is necessary to choose sites and participants that have necessary information to assist the researcher in understanding the research problem and research questions (Creswell, 2013; Parker-Jenkins, 2018). According to Creswell (2013), such a choice can be done through purposive sampling. Data generation for this study was done in three secondary schools. These secondary schools were given pseudonyms as follows: Qhubekani Secondary School (QSS), Phakama Secondary School (PSS) and Khanyisani Secondary School (KSS). All three secondary schools were located within King Cetshwayo District. My interest was in the role played by school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence. Although the location of schools was within the King Cetshwayo District, their experience in parental involvement might not be the same. Cohen et al. (2014) postulate that purposive sampling gives the researcher an opportunity to interact with people having the in-depth information of the investigated phenomenon. For the purposes of this study, categories of purposively, as well as conveniently selected participants were: school principals, SGB chairpersons, non SGB parents, heads of departments as well as post level one teachers. See table 4.2 showing the enrolment and staffing of participant schools.

	QSS	PSS	KSS
Enrolment	823	820	742
PPN	26	26	22
Principal	01	01	01
Deputy Principal	01	01	01
Departmental Heads	04	04	03
Teachers	20	20	17
Admin clerk	01	01	01
Security personnel	01	01	01
Cleaner(s)	02	01	01
Food handlers	03	03	03

Table 5: (Participants' schools, enrolment and staffing in 2025)

Below is the performance of Grade 12 in participant schools as from 2018 to 2024

	QSS	PSS	KSS
2024 pass rate	96%	93%	90%
2023 pass rate	87%	87.7%	87.5%
2022 pass rate	87%	77%	86.2%
2021 pass rate	83.2%	86.2%	86.6%
2020 pass rate	80%	86.6%	77%
2019 pass rate	67%	88.2%	61%
2018 pass rate	64.3%	52.9%	52.9%

Table 6: Performance of Grade 12 in participant schools as from 2018 to 2023

4.7 Recruitment and gaining access to schools and communities

It is important for readers to first know how the participants were recruited to the study and how various sites were accessed to be able to make the correct evaluation of the research. It is equally important also to make known to other researchers my experience of accessing schools and participants. This study was conducted in the King Cetshwayo District of KwaZulu-Natal Province,

South Africa. I needed to get permission from the KZN Department of Education to be able to access schools. Fortunately for me, I emailed a letter seeking permission and got permission within three days which was very surprising as I waited for more than a month when doing my Master's degree. Three secondary schools also gave me permission to use them as research sites. Face to face invitations as well as telephonic communications were used in order to recruit participants and inform them about my desire to have them participate in the study. Participants were briefed about the rationale, objectives of the study, and significance of the study. When participants agreed to participate in the study, a template of the *Permission to Conduct Research* was issued to them. This template clearly specified the significance of the study, data generation methods, participants' rights, issues of confidentiality, voluntary participation, as well as the contact details of the supervisor and HSSREC. Participants were further requested to sign the *Declaration of Informed Consent* to indicate that they agreed to participate in research. I thereafter, had to apply for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal research office to be able to continue going to schools. I was guided by my supervisor on how to upload the necessary information and documents on the UKZN Research Information Gateway (RIG). Once the ethical clearance was granted by the University, I then commenced with the process of arranging my visits to the schools.

4.8 Data generation methods

In this part of my study, I present the research methods that I used to generate data. Some of the generally utilised data generation methods in qualitative research are questionnaires, interviews, personal accounts, roleplay, observations, visual media and document review (Cohen et al., 2011). Semi-structured interviews were mostly used compared to document review.

4.8.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were just one technique that I used to generate qualitative data in this study. Maree (2010) posits that semi-structured interviews offer researchers intense detailed data that will assist in a better understanding of participants' formation of knowledge (epistemology assumptions) and reality (ontology assumptions). An interview is described as an interaction where ideas are traded on a topic of interest between two or more people (Cohen et al., 2018). Interviews are also taken as supple tools for generating data. Scholars (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) identify different interviews like in-depth interviews, structured

interviews, standardised interviews, semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, telephonic interviews, as well as informal conversation interviews as a variety of kinds of interviews that can be utilised for data generation. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used for data generation. I selected semi-structured interviews because they allow for flexibility during discussions, where issues that might not be originally in the interview schedule can be raised and pursued during the semi-structured interviews (Cohen et al., 2020). Semi-structured interviews are principal in qualitative design data generation because of their open-ended nature and the ability to assist researchers in clarifying confusing and significant points (Chan et al., 2013). Moving from this postulation, semi-structured interviews were appropriate for this study as they enabled me, the researcher to deeply understand teachers' and parents' experiences of collaboration to reduce school violence. I prepared interview schedules long before interviews took place for guidance. Each category of participants had its schedule of questions. Some questions had to be similar for purposes of triangulation across the categories. Others were specific to categories of participants in order to obtain exclusive individual perspectives. In many cases I used probes to get the correct impression and understanding as some participants could not be that explicit in their responses. Without the probes I was going to be left with wrong impressions and misunderstandings. The duration of interviews ranged between 45 and 60 minutes and they were all held in schools. All 21 participants availed themselves for the interviews. Follow up interviews were done wherever the participants were willing to respond to follow up questions. All interviews were audio recorded as per the participants consent. Records of the interviews as well as field notes were safely kept.

4.8.2 Document review

Semi-structured interviews as the main data generation method in qualitative designs were complemented by document review in this study. Document review means observing different kinds of documents that give more information about the phenomena being studied and are always available whether there is research or not (Fitzgerald, 2007). Documents are identified either as primary documents or secondary documents (Maree, 2013). Primary documents present the original experience and observations of the author whereas, secondary documents are composed by another person from the original documents or activities (Maree, 2013). I made use of primary documents as I, to some extent engaged in the communication with participants when they reflected on school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence. "Document review refers to critical reading of documents as this forms a major source of data in qualitative research and can help to uncover

meaning, develop understanding and discover insight relevant to the research problem” (Merriam, 1998, p. 54). I only reviewed school records and minutes taken during parents’ meetings, staff meetings, SGB meetings, grade or phase meetings with parents, one on one meetings with parents. I only focused on documents that were not older than three years. I intended to find evidence of teachers reaching out to parents and the reaction from parents which would confirm the existence of collaboration as reported by participants. These records also confirmed the extent of complexities in the collaboration, for example, the rate of attendance in meetings, reports on response from parents when invited to schools, school activities that need parental participation and the actual participation rate by parents. Data generation was done at school levels (study sites).

4.9 Data analysis

Research only make sense after it has been analysed, and there are many strategies that can be used to do data analysis (Schwandt, 2007). Data analysis is the process of creating logic, structure and meaning from the mass of generated data. “Broadly conceived this is the activity of making sense of interpreting and theorising data” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 42). Qualitative research takes the form of an ongoing interactive and emerging process (Henning et al., 2002), and it happens while the data generation process is ongoing. Cohen et al. (2011) describe data analysis as a process consisting of organising, accounting for and explaining the data. Hammersley (2006) emphasises that interviewing is a convenient method but will necessitate the researcher to tape record the proceedings. Consequently, the audio-taped perspectives were recorded and later transcribed. Thereafter, the data were translated and transcribed into English (where responses were done in IsiZulu) then examined. This study opted to use thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2020). “Thematic analysis is an easily accessible and theoretically flexible interpretative approach to qualitative data analysis that facilitates the identification and analysis of patterns or themes in a given data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2020, p. 77). Braun and Clarke (2020) presented a six-phase approach to implementing thematic analysis.

These phases are presented in a logical, sequential structure but as a researcher I was conscious of the fact that analysis does not progress from one stage to another in a single series of steps. I rather moved back and forth through the phases as needed (Braun & Clarke, 2020). The first phase is familiarisation with the data. In this phase, I began by transcribing data (interviews in

the recordings). I began to read transcripts repeatedly to familiarise myself with the data and comprehend the perspectives of participants before engaging in the actual analysis. Thereafter, I provided participants with a copy for accuracy verification as it was highly important to ensure that transcriptions were trustworthy. I also ensured that the document review table was correctly and completely done. In the second phase, I went through interview transcripts, document analysis tables and the theoretical framework guiding this study in order to generate initial codes, these were the building blocks towards identifying themes. Therefore, I worked systematically through the whole dataset and identified interesting aspects that might give information towards developing themes. Ravindran (2018, p. 21) postulates that “coding can be defined as labels given to phrases or sentences found in the data, and categorising is the act of grouping together similar codes”. Phase Three is about generating themes, after coding in Phase Two. I reviewed and analysed how these varied codes might be put together according to their associations to form themes or sub-themes (categorising). Phase Four is reviewing potential themes, and in this phase it must be clear that some codes constituting themes were incongruent and could not address research questions and therefore, they needed to be reviewed through asking a number of questions as provided by Braun and Clarke (2020). Phase Five is defining and naming themes, and in this phase I presented a detailed analysis of the thematic framework. Each theme and the sub-themes were put in correlation to both the data set and research question(s). The last phase was report writing. Emerging themes signified the roles and experiences of parents in the maintenance of learner discipline, and justifying their practices and their relationship with teachers in schools.

4.10 Trustworthiness and credibility

In every qualitative design there comes a time when the determination of trust in the study must be established, and according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) that is a critical moment. To establish trustworthiness in this qualitative research study, I ensured the truthfulness and accuracy of explanations, findings and conclusions by using Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria to establish trustworthiness. The following constructs are presented by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as appropriate for the determination of trust in a qualitative study. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

4.10.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to acceptability as truth of the generated data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility can be ensured by lengthened interactions with participants, member-checking, as well as peer debriefing and cross validation /triangulation. Therefore, in this study I ensured that findings were honest. I extended the time of engagement with participants, cross validated the two methods of data generation (interviews and document reviews), took generated data back to participants so that they checked if their responses were correctly captured (member checking) and also engaged in peer debriefing to ensure that the study was credible. I gave all participants enough time to go through transcripts of interviews and data from reviewed documents so that their input was confirmed. This ensured that findings were not my interpretations but reflected the participants' input. This enhanced the credibility of my study.

4.10.2 Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which findings of the study can be transferred outside the range of the investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Krefting (1991), transferability is not the responsibility of the original researcher but more that of a researcher who wants to transfer and implement the research findings in his/her own environment. Therefore, for this to be possible I made sure that my study has an effect in the academic world so that other researchers are able to make use of it to further their own studies. Clear and detailed descriptions of all steps and decisions taken in the process of carrying out this study was provided, for example, the theoretical framework, methodology and participants. I explained the whole process of the research, methods of data generation, data analysis so that other researchers who wish to do the same study are aware of every step I took in this investigation, and I concluded that the study either fits their context or does not. Things that might cause inconsistencies which need to be taken care of and reported are the attitudes, emotions, feelings and situations of life on the side of participants as these as these may compromise the quality of the study and result in findings that are not consistent. People are not always in the same space, for example, when you have lost your loved one to death you cannot be as normal as you always are (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative research must be consistent when repeated with the same participants in the same context (Krefting, 1991).

4.10.3 Dependability

According to Guba and Krefting (1991), if variability that causes findings to change in the study can be tracked, the study has dependability. Guba and Krefting (1991) further define dependability as consistency even if the study were to be reconducted with similar participants in the context. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe dependability as an audit of the quality of the three integrated processes which are data generation, data analysis and theory generation. I ensured this by auditing the inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I checked interviews against those documents that were in support of participants' contribution, to enhance dependability. Documents included minutes of all meetings that had to do with parental involvement and indiscipline matters from general parents' meetings and other records that had to do with parental involvement matters. Findings were discussed with participants (peer debriefing) to ensure that analysis was based on data. I also involved research peers in critiquing and contributing to the study. The supervisor was also involved through examining the process and the outcomes of the study. Adhering to these procedures, I tried to manage dependability.

4.10.4 Confirmability

Qualitative study must be bias free in its procedures and results (Krefting, 1991). Shenton (2004) postulates that it is not easy to maintain operational bias in qualitative studies since questions and sampling are done by the researcher. To ensure confirmability of the findings, researchers must be very conscious and take the necessary steps to make sure that findings are neutral and are the actual experiences of participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This neutrality of findings is called confirmability (Faan, 2016; Shenton, 2004). Confirmability measures the level at which the findings are backed by generated data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I ensured confirmability by discussing transcripts with participants so that they confirmed that the content was what came about during our interactions (member checking). After discussing transcripts, participants had a right to request the removal of anything they believed would expose them to risks or even be criminally charged. I also checked if my interpretations were in harmony with every participant's apprehensions. Records of all activities done were kept and all research steps in this project were fully explained. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this strategy is called member-checking.

4.11 Ethical considerations

To be ethical is to abide by the accepted professional practices. As this is a qualitative study, it could not be avoided that I interacted with participants when generating data. Throughout this study my conduct was guided by ethical values and procedures. This ensured that I acted within the recognised and accepted practices when dealing with educators, principals, parents (SGB Chairs and non-SGB members) as sampled participants of this study (Gomaa, 2008). As a researcher, I was obliged to protect all study participants from any form of emotional, physical, or concrete harm (De Vos et al., 2011). There are many ethical issues in research, but for the purpose of this study I attended to the following. I sought written consent from the Department of Basic Education, schools involved and all participants. In every discipline it is considered unethical to collect information without the knowledge of participants and their expressed willingness and informed consent (Kumar, 2014); I explained and respected anonymity and confidentiality.

According to Fouka and Mantzorou (2011), the researcher is responsible for the maintenance of confidentiality throughout the study. I tried to be accurate when reporting. To report the findings in a way that changes or slants them to serve my own or someone else's interest is unethical. Correct and unbiased reporting is an important characteristic of ethical research practice. Kumar (2014) cautions that anyone involved in research needs to be aware of what is proper and improper. In this regard, I discussed all ethical considerations with the participants before beginning with the research; I clarified to participants the nature of the research and responsibilities of each party, the duration, procedures to be used and the participant's right to decline participating and the right to withdraw at any time; I avoided undue intrusion by confining discussions to the relevant researched matters in order not to intrude into private and personal matters of the participants; I adhered to honesty in the analysis of data so as to present an honest interpretation of data. I respected and valued all participants and their contributions. No participant was judged or discredited, and I gave all participants the opportunity to confirm after data collection that they were correctly and completely captured during the data collection process. All the above issues followed the issuing of the ethical clearance certificate by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This ethical clearance certificate allowed me to go to the field and begin interacting with participants so as to come

up with findings that eventually led to recommendations on how school-parent collaboration may be better utilised to reduce school violence.

4.12 Limitations

In IsiZulu there is a saying that goes ‘akukho soka lingenasici’. This translates in English as ‘there is no perfect person’. This means no matter how appealing or good the object or a person may look, they are certain to have some deficiencies, blind spots or red flags that might diminish them. Research also falls in this category. Each and every research project would have those design limitations which suggest that no research is perfect (Bryman & Bell, 2019). However, it remains immensely important that despite the limitations, the findings must still be trustworthy; they must be believable (Bryman & Bell, 2019). It does not matter how skilful the researcher is or how efficiently the research was undertaken, limitations will always be there (Bryman & Bell, 2019). In qualitative studies, the researcher is the main player who takes all decisions and invites all participants. Qualitative studies are subjective because they are overdependent on researcher’s views and judgements (Bryman & Bell, 2019). This then suggests the possibility of bias in qualitative studies (Bryman & Bell, 2019). I was extremely cautious in complying with trustworthiness processes as mentioned in 4.10 of the preceding section. That is why it is important that in regard to the limitations identified, steps must be taken to address such limitations.

In the context of this study, it is evident that to understand how the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration might reduce school violence, the study could not generate knowledge which is applicable from all 208 schools in the district. Secondly, I was a circuit manager in the district, and therefore, my personal experiences could interfere with what I was finding. That means that personal biases could become a barrier to generating credible knowledge. That is why ethical processes such as voluntary participation are required. People wanted to share their experiences without any coercion. Secondly, member checking during the interviews assisted in ensuring that my interpretations were checked on the spot to assess if they were representative of what the current participant was saying. After the interviews and other processes such as document reviews were over, I had to hold confirmation sessions with the participants. This is where I explicitly indicated what I was understanding from what they had told me. That processes also served to confirm or add any missing information and closing

any gap that I might have had. That session enabled the participants to clarify further any misunderstandings I may have had about the contents of our discussions during the interviews.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research design and the processes undertaken to accomplish the study. I firstly discussed the qualitative approach and the interpretive paradigm that I used in the study. I provided the context in which I conducted the study, and also motivated for the choice of the context, participants and data generation methods that I employed. Although I had as many as twenty-one participants, they all availed themselves for interviews despite the fact that I had two postponements, one of which was an interview with the principal of Phakama who received an urgent call from the district office to urgently see the district Director so we had to postpone what we had started with him. The second postponement was that of a parent who had to go to the clinic on the same day of the interview due to heavy flu. Both these participants honoured their second appointments and interviews were timely concluded. The next chapter (chapter 5) of this study is aimed at providing the descriptive analysis of data.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROLE AND COMPLEXITIES OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION IN REDUCING SCHOOL VIOLENCE: PERSPECTIVES FROM PHAKAMA SECONDARY SCHOOL

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter gave an overarching discussion of the research design and methodology applied in this study. Presented in this chapter is the analysis and presentation of findings from data generated in one of the three sites. This site is known as Phakama Secondary School (*pseudonym*). This chapter gives a picture of how the principal, the SGB Chairperson, parents and teachers perceived school-parent collaboration to reduce school violence in their school. Because of the big volume of the generated data from the three research sites, I decided to present it in three chapters, sorted according to research sites. These chapters will be Chapter Five as presented now, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven. Principals, Departmental Heads, SGB chairpersons, teachers and parents were interviewed in all these three sites. There is not much infusion of literature in the presentation of this research data. The infusion of literature will be done in Chapter Eight when I do cross-site analysis. Presenting data per site first assists the reader to understand the discussion of data per research site prior to the engagement with data comparison across all sites in chapter eight.

In this case study data generation was done through semi-structured interviews and document review. Minutes of parents' meetings form part of the generated data. *Pseudonyms* were used instead of real participants and sites names. This was done in order to safeguard the identities of the participants and schools. Data discussion will be preceded by the school, community and participants' profile. After this the perspectives of participants will be presented. For chapters 5, 6 and 7 data which was generated during interviews was based on the interview schedules prepared by the researcher prior to the interviews and were guided by the research questions of the study. This, therefore resulted in similar headings of the data presentation across these chapters.

5.2 The school, community and the participants' profiles

This presentation is done to give the reader a contextual understanding of the stories that were presented by Phakama Secondary School participants. Only the information, that in my understanding, will help readers to be in a better position to comprehend the data are to be presented here.

5.2.1 The profile of Phakama Secondary School

Phakama Secondary School was established in 1981. The school produced its first Grade 12 (matric) class in 1990. This school is situated in King Cetshwayo District. It is located approximately 400 km away from the main road to Eshowe town which makes the area around the school busy. There are many other schools in the area. This is an indication that the area has many households with many school going children. These are not the only schools in this tribal area, but I am focusing on the area around Phakama Secondary School. The other two schools I have just mentioned have high enrolments as well. Phakama Secondary School has four blocks of classrooms, a library, a small laboratory, a school hall built by one parent in 2021, a staff room, kitchen, SMT offices and a small reception office for the administration clerk. The parent who funded the building of a school hall is a business man as well as Undunankulu wesizwe (Chief Tribal Councillor). The school is well fenced with a security guard at the gate. Phakama Secondary School has a problem of weak network, and as a result, it becomes a struggle for a cell phone within the school premises as there are only one or two spots that are known to have a usable signal. There is electricity as well as tap water at the school, however these taps run dry most of the time and the school depends on water tanks that are sometimes filled by the rain or the municipality. Teachers and learners use pit toilets, and this is because of a water shortage.

The school staff of Phakama Secondary School consists of the principal, deputy principal, four departmental heads, twenty teachers, one administration clerk, one security guard, one cleaner and three food handlers that assists with the feeding of learners from the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). The school had a learner enrolment of 861 learners in 2025. It is a Quintile 2 school, meaning the school does not charge school fees as it is categorised as a school having not less than 40% of learners who are economically disadvantaged, that is, from

poor families. Matric results have improved since 2019 as they were 52,9% in 2018, went up to 88,2% in 2019, 86% in 2020 and 2021, went a little bit down to 77% in 2022, went up again to 87,5% in 2023 and shot up to 93% in 2024.

MATRIC PERFORMANCE AS FROM 2018	
2024 pass rate	93%
2023 pass rate	87.5%
2022 pass rate	77%
2021 pass rate	86.2%
2020 pass rate	86.6%
2019 pass rate	88.2%
2018 pass rate	52.9%

Table 7: Matric pass rate as from 2018

5.2.2 The profile of Emalaleni Community

Phakama Secondary School is located in the Emalaleni area. Emalaleni community is rural. There is a tarred road to the community, and this makes it easy for the public to access public transport. Statistics South Africa (2022) states that the area is 100% rural with a population of 6 675 people. 14.2% of the households use water from taps or tanks although taps are often dry and 86% depend on the water delivered by the municipality to the public tanks or sometimes they make use of the streams where these are still available. Ninety five percent still use pit toilets and only 4.3% have flush toilets connected to sewerage. The statistics indicates that 55.6% of families are female headed meaning male headed families are fewer than female headed families, and 96.1% of homes are electrified.

HOUSEHOLD UTILITIES AND HEADS STATISTICS	
Households dependent on water delivered by municipality and water from streams	86%
Households using pit toilets	95.7%
Household headed by females	55.6%
Electrified households	96.1%

Table 8: Household utilities at Emalaleni (Adapted from Stats SA, 2022)

As in many rural communities in South Africa the level of formal education at Emalaleni is also low. Only 4% went beyond Grade 12 (matric), that is, getting certificates, diplomas or degrees, and only 29.8% have Grade 12 (matric), while 6.2% have never gone to school. This means 60% dropped out before reaching Grade 12.

FORMAL EDUCATION STATISTICS	
Beyond matric (certificates, diplomas, degrees)	4%
Matric	29.8%
No schooling	6.2%
Dropped before matric	60%

Table 9: Formal education statistics at Emalaleni (Adapted from Stats SA, 2022)

5.2.3. The profile of participants

There were seven participants in this site, who were Mr Masombuka, the principal; Mrs Mthethwa, the departmental head; Mr Dladla, the teacher; Mr Ntombela, the teacher; Mr Mnguni, the SGB Chair; Mr Ntuli, the parent and Mr Nhlabathi, the parent.

Participant's name and position	Age	Gender	Years in service	Highest level of education
Mr Masombuka - Principal	52	Male	17	B Ed Hons
Mrs Mthethwa – Departmental Head	56	Female	23	STD
Mr Ndlela – Teacher A	47	Male	11	B Ed
Mr Ntombela – Teacher B	40	Male	06	B Tech and PGCE
Mr Mnguni – SGB Chair (Parent A)	57	Male	04	Diploma-Medical Technology
Mr Ntuli – Parent B	51	Male	04	Grade 11
Mr Nhlabathi – Parent C	42	Male	01	Grade 11

Table 10: PSS participants' level of education and other details

5.3. Perspectives transpiring from Phakama Secondary School

Perspectives emerging from Phakama Secondary School will be presented under seven main themes and these themes are: stakeholders understanding of violence and its consequences on safety and the functionality of the school, establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence, the intervention of community leadership – traditional leadership in reducing school violence, benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence, repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence and strategies to navigate complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach. I commence with the discussion of the first theme.

5.3.1 Stakeholders' understandings of school violence and its consequences on safety and functionality of the school

The data from all the participants, that is, the principal, the deputy principal, the departmental head, two other teachers, the SGB Chair and two other parents indicated that they had an understandings of what school violence is as some of them indicated that some of the violence occurrences they mentioned were not frequent in their school but did happen in other schools as some of them had their children attending other schools before they came here. Mr Masombuka, the Principal of the school had this to say about school violence:

This is intentional harmful behaviour mostly among learners taking place within school premises, during school activities or on the way from school to home. It may be physical, emotional, psychological or sexual. Physical assault which is any form of physical aggression between students or involving staff, such as fights, hitting, kicking, or pushing. Another one is bullying which is repeated aggressive behaviour that involves an imbalance of power, including physical, verbal, or social bullying. There is also cyberbullying which is harassment or bullying that occurs through digital platforms, including social media, text messages, or email. Verbal abuse is also one occurrence which includes insults, threats, or any form of verbal harassment directed at students, teachers, or staff. Sexual harassment is unwanted or inappropriate sexual

behaviour, including touching, comments, or advances. learners, teachers, or the school, which can escalate to confrontations or violence. Some of these forms of violence used to take place in our school but the rate of occurrence has gone down, it is only bullying cases that we sometimes come across.

The principal confirmed that these violent occurrences had been experienced in his school but the rate at which they happened had been reduced, but bullying was still a problem sometimes. The departmental head, Mrs Mthethwa, in her comment was very specific and mentioned even the years in which some of these occurrences happened in the school. She even made mention of corporal punishment which, of course, is one form of school violence (physical violence) and indicated that it did take place at her school. She said:

Physical and emotional harm by one learner to the other happening at school or on the way from home to school. The first and highly common occurrence is bullying. This is when one learner decides to illtreat the other learner, for example, demanding his or her pocket money. Secondly is when learners fight each other or when one learner assaults another learner, like in this school some years back learners used to carry dangerous weapons to school and one day a boy learner assaulted another boy with a tomahawk (small axe) in the presence of a female teacher and other learners in the classroom. Because of the weight of the occurrence the school could not handle the matter alone but involved traditional leadership, parents of both learners and police. This was in 2016 before you arrived sir as the circuit manager. There are many others like verbal abuse and even corporal punishment that we administer to learners which we know is wrong and is one of the occurrences categorised as school punishment. I do not mean that I administer corporal punishment myself sir (laughing) but I do observe that some teachers sometimes do it.

Mr Ndlela (Teacher A) in his comment went as far as mentioning three dimensions of school violence which are learner on learner violence, learner on teacher violence and teacher on learner violence. Although the focus of the study is on reduction of learner on learner violence, the mentioning of these three dimensions indicates that one understands what constitutes school violence and one cannot ignore the possibility of other dimensions occurring as the departmental head mentioned the administering of corporal punishment by some teachers in her comment. Mr Ndlela commented as follows:

Emotional and physical aggressive behaviour during school hours, school events and between school and home after school. Teacher to learner violence: vulgar language, name calling, corporal punishment, physical handling etc. Learner to teacher violence: swearing, drawings and degrading texts in toilet walls, hitting/fighting educators and intimidation. Learner to Learner violence: fighting, bullying, name calling, inappropriate comments and touching, isolation and side lining.

Mr Ntombela (Teacher B) also mentioned teacher on learner as well as learner on teacher violence in addition to learner on learner violence. He also mentioned faction fights which used to be a problem at the school. The faction fights according to Mr Ntombela could halt the functionality of the school as days could go by without proper teaching and learners could not come to school in fear of being caught in the middle of the fight and get hurt. This also impacts negatively safety for everybody at school. His comment was:

A lot of violence occurrences happen at schools from insults hurled at by learners to other learners, from learners to teachers and sometimes teachers to learners. This results in emotional violence, sometimes learners fight using their fists or hands. Bullying at schools is one of the occurrences, and the others include strikes by learners. Another thing could be faction fights that start due to quarrel at school and end up in the community as community faction fights. Sometimes teachers also fight at school. The problem we experienced before at school was that of faction fights which occurred often. This was very bad as it threatened the safety of learners and staff members, it also disturbed teaching and learning in fact the functioning of the school as learners absented themselves during these fights and some days after them. Learners as well as some teachers were afraid of getting hurt. Fortunately, this is now a thing of the past.

The SGB Chair (Mr Mnguni) also touched on the dimensions of school violence and the impact of these violent occurrences on individuals or victims. The SGB Chair responded to say:

I understand violence as any action happening during school hours by a learner to other learners that is harmful. This may also happen between learners and teachers themselves, example of there are bullying which is when a learner that considers himself or herself powerful or better in anyway look down upon the other learners or mistreat them. This may also result to learners taking others'

belongings by force, for example lunch box, money or any other possession. The other occurrence among learners is fighting, in most cases in secondary schools boys fight over girls and girls fight over boys, this is due to teenage dating. As it was mentioned before school violence also occur between learners and teachers, this happens as emotional violence when teacher shout or demean learners by calling them with unacceptable names for example, "Lelikhanelikhulu leli" (big head) such a learner becomes embarrassed and emotionally disturbed. This also happen to teachers when learners shout, scold or howl them or when one ill-disciplined learner harasses a teacher or even wants to fight a teacher.

It is clear that these participants understand that school violence does not end with learner on learner violence but learners also do abuse teachers and at a minimal level some teachers do cross the line and become abusive but mainly it is learners who are a big problem. Mr Ntuli (Parent B) indicated that his response is general as he only knew of faction fights in this school before 2019, otherwise he is not aware of any school violence problems currently. This is what he had to say:

This is harmful action by one learner to the other during school hours. It is fighting among learners, sometimes injuring one another using weapons. Another one which is dominant in many schools is bullying. Sometimes learners threaten and fight teachers if they are disciplined and that is school violence by learners to teachers. Teachers sometimes use strong and abusive words against learners as they are troubled by learners' indiscipline. To be honest I am general here as I have never heard of what I have mentioned in this school except a little bit of bullying and faction fights which were dominant in this school in previous years.

Mr Nhlabathi (Parent C) made mention of bullying as the main violent occurrence in many schools. He also mentioned its negative effects on the individual learners being bullied as well as its impact on safety in the school. Mr Nhlabathi does not deny the prevalence of other forms of violence but to him this is the most prevalent. He also mentioned a case that happened in this school. His utterances were:

School violence is purposeful infliction of pain by a learner to the other and this happens during school hours. Bullying is the most prevalent school violence. Many learners are ill-treated by others who believe they are better or powerful

than them. At one stage my neighbour complained about his child who did not want to go to school if he is not given pocket money at home. It was until the friend of his child came to report at home that his friend has a problem of a boy who always demand money from him. If he doesn't get money he beats him and that is why he does not want to go to school if there is no money. There are other violent occurrences but bullying is the main one according to me.

Participants acknowledged that there is violence in schools, and they are aware of its dimensions, forms and effects especially on the functionality of the school and safety. It is also clear that some of these forms of violence do take place in this school. There is also a slight indication that these occurrences are less prevalent than before.

5.3.2. Establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence

In establishing school-parent collaboration the school needs to take a lead and invite parents to be part of the team that take cares of the academic and social development of learners. Teachers are not taught at training institutions about working with parents, but principals of schools must see to it that teachers are developed in this skill as well as in changing their attitudes towards parents. In this case parents realise that they have a role to play, and the school is ready to accommodate them. Mrs Mthethwa (Departmental Head) confirmed this when she explained how they went about developing this collaboration as a school:

Although as teachers we were not taught about how to work with parents during our years of teacher training, the principal in this school organises workshops on yearly basis where we as teachers are reminded about the importance of working collaboratively with parents, the benefits to the school when parents are made to be team members and in the same workshops we plan activities that will increase the interest of parents in the school. During these workshops it is emphasised that whatever we do or say must be inviting to parents.

Mr Masombuka (Principal) gave the following reasons for inviting and welcoming parents as partners at school:

Promoting collaboration with parents is a crucial strategy in fostering a positive school environment and reducing school violence. Schools that

actively engage parents create a more supportive and cohesive atmosphere, which help address and prevent issues like violence. We have done this and we have seen benefits.

Once collaboration has been established it becomes the responsibility of both teachers and parents to take it to the next level, that is, making it work so that firstly, learners benefit from learning in an environment that is free from violent occurrences. Secondly the school benefits by having more time to focus on teaching and learning as learners' behaviour becomes positive and lastly, parents become free from negative thoughts about the safety of their children at school. As a result, both parents and the school have roles to play.

5.3.2.1. The role of the school in establishing and maintaining collaboration with parents to reduce school violence

Once parents were on board, the school had its doors open for them and they felt free and saw that they were indeed accepted. Mr Masombuka (Principal) emphasised that the school kept its doors open for parents so that whenever they felt the need to access the school they did so. He had this to say:

In this school we practise open door policy where parents are allowed to visit the school on any day between 13h30 and 14h30 to inspect and have discussions about their children's academic and social behaviour. One deputy principal is assigned the duty of attending such parents and facilitate all their needs, be it they want to see subject teachers or class teachers and any other need. These parents make appointments with this Deputy Principal who further consult and make arrangements with relevant teachers. Some parents directly contact teachers who must give all details of the visit to the Deputy Principal for effective management of these visits. This is to avoid a situation where there will be parallel responsibilities for teachers who have to attend to parents. This also does not mean that every day we are flooded by parents between 13h30 and 14h30, sometimes a week elapses having been visited by one or two parents because they do attend grade meetings and can telephonically communicate with teachers in the afternoons or during break times.

Mr Masombuka (Principal) further mentioned that in its role the school went beyond focussing on teachers and learners but also assisted parents when their focus on playing an effective role

in the collaboration could be derailed. He made an example of an incident that took place at the school, the incident traumatised learners, teachers and parents. The school intervened and assisted all, including parents. This is how he put it:

The school provides access to counselling and support services for both parents and learners through assistance from Department of Social Development, for example, at one stage one boy got into a classroom with an axe and assaulted another learner in front of the whole class and a female teacher who was busy teaching at that time. Those who witnessed this were so traumatised in such a way that 31% of learners of that class and the teacher did not come to school the following day. Through the District Office Social Development and social workers from the Department of Education offered counselling sessions to concerned learners, all teachers who ended up helping in the scene including the one who was teaching when this happened, parents of the victim as well as the victim after being released from hospital. This happened in 2018.

Mr Ntombela (Teacher B) mentioned the opening of communication lines as a role that the school played successfully. He emphasised that no collaboration could succeed and be strong without healthy and transparent communication. In fact, communication is the heart of collaboration. Here is Mr Ntombela's account:

We have improved communication as now we use different platforms for communication, for example, each grade has a WhatsApp group for parents of learners and the class teacher, the school also uses face book, we also have communication books where teachers write messages and parents reply, parents again have cell phone numbers of class teachers and subject teachers of their children as the school also has cell phone numbers for all parents.

The School Governing Body has sub committees where parents are members. It was the role of the school to organise and administer meetings of these sub committees working with the SGB. Parents as team members were involved in decision making and decisions were taken in meetings. Mr Ntombela (Teacher B) again confirmed that the school played this role when he said:

The school also sees to it that the Safety and Security committee meets frequently so as to be ahead of all situations that might cause a threat of violence at school, whatever situations that might result in violence or unsafety

are discussed and resolve through this committee and if some parents are needed to be part of the resolution they are also made aware, for example, in 2019 there was a report that some learners were planning to attack other learners (faction quarrels) parents were invited and this was ironed before it erupted.

Mr Ndlela (Teacher A) highlighted another role the school played which is workshopping parents on parental skills. Mr Ndlela explained that the school found this imperative as it was felt that if parents were engulfed by many parental challenges they might withdraw from full participation in the collaboration because of the challenges they encountered during the bringing up of their children. The school felt parents might have a feeling of being failures and become ashamed of involving themselves in school matters. Parents appreciated these workshops as their remarks showed that they were benefiting a lot. Mr Ndlela commented like this:

We also workshop our parents on parenting, making use of the expertise of other parents who work in other governmental departments like Department of Social Development.

It is highly important for the school to play the role of a motivator and appreciator so that all members in the collaboration feel important and needed. When appreciated, parents were seen to want to do more. The principal appreciated parents every time there was a meeting. Mr Ndlela (Teacher A) revealed this:

There is nothing more influential than making parents to feel needed and welcomed by the school. The warm reception depicting trust and 'we cannot do it without you' attitude is very important. Our school does this, in meetings parents are assured of their importance in the education of their children. The principal even says "I am a respected principal in the district because of the type of parents I work with".

The extracts above emphasise the importance of showing respect and trust in the parents' contribution to the life of a school.

5.3.2.2. The role of parents in establishing and maintaining collaboration with schools to reduce school violence

The interplay between teachers and parents have seen the school reducing violent occurrences. This is according to Mr Masombuka (Principal) who acknowledged the fact that children look up to their parents and copy what they do. Many parents had been positive role models to their children in this school. This was detected from the change of learners' behaviour to the behaviour expected and appreciated by the school. This is how he put it:

Parents play a crucial role in assisting to reduce violence in schools. Their involvement significantly impacts the behaviour and attitudes of their children, contributing to a safer and more positive school environment. Parents serve as primary role models to their children as demonstrating respectful, non-violent behaviour at home influence children to adopt similar behaviour.

In addition to parents being positive role models for their children, Mrs Mthethwa (Departmental Head) revealed that parents were also providers as they provided their children with all that they needed and this contributed to good behaviour as children did not have to steal and be involved in conflicts. Mrs Mthethwa said:

Parents are providers to their children, they provide all needs by the school, shelter, protection, clothes and food which of course contribute to better behaviour.

Parents also played the role of being teachers. After birth the first people the child is exposed to, are parents. The first lessons the child receives after birth are from parents. It was found in this school that parents did play the role of first being teachers to their children and most of them showed that they were from families with good lessons hence the reduction of aggressive behaviour. Mr Ndlela (Teacher A) commented on this role of parents being teachers and said:

Parents teach good morals at home, offer faith-based teaching and principles, teach cultural roots or traditions, values such as respect and humility, discuss with their children about their experiences at school, physically and psychologically protect their kids, teach children to report any form of abuse or challenges encountered.

Mr Mnguni (SGB Chairperson) revealed that this school invited parents in cases where their children were involved in conflicts. This afforded parents an opportunity to get more

information about the behaviour of their children, and also to be part of the problem-solving process and decision making about the social life of their children and this therefore afforded parents a chance to play the role of being conflict resolvers. Here is Mr Mnguni's account:

Parents also play the role of conflict resolvers and that is why when their children have been involved in fights or any kind of violence they are invited at school to be part of the problem-solving process.

Mr Ntuli (Parent B) revealed that parents also played the role of social advisors to their children as when there was something wrong with their children, they were the first to notice and intervene, making use of their experience and even if teachers suspected that children had social problems they reported to parents where they could not assist. Mr Ntuli's comment was:

Parents cannot leave everything in the hands of teachers. Parents also play a role of social workers or counsellors as they have to see to emotional wellbeing of their children, if they suspect something is wrong with their children they must ask questions and give advises.

It was also found that parents were very particular about the safety of their children, they protected them. This is a constitutional obligation of parents. Mr Nhlabathi highlighted this in the interview:

Parents are also protectors of their children. The safety of children when not at school is in the hands of parents, when in school parents must again contribute to safety of their children.

When making a follow up on workshops offered by the school to parents. Mr Ndlela (Teacher A) revealed that the school identified some of the parents who worked for governmental departments like Social Development, Health and others to come and facilitate these workshops and these added to the strength of school-parent collaboration in this school. Therefore, some parents also played the role of facilitators in their own workshops. Mr Ndlela spoke like this:

We also workshop our parents on parenting, making use of the expertise of other parents who work in other governmental departments like Department of Social Development.

It was also found during the interviews that many parents volunteered to take different responsibilities in different programmes and committees of the school, for example, it was mentioned that they took turns to come to school especially during break times to help monitor learners and their actions and report suspicious movements or actions. This was communicated by Mr Masombuka (Principal) who said:

In this school parents volunteer to take turns and come to school during break time to supervise and look for suspicious activities as this is the time that people from outside come to school and sell drugs and deliver weapons to learners, teachers also take turns to be with these parents. This partnership paves the way for timely intervention as parents communicate regularly with school staff to provide early warnings if they observe suspicious actions or activities, for example, one parent observed the way other learners were looking and pointing at one learner during break and decided to talk to one of the learners who told the parent that the boy is not one of our learners but to our surprise he was wearing our full school uniform. The parent quietly reported to the Deputy Principal as I was attending the Principals' meeting in the circuit. The boy was called and threatened that police were on the way. The boy agreed that he was at school on a mission to sell drugs during break. It is due to such things that parents resolved in their meeting that the school should have a tuck shop so that during break all learners stay within school premises.

Mrs Mthethwa (Departmental Head) confirmed volunteering by parents in this school when she said:

During Grade 12 Camp towards the writing of NSC exam in 2023 parents became part of the team managing the camp. They were involved in security, cooking, and being boarding masters and matrons during this period, which helped us obtain good results in Grade 12 2023 NSC exams.

Mr Masombuka (Principal) appreciated the role played by parents in the school and mentioned that when the collaboration is well sustained parents become so motivated such that they do what you never thought would happen, for example, one parent made donations exceeding a million Rands to the school. One could see the happiness and pride in the principal when he narrated this:

One parent who is also a business person adopted the school and donated funding to the tune of more than a million rands to build and hand over the school hall in 2021. This facility was erected from July and by October it was officially opened. The parent also compensated the school with an amount of R30 000 after the burglary that had recently occurred during spring holidays. On that burglary incident, the burglars stole 5 computers (laptops) and they were purchased by this money donated by this parent. After the release of 2023

results, the same parent gave the school the amount of R10 000 to celebrate good results of 87.5%. By the 19th July 2024, same person awarded the top five of Grade 12 learners with amounts ranging from R500 for position five, R1000 for position four, R1500 for position three, R2000 for position two and R2500 for position one as well as R10 000 to assist in conducting weekends and holidays' matric programmes.

This means some parents become ambassadors for the school or funders themselves. The combination of these roles results in humble and trustworthy parents as well as grounded children. This is the recipe for academic and social success resulting in violence free schools through a joint effort of teachers and parents. It must be noted that many parents are only able to play these roles because of the social capital elements which allow for networking, engagement, shared norms and values and the element of trust which motivates everyone in the collaboration.

5.3.3. The intervention of community leadership—traditional leadership in reducing school violence

For the school to function well and be respected it needs to be embraced not only by parents but by the whole community. It becomes difficult for the community to be attracted to the school if their leaders are left behind. Phakama Secondary School is a rural school in a rural community which is led by the traditional leadership council with Inkosi as the head. The traditional leadership council especially *Induna* was highly involved in school matters particularly when it came to the issues of ill-discipline and school violence. They helped the school to resolve issues that were seen to be beyond the school and SGB. They also communicated directly with all parents in community meetings concerning the behaviour of their children, whether in school or in the community. The involvement of traditional leadership in school also contributed to strengthening the school-parent collaboration. Mr Masombuka (Principal) revealed that the school did on many occasions involve traditional leadership in resolving conflicts as well as giving advice to parents. He said:

If the situation demands that the traditional leadership be involved, we do involve them especially when there is a feud between a learner or learners and the community. There was a time when the school had faction fights involving

different areas of different izinduna, Inkosi and izinduna together with parents of the perpetrators were involved in problem solving sessions.

Mrs Mthethwa (Departmental Head) confirmed the involvement of traditional leadership which happened not only after trouble had taken place, but even in planning to reduce school violence traditional leadership was involved and their involvement did make a difference. She asserted that:

It was only in 2017 that there was a meeting with the traditional council of Tribal Authority of this area (all izinduna zesizwe), SGB, SMT, other teachers, circuit management and departmental officials from school governance in the district to discuss the issue of school violence which was at its highest level at that time in this schools as there were a lot of faction fights.

The community respected and trusted traditional leadership on safety and security matters even more than the police and therefore the involvement of traditional leadership calmed even the rudest learner at school. As a result, this school established and maintained good relationships with traditional leaders. Mr Mnguni (SGB Chairperson) alluded to that by saying:

We are also very fortunate that the traditional councillor is very passionate about education, every Sunday the ward council under Induna meet in the hall next to the school and education matters is a standing bi-weekly item in their agenda. If there is a pressing issue, it is discussed as soon as it is received, the relationship between Induna and the school SGB in very well.

Mr Ntuli (Parent B) also confirmed the intervention by traditional leadership when he said:

The School Safety Committee among other categories comprises of traditional leadership, business people, SAPS, CPF. These are members of the community who see to it that the school has a positive climate and free of any violence or danger.

The indication from the findings is that traditional leadership is the most respected structure in the community around Phakama Secondary School. From the above extracts, one could feel that they accept it as their responsibility to be part of school issues and the school appreciates the involvement of traditional leadership which, according to the data, has help in making collaboration between the school and parents strong and which has resulted in school violence subsiding.

5.3.4. Benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence

In Isizulu we say “injobo ithungelwa ebandla” meaning that many minds and skills could solve the problem that one person failed to solve. I am driving at the fact that teachers and parents together can come up with solutions to transform the school to a non-violent and safe institution for children to successfully develop academically and socially. Phakama Secondary School is one of the three schools selected for this study because it is doing well in reducing school violence. Mr Masombuka (Principal) stated that the collaboration between the school and parents had benefited the school through calmness among learners, improved academic results and increased enrolment. He put it like this:

This has led to improved academic results as well as social conduct in the school. The evidence to that is our matric results which improved again in 2024 from 84% to 93%. When there is calmness at school and the results are good the learner enrolment increases as many parents want their children to be in a safe and learning school, for example, our enrolment in 2025 has exceeded the 2024 enrolment by 62 learners.

The school climate at Phakama Secondary School changed as learners changed their behaviour due to parents being part of school activities and it made things easier for teachers as they had the support of parents when dealing with learners. Mrs Mthethwa (Departmental Head) confirmed that the school climate at Phakama Secondary School changed from being negative and unsafe to positive due to school-parent collaboration. She indicated:

The school with parents that participate in their children's education like ours enjoy positive school climate where everyone feels safe and motivated to do his or her share of work, be it SGB, SM, LRC, teachers, learners and other staff members.

Mr Ndlela (Teacher A) added on the benefits the school enjoyed because of strong school-parent collaboration when he stated that the school functionality improved. His comment was:

If there is unending violence at school teaching and learning will be jeopardised or compromised. The school will eventually lose enrolment, which might lead to the school being shut down, this in turn would affect the community with having to find alternative schools for their kids, which might be too far and maybe lack quality compared to the school shutting down. The situation in this

school is opposite to this as the school functions well, learners and teachers arrive on time in the morning, absenteeism rate has been drastically reduced and teaching and learning is up to standard.

Mr Mnguni (SGB Chairperson) also mentioned many benefits but two of them had not been mentioned by other participants and those were:

Both learners and teachers began to come to school on time in the morning and the rate of absenteeism went down.

Learners behaved well, meaning school violence was reduced, teachers got motivated and academic results improved. This was reinforced by Mr Ntuli (Parent B) in his comment that:

In schools with parents and teachers collaborating the quality and rate of academic achievement grow as in the case of our school. Teachers get motivated as learners become responsible and disciplined.

Mr Nhlabathi (Parent C) declared that the focus of teachers in this school changed from problem solving to teaching and learning and this was due to the participation of parents in school activities which made learners to be less troublesome. He indicated that:

A school with parents that participate in their children's education produce good results as teachers have less behavioural problems which makes them have more time to focus on teaching and learning than focusing on problem solving most of the time. The school atmosphere becomes warm and safe as learners become obedient less trouble and violence at school.

Data in this theme indicated that Phakama Secondary School benefited from the collaboration of the school and parents. Participants mentioned benefits such as well behaving learners, improved academic results, greater focus on teaching and learning, positive school climate, motivated teachers, increased learner enrolment, functionality of the school was enhanced, early arrival at school and reduced absenteeism as well as reduced violent occurrences.

5.3.5. Complexities of utilising school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence

Data generated at Phakama Secondary School so far indicates that school-parent collaboration is a good and effective approach in managing learner social behaviour. Discussions with participants revealed that this collaboration had contributed to the reduction in school violence.

It was also revealed that good as it is, a school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence is not without challenges.

5.3.5.1. Complexities of utilising school-parent collaboration approach emanating from the parents

South Africa is in a difficult time economically; this makes some parents wish not to miss a day at work as most of them are employed on a no-work-no-pay principle. This were communicated by parents to the school when reporting their absence from parents meetings and other activities. Mr Masombuka (Principal) highlighted this in his comment when he said:

Events and meetings scheduled during working hours or traditional school hours may not be convenient for all parents as parents with demanding work schedules or multiple responsibilities find it difficult to attend these meetings, school events, or volunteer opportunities.

Mr Masombuka continued to reveal that some parents were so attached to their children that whatever their children told them, they stood by it. In other words, their children were never wrong. He had this to say:

Other parents have a challenge of believing in their children more than they believe in teachers, so what they get from their learners is correct and doubt what is said by teachers, for example, if a child come home and report that a particular teacher disciplined him or her but he or she was innocent, the parent takes the matter up with the principal without finding out from the teacher concerned and the matter comes to me as a case against the teacher and only to find that the teacher was acting as an innocent and responsible adult giving advise against bullying other learners.

This was confirmed by Mr Ndlela (Teacher A) when he revealed that:

Some parents are defensive of learners, or show favouritism to their children. Some might also have preconceived negative ideas about the school (bad mouthing the school). Some do not rebuke or scold children when they are wrong.

There are still parents who regard teachers as noble and educated people that they should not go closer to since they (parents) were not educated. This created a problem as what was needed by the school from the parents had nothing to do with the parent's education but with their care

and responsibility for the child, especially with regard to social development. This was revealed through further comments by Mr Masombuka (Principal) who asserted that:

Some parents have negative experience or less confidence in engaging with the school, making it challenging for them to participate effectively. In most cases these teachers are ashamed of the fact that they never went to school and see teachers as people on a higher level who need not be disturbed.

Although school-parent collaboration existed at Phakama Secondary School, it was not all parents (100%) that co-operated. Mrs Mthethwa (Departmental Head) exposed this when she said:

We also have a very few parents though who are arrogant and have negative attitude about school meetings and all other messages from the school. Such parents are few and the school is working on a strategy to change their attitude.

Another finding on the attitude of parents is the negative attitude shown by a few parents (one or two sometimes) during meetings. This raised a question that if they were negative in public, how did they portray the school and teachers to their children at home? Mr Ntombela exposed this when he said:

Even if parents come to meetings they become impatient, for example, if they are called for reports they just want reports and no detailed analysis of learner performance. When parents are requested to air their views, we observe that some just fight with teachers, for example, “why are learners called to school on a Saturday or why are they asked to come to school early because it is winter now and it is cold.

The above excerpts from the interviews confirm that there are challenges and complexities surrounding the operations and success of school-parent collaboration. The perspectives come from the parents, and they capture their views and experiences of working with the school and suggest that the collaboration faced challenges. The next section discusses the same issue, but from the perspective of the school.

5.3.5.2. Complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach emanating from the school

Many participants indicated that they did not have bad experiences or challenges created by the school except Mr Mnguni (SGB Chairperson). Mr Mnguni mentioned a challenge that had to

do with the appointments into promotion posts where the SGB had to constitute an Interview Committee to interview candidates, as per the Departmental policy. The chairperson was not happy about the behaviour of teachers during that time as they had their own expectations and ended up making unrealistic conclusions. Mr Mnguni indicated that this also happened in other schools due to unionism and it put their lives (SGB members) in danger. He had this to say:

All start with challenges faced by SGB especially the chairperson. There are times when the school has to interview candidates for management posts (HOD, Deputy Principal and Principal), in most cases unions have interest in these posts and this causes teachers to be divided according to their unions and their wishes as to who should get the post. In many instances after the SGB through the interview committee has finished recommending suitable candidate or candidates, there will be gossips and sometimes threats where teachers are saying the chairperson has recommended someone who is close to his or her heart or who has paid just because the recommended person is not from their union and they will start associating it with political organisations. It is worse if the chairperson is not educated because they start questioning many things like how did the chairperson recommend this person because he or she cannot even understand English yet it is not the chairperson who recommends but the panel has different people and scorers. This damages relationship between the SGB and some of the teachers and destroy the self-esteem in SGB members.

Otherwise, other participants especially parents did not have any issues on this sub theme, they said teachers and the principal valued them as parents and as such they did not have any challenges emanating from the school. There might have been mistakes that were corrected when discovered but not challenges.

One of the parents who revealed that was Mr Ntuli (Parent B) who said:

I do not want to lie, on my side teachers are welcoming and the school principal value us as parents.

Mr Ntuli's revelation was supported by Mr Nhlabathi's (Parent C) statement which went like this:

I do not remember any problem from the side of the teachers. Our teachers seem to be knowing where they are heading and know very well that without parents it will be difficult to reach the destination as a school. Even in parents' meeting

they assure us of our importance in the education of our children. From the side of parents, we have a very few who have problems here and there but the level of collaboration is high in this school.

Data in this theme revealed that indeed there are challenges but more from the the side of parents. This shows that the school is serious about involving parents and they have applied, and are still applying the invitational leadership approach hence the contentment of the majority of parents about the collaboration.

5.3.6. Repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence

Participants revealed that as a school they did not wake up and find themselves where they currently are, but for a long time they experienced the consequences of weak school-parent collaboration. They mentioned that it was only after the arrival of the current principal in 2018 that they started to see things changing, including the attitude of teachers towards parents and that of parents towards teachers. School-parent collaboration became stronger as from 2020 and before that the following were their experiences. Mrs Mthethwa (Departmental Head) alluded to the arrival of the new Principal and what happened thereafter as well as what the situation was before. She revealed that:

In 2018 the new school principal arrived and that was the beginning of change in this school. For the first time we saw the community coming closer to the school. Before this learner behaviour had deteriorated, late coming and absenteeism were rife. The new principal who is still the principal of the school began to make inroads to the community and this started to show fruits as the attitude of the community which was not good at all began changing to better. Parents were involved from then to the development and approval of the learner code of conduct. The school safety committee began to be active in dealing with school safety issues. Parents also began to take part in hearings and discussion of their children's behaviour at school.

The above extract indicates clearly that because of the weak school-parent collaboration, the school had learners behaving badly, leading to a lot of conflicts and fights; the rate of late coming shot up as well as absenteeism. Mrs Mthethwa painted another picture of the other consequences of weak school-parent collaboration from their experience at this school. She mentioned a number of things like the fact that learners became chaotic, the school itself was

unsafe, teachers also changed their behaviour due to fear of being harassed by learners and this led to a drop in academic performance and eventually parents removed their children from the school. She said:

The school becomes chaotic as learners do as they wish since teachers cannot report them to parents. In such a way the school climate becomes negative and unsafe. This leads to some teachers beginning to dodge some periods if the class they must be going in has some troublesome learners as they are afraid to be abused. It becomes difficult to control late coming and absenteeism as when disciplined, learners report teachers to their parents who take the side of their learners. Academic performance goes down as parents do not monitor learners at home and sometimes absent themselves from school. School enrolment decreases as parents remove their children from chaotic and unsafe school.

Mr Ndlela (Teacher A) confirmed that indeed that the school went through the above problems due to weak school-parent collaboration and he even shared statistics as he said:

The school began to show signs of poor performance, reduced enrolment (numbers). The school ended up being labelled a bad school. Our learner enrolment in 2017 had gone down to 571 from 709 and this year in 2025 we have 865 learners.

The weak school-parent collaboration did not only make the school suffer, learners also suffered as they had no social guidance from parents to help them live well with others at school. Mr Ntombela (Teacher B) remarked:

The learner first is disadvantaged as parents are supposed to guide their children on social issues and this makes the school a chaotic place as learners do as they wish because their parents are not close to teachers. Negative school climate results in escalation of violent occurrences.

Mr Mnguni related the association of teachers, parents and learners to a three-legged pot and mentioned that if one leg is broken, definitely the association will be weak and in the case of school-parent collaboration if one party is passive the collaboration becomes weak. He said:

As I have mentioned that in three-legged pot if one leg is missing, the pot cannot stand, parents are first teachers of learners especially teaching them about social life. They are the persons who know the behaviour, challenges and strengths of their children and therefore if the school does not get that information it becomes difficult to help the child develop in totality. In schools where parents are distant

the level of indiscipline is high as learners do as they wish and make false reports to their parents.

Mr Ntuli (Parent B) also mentioned that teachers ended up being discouraged, demotivated and confused because of weak school-parent collaboration as some learners were at a level of ill-discipline that needed the intervention of the family, but families could not come on board. He put it like this:

Teachers do not know who to work with when learners are rude and violent at school, as a result the school end up being violent and chaotic. When the school is chaotic some teachers get discouraged and start blaming SMT, therefore this causes division among teachers. Once teachers get discouraged they start to dodge classes. Teachers dodging classes and learners playing truancy lead to poor academic achievement. Poor academic achievement lead to parents distrusting teachers and speaking evil about them in the community. The community end up withdrawing their children from the school.

It must be remembered that in this very data one participant mentioned an incident when a learner arrived in the classroom and assaulted another learner with an axe in front of the female teacher and learners. Mr Nhlabathi (Parent C) attributed that to a weak school-parent collaboration that resulted in a negative school climate. This is what he had to say:

If the school-parent association is weak the school develops a highly negative climate as the rate of school violence rise and threaten safety of learners and staff at school. We experienced that many times in this school including the incident where a learner assaulted another learner with an axe.

These findings make it clear that schools and parents need to work together to see learner discipline improving. If learner discipline improves a lot of positive conditions follow, for example, better academic performance, improved school attendance, late coming becoming a thing of the past, school climate changing from negative to positive and the school environment becoming safer. Teaching and learning becomes the main focus. All of these result in a healthy relationship between the school and the community.

5.3.7. Strategies to navigate complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence

Academic and social development of children is remarkably enhanced by powerful collaboration between teachers and parents. Regardless of the gains of school-parent collaboration, data in this study revealed that there are practices or actions that impede either teachers or parents being vigorously participative in the collaboration. It is imperative for both the school and parents to come up with strategies that will assist in countering these challenges for school-parent collaboration to be strong and effective. Mr Masombuka (Principal) mentioned a number of strategies applied in his school. He firstly emphasised the importance of open communication by saying:

To counter these difficulties, schools implement several strategies such as multiple communication platforms which may be emails, newsletters, social media and school website depending on what is mostly used by the community. Parents share their concerns, suggestions and feedback in these platforms. The school also schedule meetings and events at different times, including evenings and weekends, to accommodate parents' diverse schedules. We have observed that the community spend a lot of time on face book and other platforms. We also communicate to them using their language although we once had a problem of some teachers forgetting and using English language sometimes but we have corrected that. We also have an open-door policy where parents make appointments to visit the school and meet with teachers and principal between 13h30 and 14h30, this strategy is managed by our deputy principal.

Mr Masombuka (Principal) also commented about the environment of the school being inviting and teachers welcoming to stakeholders. This made parents feel free to visit the school or contact the school for any information, whether the information was to be received from the school or from the parent to teachers. Mr Masombuka remarked:

In our school we make sure that the school atmosphere is welcoming, we do this through our friendly staff who treat parents like customers and always assure them that the school loves them. Our school also has clear signage for principal's office, staff room, tuck shop, toilets and all other important places in the school. This creates an inviting environment.

Collaboration is also about social capital. Social capital builds powerful networks, encourages co-operation and shared action. This can be successful if there is empowerment. Those who are knowledgeable should assist others to come to their level so that they can act collectively. Again Mr Masombuka (Principal) revealed that the school also workshopped parents as a strategy to give them skills to be effective parents. He said:

We also offer workshops to parents on topics such as understanding the school operational system, helping with homework, and effective parenting strategies. In some cases, we involve other governmental departments through our parents who work for those departments.

Mrs Mthethwa (Departmental Head) revealed that the school made the parents aware of their importance as one strategy to strengthen the collaboration. This made parents realise that they were in the correct partnership. Parents were also taken good care of during parents' meeting as they were provided with catering to accommodate those who stay far away from the school and those who take medication. She said:

When parents are attending parents' meeting, the school ensures that they are catered for with something to eat as we understand that some are from poverty stricken environments and cannot stay focussed for long and others are from far places, this has seen us seeing increase in the number of parents attending school meetings. I'm not saying that parents come for food, the way parents are handled by the principal and SGB during these meetings make parents see that they are an important part of the school. They are told that they are important and all the achievements by the school are because of their will to work with teachers.

Mrs Mthethwa further revealed the strategy used by the School Principal who offered himself and the SGB to the traditional council, to be invited to their meetings to clarify any confusion raised by the community about the school. She put it this way:

The principal offered himself and the SGB to the traditional leadership by saying should they have anything that they do not understand concerning school issues they should invite the SGB to a traditional meeting to clarify that, as a result traditional leadership is very cooperative when their intervention is sought by the school.

This strategy assisted because sometimes when the community has a problem about the school they go straight to *izinduna* instead of coming to school. This makes sure that no confusion is

left unattended to. According to Mr Ndlela (Teacher A) the school tried by all means to make parents feel free to talk about anything they felt would assist children in their academic and social journey. Another strategy used by the school was to create a space in learners' report cards for parents to request a meeting with the school if they felt they needed to discuss something about their children's education. Mr Ndlela stated:

We have a space in the learner academic report card where a parent can request a meeting with the school to discuss their child's progress.

Mr Ndlela also stressed the point of communication as an important strategy as he said:

We also have communication books to parents in mother tongue and when parents have seen the messages they sign and write back if there is a need.

Warm welcoming of parents or stakeholders seems to be the order of the day in this school and a strategy that seems to be working for the school. This is mentioned because Mr Ntombela (Teacher B) made mention again of the warm welcoming of parents, as other participants had also mentioned it. They said this made parents feel important and appreciated and therefore they were motivated to stay in the partnership. Mr Ntombela commented:

There is nothing more influential than making parents to feel needed and welcomed by the school. The warm reception depicting trust and 'we cannot do it without you' attitude is very important. Our school does this, in meetings parents are assured of their importance in the education of their children. The principal even says "I am a respected principal in the district because of the type of parents I work with".

The visibility of teachers in the community during happy or sad times was important to make parents realise that the school was part of them and in return they became part of the school.

Mr Mnguni (SGB Chairperson) revealed this:

We also make sure as a school that we send delegates to families of our learners if there are unfortunate circumstances, for example, death.

The school also celebrated important days with parents, making them part of activities, exchanging knowledge and building an environment that was supportive. This was divulged by Mr Ntuli (Parent B) when he talked about what the school did as one of the strategies to build support. He said:

At school we have a Parents' Day where parents are entertained by teachers and learners; an awards day where learners who excelled academically and in co-curricular activities are invited together with their parents to be awarded as

well as the Heritage Day that we celebrate with the community and teachers as well as learners. We request all attendees to wear traditional attire if they have it.

Mr Nhlabathi (Parent C) shared that the school sometimes made use of other parents to address a parent's meeting about the importance of being part of the child's education as a parent. This is how he put it:

We have requested the SGB to invite a parent either from our own or any other parent of a learner from any other school to address the parents' meeting about the importance of parents working with the school rather than teachers only emphasising this.

Again, Mr Nhlabathi shared another strategy which exhibited parents' ownership of their school. Mr Nhlabathi indicated that:

As parents we have requested the Principal to get us a person who can organise school golf shirts to be bought by parents, many parents have started buying these golf shirts which is a symbol of parents owning their children's school.

Depending on the context and the understanding of the community by the school or the understanding of the school by the community, strategies may vary. Each strategy needs to be implemented, monitored and reviewed, if necessary, until the positive impact shows.

5.3.8. Conclusion

Perspectives of the Principal, Departmental Head, Chairperson of the SGB, parents and teachers were presented in this chapter. Data presentation was done from the perspective of Phakama Secondary School. Seven themes emerged from the analysis, and they informed the organisation of the discussion. These themes are stakeholders understanding of violence and its consequences on safety and the functionality of the school, establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence, the intervention of community leadership – traditional leadership in reducing school violence, benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, challenges of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence, repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence and strategies to navigate challenges of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ROLE AND COMPLEXITIES OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION IN REDUCING SCHOOL VIOLENCE: PERSPECTIVES FROM QHUBEKANI SECONDARY SCHOOL

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Five presented findings on school-parent collaboration to reduce school violence from the perspective of Phakama Secondary School participants. These perspectives were obtained from the Principal of the school, Departmental Head, other two teachers, SGB Chairperson and other two parents. The discussion commenced by laying out the school profile followed by the community and participants' profiles, and then the data that came up from my engagements with different participants iPhakama Secondary School was discussed. The analysis of data brought up seven key themes that will be discussed after the participants' profiles. These themes are stakeholders' understanding of violence and its consequences on safety and the functionality of the school, establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence, the intervention of community leadership – traditional leadership in reducing school violence, benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, challenges of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence, repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence and strategies to navigate challenges of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach.

6.2 The school, community and the participants' profiles

The profiling of the school and community helps by providing readers with contextual understanding of where interviews took place. For the protection of their identities, all participants were given *pseudonyms*. The profiles that are presented begin that of the school, followed by that of the community and lastly the participants.

6.2.1 Profile of Qhubekani Secondary School

Qhubekani Secondary School was established in 1985. It was called Qhubekani in honour of the great grandfather of the current Inkosi whose name was Qhubekani. The school is located in a rural area called Bomvini in King Cetshwayo District. It is situated almost 21 kilometres from the nearest town. The road to school branches from the main tarred road to town and the distance is about five kilometres. This is the gravel road which becomes very bad after heavy rains. The first Grade 12 (matric) class at Qhubekani Secondary School was introduced in 1997. Public transport is not that reliable in this area and as a result, teachers use the staff car to and from work. On approaching the school one sees two school located next to each other. The first one is Qhubekani Secondary School and the other one is the primary school. Those are only two schools in Bomvini area. The school is well fenced with a security guard at the gate. Qhubekani Secondary School has four blocks of classrooms, Principal and Deputy Principal's offices, a staff room which is also used by Departmental Heads, a kitchen and an administration clerk's office. The school has a small office for the administration clerk, a container laboratory and no library. The school is electrified and has a borehole with tanks on high stands for water. Water is pumped up to the tanks. The school still uses pit toilets as the Departmental budget has not allowed for the building of flushing toilets. The borehole was erected in 2021.

The school staff of Qhubekani Secondary School consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal, four Departmental Heads, twenty teachers, one administration clerk, one security guard, one cleaner and three food handlers assisting in the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). The school had a learner enrolment of 823 learners in 2025. The school is a Quintile 2 school meaning not less than 40% of their learners are from poor backgrounds.

Matric results have improved from 64% in 2018, going up to 67% in 2019, 80% in 2020, 83% in 2021, 87% in 2022, 87% again in 2023 in 2023 and 96% in 2024.

MATRIC PERFORMANCE AS FROM 2018	
2024 pass rate	96%
2023 pass rate	87%
2022 pass rate	87%
2021 pass rate	83.2%
2020 pass rate	80%
2019 pass rate	67%
2018 pass rate	64.3%

Table 11: Matric pass rate as from 2018

6.2.2 The profile of Bomvini Community

Qhubekani Secondary School is situated in the Bomvini rural area. There is gravel road branching from the tarred main road to access the community area. The road becomes very bad after heavy rains. Public transport is available but is not reliable after heavy rains as the road becomes bad. Statistics South Africa (2022) presented a report that the area is 100% rural having a population of 5900 people. Only 13.1% of households use water from taps or tanks. Taps are frequently dry and 86.9% are dependent on public water tanks placed by the municipality and in some cases they use stream water. The gravity of the situation is evidenced by the fact that 96.5% of the population still make use of pit toilets and only 3,5% make use of flushing toilets connected to sewerage. In terms of the population profile, 52.3% of household have females as heads of families and 47,7% are male headed. Progress is visible in terms of electrification where, 97% of homes are electrified.

HOUSEHOLD UTILITIES AND HEADS STATISTICS	
Households dependent on water delivered by municipality and water from streams	86.9%
Households using pit toilets	96.7%
Household headed by females	52.3%
Electrified households	97%

Table 12: Household utilities at Bomvini (Adapted from Stats SA,2022)

The level of formal education at Bomvini is as low as in many other rural areas. According to Statistics South Africa (2022) only 5.2% of the residents went beyond Grade 12 (matric), that is, holding certificates, diplomas and degrees, whereas, 31.7% have Grade 12 (matric) and 5,2% never went to school. Those who dropped out before reaching Grade 12 (matric) are reflected as 57.9%.

FORMAL EDUCATION STATISTICS	
Beyond matric (certificates, diplomas, degrees)	5.2%
Matric	31.7%
No schooling	5,2%
Dropped before matric	57.9%

Table 13: Formal education statistics at Bomvini (Adapted from Stats SA, 2022)

6.2.3 The profile of participants

There were seven participants in this site, who were Mr Nene, the principal; Mr Buthelezi, the departmental head; Mrs Mhlongo, a teacher; Miss Mgenge, a teacher; Mr Zulu, the SGB Chair; Mrs Nkabinde, a parent and Mrs Skhakhane, a parent.

Participant's name and position	Age	Gender	Years in service	Highest education
Mr Nene: Principal	60	Male	20	M Ed
Mr Buthelezi: Departmental Head	55	Male	18	B Paed
Mrs Mhlongo: Teacher A	51	Female	17	B Ed

Miss Mgenge: Teacher B	37	Female	09	B Ed
Mr Zulu – SGB Chair (Parent A)	57	Male	07	Grade 11
Mrs Nkabinde – Parent B	54	Female	01	Grade 9
Mrs Skhakhane – Parent C	40	Female	04	Grade 12

Table 14: QSS participants’ level of education and other details

6.3 Perspectives transpiring from Qhubekani Secondary School

Findings from Qhubekani Secondary School will be discussed under seven major themes, namely, (a) Stakeholders’ understandings of violence and its consequences for safety and the functionality of the school, (b) Establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence, (c) The intervention of community leadership – traditional leadership in reducing school violence, (d) The benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, (e) The complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence, (f) The repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence and (g) Strategies to navigate the complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach.

6.3.1 Stakeholders’ understandings of school violence and its consequences for safety and functionality of the school

All interviewed participants, who were the Principal, Deputy Principal, Departmental Head, two teachers, the SGB Chairperson, and two parents declared their understandings of school violence. However, they mentioned that not all school violence occurrences they mentioned happened in their school, but these occurrences happened in other schools since there were many reports of school violence in print and electronic media and others had their relatives’ children attending schools where these violent occurrences were prevalent. Mr Nene, the Principal indicated that although there were other forms of school violence, the main violent occurrences that took place frequently in school were faction fights. He said:

School violence is the act of harming others physically, psychologically, emotionally and sexually taking place at school among learners mainly during activities and on the way from school to home. In our school the major occurrence until 2019 were faction fights. We have learners coming from

different tribal authorities. In most cases fights would be between learners coming from these tribal authorities. These fights were a thorn in the flesh of the school in such a way that sometimes even during exam time learners would write their exam under heavy police guard.

The principal mentioned that the main form of school violence they experienced in school until 2019 were faction fights. Mr Buthelezi, the Departmental head, mentioned a number of violent occurrences but also emphasised that the main problem they had in the school previously was faction fights. The Departmental Head also mentioned one rape incident that took place. He commented:

Aggressive behaviour among learners leading to physical and emotional harm taking place during school hours or after school before learners reach their homes. Physical fighting among learners is one of them. In some cases, learners fight in groups which is known as faction fights and this is one problem we had in this school previously. Although we do not have much of this in our school, rape is one of violent occurrences, it happened once in 2017 on the way from school to home when a girl learner was allegedly raped by a boy learner who never returned to school after that.

Mrs Mhlongo, Teacher A also attested to the issue of faction fights occurring for a number of years until 2019. What also came up from many participants was the issue of bullying although they mentioned that these issues of bullying had been reduced. Mrs Mhlongo mentioned the effect of these violent occurrences on teaching and learning. She indicated:

In most cases it is bullying which also take place in primary schools. Although we do not have much of this in our school, rape is one of violent occurrences, it happened once in 2017 on the way from school to home when a girl learner was allegedly raped by a boy learner who never returned to school after that. These violent activities impact negatively on teaching and learning as sometimes teachers have to abandon their lessons and go and manage these situations.

Miss Mgenge, Teacher B also presented the issue of faction fights that took place in the school. She even mentioned a disturbing situation where due to faction fights learners wrote their final examinations under heavy police guard. She had this to say:

School violence is intentional harmful behaviour by learners. This takes place at school during school activities or on the way from school to home. In our

school we used to have a lot of faction fights among groups of learners from different areas and in most cases from different izinduna. At times these faction fights would take place during the writing of matric examination and have candidates writing under the guard of police officers.

Seemingly this school was a battlefield until 2019. All participants mentioned the issue of faction fights. Mr Zulu, the SGB Chairperson also based his response on faction fights in the school as a major problem although he did mention other forms of school violence. The SGB chairperson also discussed how these faction fights manifested and how they impacted on teaching and learning as well as on learner behaviour. He presented like this:

School violence is infliction of pain caused by one learner to the other during school hours. The faction fights emanated from outside the school in most cases, for example, during community gatherings like weddings, imigonqo, imemulo and others where the youth would quarrel and thereafter groups buy the quarrel and solve each other during school hours. This situation totally changed the behaviour of learners at school, they would come to school carrying weapons and drugs. Their attitude changed even towards teachers. Having them coming to school with weapons that they hid outside school premises and only retrieved them when the fight had started caused them to start individual fights with other learners because they knew they had weapons concealed somewhere. This also led to male learners to start harassing female learners sexually which was the third violent occurrence after individual physical fights.

When these faction fights erupted even teachers got traumatised because of the violent behaviour of learners and different types of weapons they carried. This was revealed by Mrs Nkabinde, Parent B who said:

School violence is learner on learner violence taking place during school hours and in our school it was mostly in the form of faction fights. When these fights break up it escapes your mind that these are learners due to different types of ammunition they carry and use to assault each other. Even teachers are not able to control them when these fights start as they also get traumatised, only police intervene. This has happened for a number of years in our school.

Faction fights used to halt the school functionality for several days as learners feared to be caught in the middle of the battle. This was revealed by Mrs Skhakhane:

These faction fights could halt the functionality of a school for up to a week with learners who are not part of it not coming to school because of fear. This is how mostly school violence prevailed in our school, learners used to harm one another using weapons during school hours.

Data reflecting this theme clearly indicates that this school had a highly disturbing problem of school violence. Other forms of school violence prevailed but the most prevalent form of school violence were faction fights that ended in 2019, according to participants. It is also evident that participants understood school violence and had experienced gruesome violence in the form of faction fights. They also revealed the negative effects of these faction fights on school functionality.

6.3.2. Establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence

Qhubekani Secondary School teachers had for a long time wanted the full attention and cooperation of parents as collaborators in reducing school violence. However, there were threats to this sought-after collaboration. One of the threats came from faction fights that destabilised the operations of the school, and parents were not keen to frequently visit the school. In addition, there was a high level of rudeness among some learners, and parents in this school belonged to two tribal areas with two different *Amakhosi*. Because of the faction fights that were mostly between learners from the two tribal areas, even parents had developed an attitude towards those parents who came from the other traditional community, with a different Inkosi from theirs. It was therefore difficult to work fully with parents under such circumstances. It was only after 2019 when one parent came to the principal with a suggestion about a school violence indaba and the Principal informed the SGB and the Circuit Office. The parent, because of his contacts, managed to organise several governmental departments like Health, Social Development, Safety and Security, Home Affairs, Sports and Recreation, Office of the Premier, District Municipality and Local Municipality. The school was tasked by the organising committee to invite two *Amakhosi* and *Izinduna*, parents and learners. The Circuit Manager invited the District Director and other District Officials. The programme was highly successful and that marked the end of faction fights in the school. Mr Nene, the Principal had this to say:

Thanks to the idea that came up with a parent in 2019 due to serial faction fights at the school. Firstly, its acceptance by all stakeholders, preparations until the last day and its implementation on the day was a turning point in the life of the school. This proved that parents have a major role to play in the education of their children and in the welfare and safety of schools.

This came at an appropriate time as the school had been yearning for collaboration, but the unfriendly and unsafe environment was chasing parents away from school. It took only one parent to bring together different communities of fighting factions with the government and fortunately the school was ready and had long wanted peace by all means. The school worked hard with this parent and together with the Circuit Office to have those fighting communities holding each other's hand and according to Mr Buthelezi, the Departmental Head parents were expressing themselves on the same day of the imbizo saying:

We are prepared come rain or shine to stand and take up our place as parents. Mr Skhosana (pseudonym for parent who came up with the idea) represented us all as parents by introducing this idea, letting him down will be letting our children down. We need to stand with teachers after all it is for the good of our children's development. Our children got an opportunity of being told by former learners who are now doctors, lawyers, teachers and managers that living a conflicted life leaves you holding nothing and it destroys your dreams and future. As they are now employed in different places of work they say they come across those who were in this school but busy with negative activities like fighting, harassing teachers and getting involved in all forms of school violence and they are nobody today.

This gathering was an eye opener to many learners, and it automatically brought teachers and parents together and the school seized the opportunity to continue to play its role as it implemented an invitational leadership approach to parents and the community. The sustainability of what had been established was necessary so that the situation would not go back to what it was before. For sustainability to be achieved both parties (teachers and parents) needed to play their roles.

6.3.2.1 The role of the school in establishing and maintaining collaboration with parents to reduce school violence

Parents committed themselves to partnering with teachers after one of them (Mr Skhosana) had shown them that as parents, they had the capacity to help the school change the situation, and the school assured parents of the freedom of communication because that is how collaboration could be made strong. The school had to make parents aware of the communication channels and platforms. Therefore, the first role of the school was to open a two-way communication channel to allow both the school and parents to receive and send information to each other. This was revealed by Mr Nene, the Principal when he said:

Open and two-way communication is one strategy that cause parents to be free to talk to teachers. If parents see that teachers value and respect them they even go out and look for donations for a school which is a sign of ownership.

Miss Mgenge, Teacher B confirmed what was said by the Principal when she said communication enhanced the relationship between the school and parents:

Communication makes the relationship between school and parents to be alive and parents are able to receive all information pertaining to their children's education and teachers on the other side are able to report and get reports about learners behaviour and be in a position to advise parents which means together they deal with any problem that comes up which might be a threat to a safe school environment as well as learners' development.

Mr Buthelezi, the Departmental Head also made a comment on the role of the school opening communication lines but went further to mention communication platforms used by the school. This is what he said:

The lines of communication are open on both sides, that is, teachers to parents and parents to teachers. All our parents have cell phone numbers of class teachers and subject teachers of their children and they know exactly when to phone so as not to disturb teachers in classes. This makes communication easy. The school also uses platforms like face book and WhatsApp to communicate with parents.

In playing its role in managing learner behaviour the school also developed a learner code of conduct that the collaboration always drew on in cases where there was misconduct by any

learner. Before its implementation the learner code of conduct was approved by parents in their meeting. This was revealed by Mrs Mhlongo, Teacher A when he said:

Our school has a learner code of conduct which is well known and understood by learners and their parents. This learner code of conduct also gives us the direction as to when we must we call parents of both learners immediately so that the matter is quickly resolved before other learners or members of the community take part in the conflict.

Mrs Mhlongo continued and revealed that the school also accepted the role to workshop parents on countering some of the social ills like drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and others, especially because these social ills impacted negatively on the behaviour of learners.

Mrs Mhlongo commented:

Out of four compulsory parents meetings in one of them an expert is identified looking at the problems in the community and targeting our parents for expert advice or workshop, for example, identifying a child that has started using drugs and the options available for a parent to start intervening. We had the last address of this nature in the first semester of 2024 and the attendance was good, parents were very happy to be assisted by SAPS, social Development and Health. We identified a few parents who did not have children at school but were allowed to be part of the target group as we still had space in our school hall. In fact, these were parents whose children were still at our neighbouring primary school.

The school also provided teachers with workshops covering working with parents and implementing the Invitational Leadership approach. This was revealed by Miss Mgenge, Teacher B when she postulated:

Parents' meetings become invitational besides the fact that the school environment on its own is invitational which is due to workshops organised by the SMT for all teachers on invitational approach and invitational leadership which has worked positively on the attitudes of teachers towards stakeholders especially parents and the community.

Miss Mgenge (Teacher B) also revealed that the school organised and administered meetings for parents in their different forms, for example, school parents' meetings, grade meetings, one on one meetings and others. This is how she put it:

We have four compulsory meeting with parents per year. We have one grade meeting with parents of learners in each grade per term meaning we have two per year. Parents are also at liberty to make appointments to come and discuss issues pertaining to the education of their children with teachers. However, there are specific times available for these appointments, for example, break times, that particular teachers free periods and after 13h30.

The extract above indicates that communication between the school and parents had improved, and that such meetings with parents suggest the school's invitational posture. It has also become clear that meetings were not just haphazardly done but were carefully planned in such a way that there was minimal disruption to the teaching and learning programme.

6.3.2.2 The role of parents in establishing and maintaining collaboration with schools to reduce school violence

As data indicated in Qhubekani Secondary School it was the teachers who were trying by all means to play their role without parents being actively involved before 2019. This did not result in any collaboration as in collaboration all involved parties must play their roles. Only after 2019 the results of parental roles began to show up. It must be mentioned though that some parents did play their roles before 2019 but very few of them were supporting their children and, as a result of that, the effort could not reduce school violence. After 2019, parents in this school became vocal in matters concerning their children's education which was not the case before. It was their role to add their voices in the cause of educating their children. This was revealed by Mr Nene, the Principal of the school as he said:

After the coming together of all governmental departments, parents, Amakhosi, teachers and learners at a function initiated by one parent, all parents developed the urge to be vocal about the education of their children. Many of them who were negative about the school and teachers changed as they realised that it was due to them distancing themselves that learners were chaotic and involved in many violent activities.

Being a positive role model is what all parents should strive to be, for their children to copy the right style of living. Many parents in this school played this role after committing to be part of

the school. The change of learners' behaviour told the story. Mr Buthelezi, the Departmental Head exposed this:

Parents play multiple roles in the lives of their children and these roles help shape the behaviour of children in the community as well as at schools. Parents are role models to their children, if parents live a violence free life and are able to resolve their differences through negotiations, children copy that style of living and practice it even at school.

Parents were also teachers for their children. Those who did not do it from birth developed the courage to sit down with their children and instil social and cultural values. The school violence indaba alone could not put the school where it is today but by teachers and parents assuming these roles the objectives of seeing the school with less violence and improved learner behaviour was enhanced. This was presented by Mr Buthelezi again, He said:

Learners rely and believe more in their parents than in teachers. What their parents teach them at home from birth which is more socially oriented like good behaviour and other cultural values they cling to that and practice it even at school. This makes our work as teachers easier because we focus more on academic activities. Therefore, parents are first teachers of their children.

Miss Mgenge (Teacher B) mentioned two roles parents of Qhubekani Secondary School played which were the roles of being providers and protectors of their children. She indicated:

Parents are also providers and protectors of their children. Even when children are at school, parents still have a duty to ensure that they are safe hence the need to collaborate with schools. All these assists in reducing school violence.

Mr Zulu, the SGB Chairperson stressed the importance of positive role models that parents of this school played. He even mentioned that learners changed their behaviour after the change of attitude of their parents. He said:

When parents started to respect, trust and accept teachers as their partners in the development of their children, learners too began to respect teachers and other learners.

Still on the role of positive role modelling, Mrs Skhakhane (Parent C) gave praise to the parent who came up with the idea of a School Violence Indaba. This is what she had to say:

One parent in the community rose above all people in the community and came up with the idea of holding this indaba which was very successful. This parent

became a role model to the whole community and that is what parents should be to their children. A child that stays with a peaceful family appreciates peace but a child that stays with a violent family believes that problems can be better solved with violence.

The integration of teachers and parents' efforts is the recipe for school violence reduction. This is according to the findings in this theme.

6.3.3 The intervention of community leadership – traditional leadership in reducing school violence

When violent occurrences and other disruptions took place at school, the SGB weighed these cases and outsourced those they felt were beyond their level. Some cases, for example, where they recommended the expulsion of learners, were outsourced to the Head of Department. There were also cases that were outsourced to traditional leadership. This was done often in this school especially because the most prevalent forms of violence were faction fights. In their nature, faction fights happened at school but did not start at school. The Chairperson of the SGB who was a member of the community and also a member of the traditional council of Induna explained how, in most cases, these faction fights originated. He said:

These faction fights emanated from outside the school in most cases, for example, during community gatherings like weddings, imigonqo, imemulo [sort of 21st birthday celebrations but traditionally] and others where the youth would quarrel and thereafter groups buy the quarrel and solve each other during school hours.

As these faction fights emanated from the community and were between learners from different traditional councillors (izinduna) they had the potential to make the whole community take up arms and fight, so consequently their cases were referred to the traditional council which worked together with the School Disciplinary Committee. Without the intervention of traditional leadership, the school would not be where it is today. Once a learner was summoned to appear before the traditional leadership the whole family of the learner got embarrassed. The fact that the school was not closed for frequent battles was because of the intervention of traditional leadership which contributed to the reduction of school violence mostly when the parents were at a distance. The Principal of the school, Mr Nene elaborated on the role of traditional leadership in the school when he said:

Parents and izinduna from both tribal authorities played and still play a major role in assisting the school to handle such occurrences. This has led to izinduna from different tribal authorities to work together towards school safety issues. There will always be a meeting between izinduna and parents of involved learners and learners themselves whenever these faction fights erupt. These meetings are to discuss and resolve the quarrels. In some cases, the police are involved in these meetings.

Mr Buthelezi, (Departmental Head) in supporting what the Principal said also revealed that traditional leadership took charge of faction fight cases. He also mentioned that traditional councillors (izinduna) were highly co-operative when he said:

In the cases like physical fights, assaults parents are invited to the school without any delay. In the case of faction fights parents of all learners are invited to school and the intervention of traditional leaders is sought. Izinduna have been highly co-operative in the case of faction fights as these were the main violent occurrences before 2019 in this school.

It was also found that not only faction fight cases were referred to traditional leadership but any other case that was found to have the potential to cause conflict in the community was referred to traditional leadership. This was reported by Mrs Mhlongo, Teacher A:

If the school feels the matter might cause conflict in the community, izinduna are involved.

Mr Zulu, Chairperson of the SGB also confirmed the intervention of traditional leadership and mentioned that in some cases it was co-ordinated with services such as counselling where it was felt this was needed. Counselling involved social workers or psychologists who worked with traditional leaders. This is what he said:

To resolve the issue of faction fights we involve even the traditional leadership who are always willing to work with the school. We also involve other governmental departments like Social development who help with counselling services to learners and teachers. This involvement of other stakeholders especially parents and the community has helped the school and we no more have faction fights at school.

The school was fortunate enough to work well with traditional leaders. Inkosi has power over parents and their entire families. A school that is supported by Inkosi gets respected by the community as Inkosi's authority is recognised by all members of the community.

6.3.4 Benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence

When teachers and parents work together for the betterment of a child's education and social development, learners feel accommodated and given the means to grow, with the knowledge that the very important characters in their existence have formed partnerships for their development and growth, placing their interest at the fore of their expedition. Due to strong school-parent collaborations formed as from 2019 learners at Qhubekani Secondary School changed and became disciplined learners and teachers had an opportunity to focus on teaching.

Mr Nene, the Principal of the school revealed that when he said:

A school where parents are part of their children's education has disciplined learners. This assists teachers because they spend most of their time in teaching and learning and not in disciplining learners.

Mr Buthelezi, the Departmental Head explained that the fact that learners became disciplined did not mean total eradication of conflicts at school, but strong school-parent collaboration made learners realise the importance of helping each other solve their own conflicts. He said:

Yes, parents' participation is beneficial to the school. I will make an example about our school, since parents became interested in being part of their children's education we have seen a lot of changes. First of all, the behaviour of learners has been amazing after 2019, this does not mean that there are no conflicts at school but most of them do not even reach teachers' attention as learners themselves are able to resolve them.

Academic performance improved at Qhubekani Secondary School from around 60% to between 80% and 100%. This was due to what the principal revealed, that teachers had more time to focus on teaching and learners on learning. Similarly, this was exposed by Mr Buthelezi as he said:

Academic performance of learners has changed dramatically, the performance is good ranging between 80 and 100% every year especially with matric learners.

The relationship and understanding between the teachers and the parents were enhanced. Parents began to communicate directly with the teachers if they had challenges or unclear issues. They stopped blaming the teachers for the wrong deeds of their children and they also stopped being attitudinal about the teachers. Mrs Mhlongo (Teacher A) postulated:

Yes, it is highly beneficial, nowadays parents seem to be very defensive in matters that concern their children. If they are not closely involved in their children's education they always blame teachers for wrong things done by their children. When parents are involved in the education of their children they understand teachers, understand policies of the school and communicate directly with teachers should there be any challenges about their children's school life and not communicate badly through children, for example, done parent told her child that "umtshele-ke lothisha wakho ukuthi mina sengaqeda ukufunda, ngakho angakuthumi uzobuza kimi izinto okufanele akufundise zona". [The IsiZulu part says-tell that teacher of yours that I finished school therefore she must not send you to ask me things that she should be teaching you]. Such attitude makes the learner to be stubborn and do anyhow to teachers and other learners.

Learner enrolment grew rapidly as community members began to recommend the school to their relatives and friends because of good things happening at the school, for example, improved academic achievement, disciplined learners, motivated teachers, good relations between teachers and parents and other things. Miss Mgenge (Teacher B) came up with:

Such schools have their learner enrolment growing up year by year.

Teachers and learners were all motivated because of the changed situation at school. This was alluded to by Miss Mgenge again:

This also motivates both teachers and learners to work hard.

Mr Zulu statistically explained the rate at which learner enrolment grew when he said:

We had between 500 and 600 learners before 2020 but now we have more than 800 learners at school, the increase in the enrolment began when our matric results started to go up due to reduced school violence.

The SGB Chairperson also revealed that increased learner enrolment resulted in increased funding from the Department of Education as schools are funded according to their learner enrolment and also qualify for additional teachers to take care of additional learners. He said:

The increase in the school enrolment means bigger funding from the Department of Education and more teachers as all this is allocated per number of learners.

The school became safe after it had been unsafe for a long time. The community, including parents were then free to visit the school without the fear of being caught in the battle of factions. Mrs Nkabinde (Parent B) commented:

Yes, it is beneficial, I am a witness to that. Before 2020 our school was a no-go area to many of us as parents because we feared that our children will start a fight while we are within school premises. The school was not safe at all. These fights would break up two or three times in a term. The school was constantly having police officers around. Since we had a programme where different stakeholders gathered at school to discuss this issue of violence in our school the situation has changed. Parents are now fully involved in school activities and violence at school has decreased, faction fights are a thing of the past due to parental involvement.

Mrs Skhakhane(Parent C) confirmed that indeed school-parent collaboration reduced school violence. She said:

Schools with well behaving learners has less learner behavioural problems, like fighting, bullying, harassment and others. We have experienced that in this school.

Data is clear in that school-parent collaboration did benefit the school and reduced certain violent occurrences.

6.3.5 Complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence

Data in the previous themes indicated that there is school-parent collaboration at Qhubekani Secondary School especially after 2019. From the interviews it was also clear that the existence of school-parent collaboration revealed some challenges pertaining to its implementation. Participants indicated that parents had many challenges emanating from the collaboration, more than those emanating from the school hence in this theme I will discuss challenges from the parents' side and then challenges from the school's side.

6.3.5.1 Complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence emanating from the parents

Participants indicated that although a few of these challenges still exist many of them were resolved when teachers and parents started to be more committed to working as a team. Parents did not attend their meetings at school and made no apologies. Not even 20% would turn up for a meeting. Even when parents were invited to discuss their children's misbehaviour and involvement in violent occurrences, some did not bother to come until the learner was instructed to stay at home and only come back with a parent. In short, some parents were very defiant, they just took the school as a dumping zone. Mr Nene, the Principal commented like this:

These were, among others, parents not attending meeting and most of them not even apologising for their absence. At that time out of more than six hundred parents less than a hundred would attend and even far less sometimes.

Relatives who were left with children while their (Children's) biological parents were at work far away had attitudes as the children were not theirs and these attitudes disadvantaged the children. They would always pass unpleasant remarks about teachers and learners took these remarks back to teachers. This was also revealed by the Principal when he said:

Such people do not have time for other things except their drinking habits. If they are invited for school meetings they either come late having started with their drinking or never come saying "we finished school long ago and these teachers must not bother us".

Parents threw away their right to be the first teachers of their children. They placed everything on the shoulders of teachers hence they did not respond even when invited by the school. Mr Buthelezi, Deputy Principal commented about this:

Yes, there are, especially before 2019 parents looked at the school as the entity that fulfils all their aspirations about their children in such a way that some parents would even question their children "kanti nifundiswani esikoleni?" if the child could not greet a relative or neighbour [The part in IsiZulu is asking – what are they teaching you at school?]. Surprisingly this is one of the social values that should be developed from the birth of a child. Even if a child misbehaves some parents still had a belief that the school should go it alone and put their children in line.

Some parents had their parental roles played by the learners, for example, some learners at Qhubekani Secondary School played the role of being parents and even attended parents' meetings for their siblings in primary schools because at home, they stayed with grandparents, meaning that when it was their turn for parents to attend meeting, no one attended as grandparents were old and sickly. This was revealed by Mrs Mhlongo (Teacher A) when she said:

Minimal as they are but there are because it is not 100% of learners we have in this school that stay with their parents, some of them grow under the guidance of grandparents who sometimes are sickly and therefore do not have enough time to focus on the education of their grandchildren and therefore for the younger ones who are at primary school level they rely on older ones at a secondary school level which means the same learners who are at our school are made to play parental roles at home which has an unpleasant impact on their school work and even on their social conduct as sometimes they go through emotional situations while taking care of themselves and their siblings. These learners come to school exhausted because of challenges and sometimes become arrogant as they have a lot on their shoulders. When it is their turn to bring parents to school grandparents do not come and this disturbs this collaboration chain a bit. This is just less than 2% of the whole school.

Sometimes the school's communication strategy got disturbed a little bit in some instances as some grandparents who stayed with learners were not used to social platforms that the school used for communication. Although this was a small number it did pose a challenge as all parents and guardians should receive information from the school and be in a position to communicate with the school as they wish. Some grandparents could not even read and therefore the option of writing letters was also ineffective, especially if the communication was not complementary about the learner who would be reading the letter to the grandparents. This becomes a problem in cases where evidence of having communicated is needed. This was a situation beyond these old people as most parents were out at work so that the same children could be taken care of. Miss Mgenge(Teacher B) reported like this:

We do have minor challenges especially with learners who stay with old people (grandparents) as sometimes they are not used to social media and therefore cannot be part of WhatsApp groups or face book which we use for communication. Sometimes they also do not attend meetings due to ill health and walking distance that seem to be long for them. These are very few and they

do not even constitute 2% of all parents. Response to probe 2: These are situations that are beyond these grandparents as learners' parents leave children with them and go seek work opportunities or just disappear.

Miss Mgenge further revealed the issue of attitude from some parents who always had to pass bad remarks before conforming to what the school was saying:

Yes, we do have a few issues of attitude. Out of hundred people there will always be one or two who will be what we call "oskhwili phambana nobhoko" meaning they do not see or do things like others instead they become negative about any good set up. I am saying we also do have such tendencies, very few though. This happens mostly when parents are invited for meetings, instead of them being happy they will receive information about learning activities of their children and be able to interact with teachers you will hear them saying "bayahlupha labothisha benu, okokuqala bona bayahola ngomsebenzi wabo manje thina singenaphi" [IsiZulu part means – your teachers are bothering us, in the first place they get paid for their work, where do we come in?]you will find that the very same parent ends up coming to the meeting because we ask learners to plead with them to attend but the fact that he or she started by remarking negatively about teachers sometimes arouse negativity about teachers in the child.

Some parents complained when matric learners started to have extra classes on weekends and school holidays but when matric results started to improve all parents welcomed these extra classes and even the matric camp. This was explained by the SGB Chairperson:

There are very few parents who always say school meetings waste their time as if they are called on monthly basis, others were complaining when matric learners started to have extra classes on weekends and school holidays. They said they needed their children to relieve them with home chores but when results started they changed and welcomed extra classes. We do not have much of this problem as such parents are a drop in the ocean and as SGB we deal with such attitudes during parents' meetings.

The above extract indicates that parents in this school were sceptical about attending meetings at the school. The reasons for their lack of enthusiasm emanates from various factors, from their busy schedules to feelings of disinvitation that existed.

6.3.5.2 Complexities of utilising school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence emanating from the school

I indicated that participants revealed that challenges were mainly from the side of parents. As evidence of the fact that participants did not mention any challenges from the side of the school but instead praised teachers here is what Mr Zulu, the SGB Chairperson said:

We do not have challenges when collaborating with the school. Teachers are friendly and welcome us. We communicate with teachers easily and freely and they appreciate our participation in the education of our children. They even ask why the situation was not like this even before 2019. Our school environment is highly inviting and even our children speak good about their teachers and the school situation.

Mrs Nkabinde (Parent B) also explained that they had a problem with the school because of faction fights as they feared to be within the school premises for a long time but this was not because of teachers, they as parents worked very well with teachers:

Before 2019 we had a problem of fearing to waste a lot of time within school premises as learners used to fight in groups and the fight would erupt at any time of the school day. It was the chaotic nature and unsafety of the school. Teachers are respectful and they welcome us well, in fact we work as partners in seeing to the academic and social development of our children.

Parents understood that teachers were human beings who could also make mistakes, but Qhubekani Secondary School teachers treated them as equal partners. Miss Mgenge commented as follows:

No. So far our teachers are good to us as parents. We cannot run away from the fact that teachers are also human beings meaning that sometimes there might be mistakes they do but in our collaboration they treat us as equal partners.

When I made a follow up as to why, she said teachers treated them like equal partners, said:

It is only that we cannot go into classrooms and teach because we are not trained for that but they give us as parents our place and their expectations from us are clear, for example, keeping in touch and attending school activities, coming up with suggestions to make the school enjoy more success, treating us as partners in the development of our children and not as senior to us just because they are

teachers, a two way respect, trust and raising issues that seem to trouble us, having constant conversations with our children about school activities and monitoring and reporting any change in the behaviour of our children.

Although participants came up with challenges especially from the side of parents, at one stage the SGB Chairperson indicated that they were working towards solving these challenges and only a very few parents were affected by abovementioned challenges which did not derail or halt the collaboration but need to be attended to.

6.3.6 Repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence

Participants expressed themselves about the experience the school went through during the time when the collaboration between the school and parents was weak. Due to an absence of their parents in their education, some learners became demotivated, others succumbed to emotional pressure due to being victims of school violence and eventually dropped out of school. Mr Nene, the Principal commented about this:

Children become demotivated and in many cases they become drop outs as no one motivates them.

Mr Nene again revealed that learners became ill disciplined in this school as they knew that their parents had no interest in their education and therefore would not know about what they were doing at school. He said:

Schools which have parents who are distancing themselves usually have a problem of ill-discipline as learners do not fear that their parents will know about their behaviour and even if they know they have no interest about their children's learning.

Learners began to play truant and the rate of absenteeism grew as no one took the responsibility of questioning learners as they were loitering around their homes during school hours. Mr Buthelezi, the Departmental Head remarked about this:

Learners play truancy and when they arrive early at home no one asks them why have they left school. Learners absent themselves from school and linger around their homes and no one asks them about why they are not going to school because parents have no interest in their education.

Teachers also got demotivated because of the pressure of working under the chaotic situation at school and even their attitude changed and they did not care anymore. This was also revealed by Mr Buthelezi:

The next thing is that teachers get discouraged due to bad learners' behaviour and you will hear them saying "sihamba nabahambayo" which of course is a sign of being fed up as teachers should never say this because to others this means the slow learners are not catered for yet teachers say it for something else, that is, they are fed up with those who are busy causing chaos at school.

Mrs Mhlongo (Teacher A) alluded to the fact that the school became chaotic because of violent learner behaviour and this resulted in teachers changing the focus from teaching to disciplining learners most of the time. She said:

Such violent learner behaviour causes chaos at school and eats from teachers as well as learners' academic time as teachers have to focus on disciplining learners than on academic activities.

The change of focus from teaching to disciplining resulted in poor academic achievement and decreased learner enrolment. This was also exposed by Mrs Mhlongo:

As a result of this academic achievement becomes poor and parents remove their children from school due to poor academic achievement and unsafety at school.

The school climate was compromised as the school became unsafe due to quarrels and fights by learners at school. Mr Zulu, SGB Chairperson postulated:

Therefore, if many parents do not participate in school activities the school climate is compromised as learners do not behave well leading to quarrels, fights and even murder in the school premises although we never had any murder case in our school.

Mr Zulu also explained that a compromised or negative school climate instilled fear in teachers and learners as they knew they were not safe. He said:

In a chaotic and violent situation, teachers become afraid to go to classes and other learners fear for their safety.

As learner enrolment decreased because parents removed their children from the low performing school, funding from the Department of Education also decreased as schools are funded according to their enrolment. This was raised by Mrs Nkabinde (Parent B) who said:

Once the school starts producing poor results especially in matric parents remove their children from school and this means the decrease in number of

teachers as they are taken to schools which have more learners. It also impacts negatively on school funding as schools are funded according to their enrolment.

Seemingly, reducing school violence can only be successful through the integrated effort of stakeholders especially teachers and parents. This is indicated by the data in this theme as it reveals that schools where parents are distant suffer a lot of disadvantages.

6.3.7 Strategies to navigate complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence

Data in this theme showed that a school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence is effective but not without challenges. Whenever there are challenges, intervention strategies must be identified and applied to enhance the approach being implemented. In this case participants revealed strategies they applied in this school to counter challenges to a school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence. In this school, as was mentioned before, one of the challenges was parents not attending parents' meetings, so the school decided to write to each parent who was absent after each parents' meeting reminding them of the importance of attending and what it meant to a child when other parents attended for their children, and his or her parents showed no interest. This resulted in improvement in the attendance of meetings by parents. This was divulged by Mr Nene, the Principal who said:

After each parent meeting we write to parents who were not in attendance and reminding them about the importance of attending meetings. We also emphasise that their absence from meetings destroys the morale of their children as they feel other children whose parents attend are loved and taken care of. We also inform them that it has been proved that learners whose parents become part of their education are the ones that in most cases succeed in life. This helps a lot as in the next meeting the attendance improves, we did this, three times, and there was major improvement in attendance.

The school organised awards day each year where teachers and parents of learners who excelled in their academic achievement came together to congratulate learners. The coming together of teachers and parents to appreciate learners' efforts had an emotionally as well as psychologically positive effect on parents as that made them to be more attached to the school. This was also revealed by Mr Nene:

We also have an awards day where all parents and learners who excelled the previous year are invited and learners awarded in front of their parents.

The school appreciated and assured parents that they are important in the education of their children and the school is dependent on their input for learners to develop academically and socially. The school also made a point that they practiced their love and care for parents by catering (providing meals) for them during parents' meetings, especially because some parents were taking chronic medication and others had diabetes. This was presented by Mr Buthelezi, the Departmental Head:

During parents' meetings, parents are always assured of their importance and are provided with something to eat for the sake of those take medication. This reduces absenteeism during parents meeting.

The school Principal was highly visible in the community, attending community gatherings and funerals and the community developed trust in him and further trusted him with their children. Mr Buthelezi again talked about this and said:

Our principal is very close to the community, he attends community functions, be it weddings or funerals. The community is at ease to approach him and that has made even parents with children in other schools to send them to our school.

As was mentioned in one of the themes that the school has the responsibility for developing open communication channels, the school also provided all parents with cell numbers of their children's class teachers to enhance communication. Parents knew when to phone as they were not expected to disturb teachers in classes. This was shared by Mrs Mhlongo (Teacher A):

All our parents have cell phone numbers of their children's class teachers which makes communication easier should there be issues that need clarity.

Miss Mgenge (Teacher B) mentioned that the school did not focus on learners only but also identified developmental needs of parents on social issues and workshopped them, for example, on parenting skills so that they would be able to be effective parents for their children. She said:

We also workshop our parents once per year on social issues that affect them and their children, we use personnel from sister governmental departments. These make our parents feel catered for by the school and come closer and be part of us.

The school involved parents in the programmes of the school, even from the planning stages, for example, the school held matric camps every year during the writing of final examinations

and parents were fully involved from the planning stage and they took full control of many responsibilities like cooking, security, acting as boarding masters, as well as matrons. Mrs Nkabinde (Parent B) shared this:

Our school hold matric camps towards matric exam until the end of it. As parents we are involved and not necessarily parents with learners doing matric but all available parents are welcomed so that we are able to relieve or substitute each other. The roles we are involved in as parents are those of planning the camp, boarding masters, matrons, cooks and security guards. These teams consist of teachers although teachers whose subjects are still to be written focus more on revision with learners.

Mrs Nkabinde also revealed that it was mandatory in this school that whenever there was a trip involving learners, parents had to be part of it to assist teachers in controlling the learners. The number of parents depended on the number of learners, for example, less than four parents if learners used more than one bus. She commented:

It is also mandatory that if the school has a trip the SGB and SMT request a few parents (not more than 4) to accompany the school.

Data further indicated that these strategies did enhance the school-parent collaboration as parents felt being full participants in the approach was significant for the development of their children and they also felt that the school trusted and accepted them as they were. On the other hand, teachers were appreciative of the full involvement of parents and the trust that existed between the two parties.

6.3.8 Conclusion

Viewpoints of the Principal, Departmental Head, Chairperson of the SGB, parents and teachers were discussed in this Chapter. Data generation was done from the perspective of Qhubekani Secondary School. Seven themes transpired from the analysis, and they influenced the organisation of the discussion. The themes that emerged are stakeholders' understanding of violence and its consequences for safety and the functionality of the school, establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence, the intervention of community leadership – traditional leadership in reducing school violence, the benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, challenges of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence, repercussions of

weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence and strategies to navigate the challenges of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE ROLE AND COMPLEXITIES OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION IN
REDUCING SCHOOL VIOLENCE: PERSPECTIVES FROM
KHANYISANI SECONDARY SCHOOL

7.1 Introduction

Chapter Six presented the discussion of school-parent collaboration to reduce school violence in Qhubekani Secondary School. The Principal of the school, Departmental Head, other two teachers, SGB Chairperson and other two parents provided their perspectives. This chapter presents the findings from the data that was generated from Khanyisani Secondary School. The discussion begins with mapping out the school profile followed by the community and participants' profiles and then data that emerged from my discussions with different participants from Khanyisani Secondary School is discussed. Seven major themes emerged from the data analysis, and the themes will be discussed after the participants' profiles. The themes are stakeholders' understandings of violence and its consequences for safety and the functionality of the school, establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence, the intervention of community leadership – traditional leadership in reducing school violence, the benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence, repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence and strategies to navigate the complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach.

7.2 The school, community and the participants' profiles

The profiling of the school and community assists readers in understanding the context of the place where interviews occurred. Pseudonyms were given to all participants for the protection of their identities. The profile of the school will come first, followed by the community profile and lastly the participants' profile.

7.2.1 Profile of Khanyisani Secondary School

Khanyisani Secondary School was inaugurated in 1980. It was named after the area where it is located. The school is located in a rural area called Khanyisani in King Cetshwayo District. It is situated almost 24 kilometres from the nearest town. The road to school branches from the main tarred road to town and the distance is about seven kilometres. This is a gravel road which is taken care of and it is in a good state most of the time. The school introduced its first Grade 12 (matric) in 1990. Although public transport is available in the area, Khanyisani Secondary School staff members use a staff car to and from work. Most staff members stay in the township next to the nearest town and only two out of seventeen teachers are members of the Khanyisani community.

The school is fenced with a clear view fence which is a strong type of fence found in very few schools in the District. The school also has a security guard. Khanyisani Secondary School has three blocks of classrooms and five mobile classrooms, due to recent increase in learner enrolment. Principal and Deputy Principal have their offices, Departmental Heads share one classroom as an office, the staff room is used by teachers during their free periods and break times, and there is a kitchen and a small reception lounge for the administration clerk. The school also has a container laboratory but no library. The school is electrified and has water tanks and water taps which are frequently waterless. The school uses pit toilets due to unavailability of piped water. The school staff of Khanyisani Secondary School consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal, three Departmental Heads, seventeen teachers, one administration clerk, one security guard, one cleaner and three food handlers assisting in the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). The school had a learner enrolment of 742 learners in 2025. The school is a Quintile 2 school meaning not less than 40% of their learners are from poor families.

Matric results have improved from 52.9% in 2018, going up to 61% in 2019, 77% in 2020, 86.6% in 2021, 86.2% again in 2022, 87,5% in 2023 and 90% in 2024.

MATRIC PERFORMANCE AS FROM 2018	
2024 pass rate	90%
2023 pass rate	87.5%
2022 pass rate	86.2%
2021 pass rate	86.6%
2020 pass rate	77%%
2019 pass rate	61%
2018 pass rate	52.9%

Table 15: Matric pass rate as from 2018

7.2.2. The profile of Khanyisani Community

Khanyisani Secondary School is situated in the Khanyisani rural area. There is gravel road branching from the tarred main road to access the community area. The road is well looked after. Public transport is available and reliable but teachers use a staff car to and from school. Statistics South Africa (2022) presented a report that the area is 100% rural having a population of 2 578 people. Only 12.2% of households use water from taps or tanks. Taps are frequently waterless and 87.8% are dependent on public water tanks placed by the municipality and in some cases they use stream water. The statistics also shows that 97.5% of the population still make use of pit toilets and only 2,5% only make use of flushing toilets connected to sewerage. In terms of the population profile, 53.5% of the household have females as heads of families and 46,5% are male headed, and 98% of homes have electricity. The table below summarises this data.

HOUSEHOLD UTILITIES AND HEADS STATISTICS	
Households dependent on water delivered by municipality and water from streams	87.8%
Households using pit toilets	97.5%
Household headed by females	53.5%
Electrified households	98%

Table 16: Household utilities at Khanyisani (Adapted from Stats SA, 2022)

The level of formal education at Khanyisani is low, as only 8.2% went beyond Grade 12 (matric), that is, having certificates, diplomas and degrees, while 37.7% have Grade 12 (matric) and 6% never went to school. Those who dropped out before reaching Grade 12 (matric) represent 48.1%.

FORMAL EDUCATION STATISTICS	
Beyond matric (certificates, diplomas, degrees)	8.2%
Matric	37.7%
No schooling	6%
Dropped before matric	48.1%

Table 17: Formal education statistics at Khanyisani (Adapted from Stats SA, 2022)

7.2.3. The profile of participants

There were seven participants in this site, who were Mrs Mngadi, the principal; Mr Nzuzza, the Departmental Head; Mrs Ngwenya, a teacher; Miss Mtambo, a teacher; Mr Ngobese, the SGB Chair; Mr Zikhali, a parent and Mrs Biyela, a parent.

Participant's name and position	Age	Gender	Years in service	Highest education
Mrs Mngadi: Principal	55	Female	25	B Ed Hons
Mr Nzuzza: Departmental Head	51	Male	22	M Ed
Mrs Ngwenya: Teacher A	49	Female	21	B Ed
Miss Mtambo: Teacher B	37	Female	12	B Ed
Mr Ngobese: SGB Chair (Parent A)	41	Male	04	Grade 12
Mr Zikhali: Parent B	39	Male	04	B Tech
Mrs Biyela: Parent C	40	Female	01	Grade 12

Table 18: KSS participants' level of education and other details

7.3 Perspectives transpiring from Khanyisani Secondary School

Findings from Khanyisani Secondary School will be discussed under seven major themes. The themes are (a) Stakeholders' understandings of violence and its consequences for safety and functionality of the school, (b) Establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and

parents to reduce school violence, (c) The intervention of community leadership – traditional leadership in reducing school violence, (d) The benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, (e) Complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence, (f) The repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence and (g) Strategies to navigate complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach.

7.3.1 Stakeholders' understandings of school violence and its consequences for safety and functionality of the school

Mrs Mngadi, the principal revealed that the school experienced physical fights especially among boys, and bullying where learners who felt they were more powerful than others ill-treated them. This is what he said:

Although school violence may take different forms of harmful behaviour, for example, physical, psychological, emotional or sexual during school activities or on the way between school and home I will talk about what we have experienced in this school. We have had a number of physical fights among learners especially male learners. In most cases this is caused by teasing and in some cases they fight over girlfriends (teenage dating). We also have bullying where learners feel they have more powers than others and start practicing big brother game over them, they make them do things like shining their shoes or sending them to call girls for them. There was once a case where one boy demanded money (pocket money) from three boys and that was reported by one parent at school and it was dealt with.

Although sexual harassment was not one of the violent occurrences experienced at Khanyisani Secondary School Mr Nzuza, the Departmental Head indicated that he regarded it as one form of school violence. He further indicated that sexual harassment may be committed by a learner on a learner, a learner on a teacher or a teacher on a learner. He said:

I consider sexual harassment as school violence whether done by a learner to another learner, learner to teacher or teacher to learner. This may involve nonconsensual touching of private parts of the other person, showing your own private parts to another person, forcing the other person to agree to sleep with you or be your partner and any other non-consensual sexual related advance.

As long as this happens during school hours, school activities or on the way from school to home it is school violence.

Bullying was mentioned as a once frequent occurrence at school. The school at one stage invited a psychologist to come and address a parents' meeting about bullying and its consequences for both perpetrator and victim. This was done so that parents could assist the school by speaking to their children against bullying. As a result, bullying was dramatically reduced in school. This was revealed by Mrs Ngwenya, Teacher A:

School violence is physical or emotional harm inflicted by one learner to the other within school premises, during school activities or on the way home. Bullying is one occurrence of school violence that is common. This happens in both primary and secondary schools. In our school we had these occurrences before and although we still have a few, it has been dramatically reduced. In one parents' meeting in 2020 the school invited psychologists to address parents about the consequences of bullying in both the perpetrator and the victim. Parents promised to talk to their children about this and also ask them to report any incident of bullying against them. If such are reported to parents, parents take reports to school.

Miss Mtambo (Teacher B) also reported physical fights and bullying as violent occurrences experienced in this school. She also mentioned the negative impact of bullying on learners (victims). This is how he put it:

Physical fight among learners. These are sometimes as a result of teenage dating. Sometimes it is two girls fighting over a boy and vice versa. The other type of school violence is bullying which is also common in many schools. This is when a learner who considers powerful maltreats another learner who is powerless and cannot defend him or herself. This maltreatment is physical or verbal. This causes a lot of emotional damage.

Cyberbullying cases were also reported in the school. It involved mostly girl learners. Mr Ngobese, SGB Chairperson explained how one of these happened:

These are violent acts among learners taking place within school premises. There is also cyberbullying where technology (WhatsApp, face book, twitter, Instagram) is used to write bad or incorrect things about others, for example, we once had a case in our school where a girl learner was insulted on face book, she was painted in the community as dating three boys from the same

school. The girl was emotionally destroyed only to find that the writer wanted the only boyfriend to leave the girl because she was also dating the same boy. There are many other violent occurrences like rape, sexual harassment, murder and others.

So far, all participants mentioned bullying in their responses which meant bullying was the most prevalent violent occurrence at Khanyisani Secondary School. In addition to bullying Mr Zikhali, (Parent B) mentioned verbal abuse as also one of the forms of violence experienced in this school. He also mentioned the dimensions of verbal abuse, that is, among learners, by learners to teachers or by teachers to learners. He commented:

School violence is the infliction of harm physically or emotionally by one learner to the other during school hours. Sometimes learners abuse each other verbally through using vulgar language and demeaning comments. Verbal abuse sometimes come from teachers to learners and sometimes teachers receive it from learners. The other common violence occurrence in schools is bullying.

Mrs Biyela (Parent C) mentioned faction fights but was quick to say this school had never experienced faction fights but they were experienced in some schools in their District:

School violence are quarrels among learners that sometimes lead to fights within school premises. In some schools there are faction fights where learners fight in groups and sometimes this extends to the community. We never had faction fights in our school.

In this school there was an indication of the prevalence of school violence. The main form of violence that was prevalent was bullying followed by physical fights. It was, however, mentioned that these occurrences had been reduced. It is clear that participants had an adequate understanding of school violence and had experienced it as a school.

7.3.2 Establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence

A School immediately benefits from the establishment of school-parent collaboration, learners and parents also benefit but after the school. Learners cannot benefit if teachers are still caught in between going to classes and disciplining learners. Once learners are disciplined teachers focus is aimed at teaching and learning as the school becomes less chaotic and safer for learners

to concentrate. It is, therefore the school that should initiate incentives for parents to get into partnership so that they are also responsible for their children's education. The school should be practical in their invitation to parents to form a collaboration with the school and thereafter both should be responsible for maintaining the collaboration. As a result, both have roles to play in establishing and maintaining the collaboration to reduce school violence.

7.3.2.1 The role of the school in establishing and maintaining collaboration with parents to reduce school violence

The school enhanced communication between teachers and parents. This was done through introducing different communication platforms to avoid some parents missing information.

This was revealed by Mrs Mngadi, the Principal of the school who said:

We have introduced different ways of communication platforms besides face book and WhatsApp we also have a mass message app where we have contact details of two people in the family of a learner and in most cases it is father and mother and in single parent families we request any other number of a member trusted by the available parent. When we send similar messages to parents, this is received by two members in the family and in addition class teachers have WhatsApp groups of parents. All resolutions taken in a parents' meeting, are further communicated in these platforms.

The Principal also revealed that an opportunity to physically visit the school was extended to parents if they needed to discuss matters concerning their children's education. This would only be done by appointment. She said:

Parents are also given an opportunity to make appointments to come to school if they need to discuss some issues or get clarity from the school.

The school made it its role to assure parents that they were important players in the education of their children. The school further reminded parents of their constitutional obligation to be protectors of their children and therefore parents were told that by not being part of the collaboration they were outsourcing their responsibility of being protectors of their children as they would not be part of decision making about the safety of their children at school. Mr Nzuza, the Departmental Head alluded to this:

In our communication with parents whether face to face or online we assure our parents of their importance in the education of their children. We further

remind them of their constitutional obligation to protect their children not only when they are at home but also when they are at school and therefore this means they should be part of decision making especially about the safety of their children at school.

Mrs Ngwenya (Teacher A) appreciated the strong communication strategy the school had. She stated:

I believe that we are strong in communication in this school. Learners have communication books and the communication is in IsiZulu. Parents are supplied with contact numbers for the SMT members, class teachers and SGB members. This makes it easy for parents to communicate with teachers about matters they do not feel easy to write in communication books.

Mrs Ngwenya also mentioned the role played by the school in organising and administering different meetings involving parents at school:

We also have mandatory four parents meeting in a year unless there is a special matter to be discussed, they do exceed four. Each grade has a parent meeting per semester as well as one on one when subject teachers see the need as per the performance of learners in their subjects. The attendance of meeting is good as parents are motivated by the performance of the school especially Grade 12.

Mrs Ngwenya further explained how this strong and healthy communication, as well as organising and administering meetings impacted on parents and learners:

All these keep parents and teachers closer to each other and both are interested in seeing the learner succeeds and this makes the learner to be in the centre of focus which makes it difficult for him or her to misbehave but instead learners are motivated to learn as their parents are part of their education.

The school made use of other parents who work in governmental departments like Health, Social Development and others as presenters or facilitators in advising parents and teachers about some challenges that could impede the proper social development of children. Miss Mtambo (Teacher B) stipulated:

Parents who work in different governmental departments are invited to school once in a term to come and address both learners and staff members on different issues, social development, health, SAPS. They address on issues they deal with at work, for example, drugs, violence and so on.

Miss Mtambo also mentioned the open-door policy practised by the school principal which made parents feel accommodated as sometimes they would not all be part of meetings and activities during specified times due to several reasons, especially work schedules. She indicated that:

The principal practices an open-door policy where each parent is free to make an appointment to come and discuss whatever that has to do with the education of their children. If it is a matter of urgency parents are allowed to phone and arrange to see the principal immediately if he is available.

The school developed the learner code of conduct working together with parents through the SGB and the learner code of conduct was approved by the parent body during the parents' meeting. The learner code of conduct guided the school on how to correct learners when they misbehaved and got involved in violent occurrences. Mrs Mngadi, the Principal stated:

This learner code of conduct explains the procedure to be followed when dealing with discipline of learners. Depending on the weight of the incident parents get invited to school to discuss his or her child's case.

The above excerpt indicates that at school level, some attempts had been made through school-parent collaboration, to minimise incidences of school violence by establishing the code of conduct for learners. This form of collaboration could be extended to other areas as well.

7.3.2.2 The role of parents in establishing and maintaining collaboration with schools to reduce school violence

Parents played their roles both at home and at school. The first role played by Khanyisani Secondary School was that of being teachers (first teachers) of their children since birth. These teachings developed good social morals and behaviours in their children which resulted in them co existing well with other learners and teachers at school. This is a comment that was made by Mrs Mngadi, the Principal:

Parents are first teachers of their children. Social behaviour is firstly taught as well as observed at home. If parents teach their children to leave in peace and practice peaceful living themselves, children observe that and live by it. When these children go to school they already value peace.

For children to be serious about their education they need their parents to motivate them. Parents of Khanyisani Secondary School also played this role for their children and this assisted teachers as learners were ready and eager to learn. Mrs Mngadi also revealed this:

Parents are also motivators as children may value peace but may not have the necessary motivation to be serious about school work if parents do not motivate them and make them see the need to be educated.

Parents fulfilled their constitutional obligation of loving, caring for and protecting their children hence the strong school-parent collaboration. Mr Nzuza (Departmental Head) alluded to this:

Parents have a constitutional obligation to love and protect their children. Learners that are not given love and care for as children have a potential of being hostile and cannot show love to others. If children are loved and cared for the possibility of being violent is reduced as they grow up in a loving and caring environment.

According to Mr Nzuza again, parents also played the role of being social and cultural advisors to their children. Mr Nzuza shared a story of a boy learner who behaved wildly towards girl learners and due to his parents' intervention it was revealed that the boy's problem was an inherited problem and after being helped the problem ended. He said:

Parents also act as social advisors to their children, they know and are the first to observe when their children are in trouble and intervene through social or cultural counselling. One boy at school used to quarrel with female learners and female teachers all the time. The boy was beginning to be violent towards females. This was reported to parents who confirmed that even at home he does not go along with his sisters, mother and aunts. After trying psychologists and social workers the family ended up taking the boy to a traditional healer who revealed that one of the boy's great grandfather quarrelled and killed his wife and the boy is possessed by that spirit. Some rituals were done. Today the boy is friend to more girls than boys. If not a parent, who else could have thought of taking the boy to a traditional healer, that is why parents are also social and cultural advisors to their children. In this case parents intervened and their intervention stopped the boy from being violent.

Parents also played the role of being positive role models for their children. Parents who lived a peaceful life in their homes had their children emulating them, even at school, resulting in the school becoming a less violent environment. Mrs Ngwenya (Teacher A) said:

Parents are role models to learners and therefore if parents live a peaceful life at home they send a message to their children that differences can be solved through peaceful means. Learners take this with them and practice it where they find themselves mixing with other children, for example, in schools, churches, community functions and so on.

Mrs Ngwenya also mentioned the role alluded to by Mr Nzuza, the Departmental Head, of parents being obliged by the constitution to protect their children. She continued to state that the implication of this obligation was that parents should work together with teachers to create a safe environment for their children at school:

It is the prerogative of parents to protect their children. This is enshrined in the constitution of this country, even when the child is not at home the parent is still responsible for his or her safety. This then calls for parents to work together with teachers to create a safe environment at school so that their children are safe when attending school.

The role of being providers was also emphasised by Mr Ngobese, the SGB chairperson when he said:

Parents are also providers, if parents do not take care and provide their children with their needs, be it school needs or general needs, children may try other means to satisfy their needs, for example, stealing and this may result in violence as those whose things are stolen may put up a fight to have their belongings back.

If both teachers and parents play their roles well in the collaboration, academic and social development of a child is enhanced, leading to reduced violent activities at school.

7.3.3 The intervention of community leadership – traditional leadership in reducing school violence

Khanyisani Secondary School is located in the Khanyisani rural community which is under traditional leaders (*Induna*) who reports to the Senior traditional leader (*Inkosi*), in line with KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act of 2005. When school violence

occurred at school there were some activities that the school felt needed the attention of traditional leadership. Khanyisani community members were loyal to their traditional leadership and therefore were motivated by the fact that the school recognised and respected the authority of traditional leaders. Sometimes there were cases that involved the community or some members of the community who were not even parents of our school. It became difficult then to solve such cases without the involvement of traditional leadership as the authority in the community where the school is located. Even when the school was visited by the Provincial Legislature for functionality monitoring on 24 January 2024, the Legislature invited traditional leaders themselves. The fact that the Legislation did not instruct the school to invite *Inkosi* and his council meant that the respect accorded to the traditional leadership by the school and the community, was also acknowledged and embraced by the provincial Department of Education because it did not disapprove of their involvement in school activities. Mrs Mngadi, the Principal confirmed that some cases needed the intervention of traditional leadership due to their nature. She said:

If we feel that an incident might have a negative on the community or different families we involve induna and his council, for example, if the fight or assault has a history based on two or more family feud which might be a quarrel that once happened between parents or relatives of different families or allegations of witchcraft and so on.

The principal also made reference to a case of assault between two boys from different *izinduna* areas which was referred to traditional leadership. She stated:

In the case of a learner that was badly stabbed we felt that because learners were from different izigodi meaning from different traditional councillors (izinduna), both izinduna were invited to assist with the issue whilst the departmental policy also enshrined in the learner code of conduct was followed.

Mr Nzuza, the Departmental Head admired the crucial role traditional leadership played at school. He even mentioned one case where *izinduna* quelled a quarrel between groups of learners from different *izinduna* before the fight ensued at school. He put it like this:

There are also cases where the school involves traditional leadership together with parents, it was only once some years back when a group of learners from different areas were quarrelling at school. The school involved izinduna and their councils to discuss the issue and discipline learners. Eventually learners

calmed down and no fight ensued. Traditional leadership play a very crucial role in disciplining learners.

Traditional leadership co-operated very well with the school whenever their intervention was sought. Mrs Ngwenya, Teacher A revealed that by saying:

There are cases where the school involves the community especially traditional leadership, for example, Izinduna or Inkosi. This is when the school views the occurrence as a potential initiator of division in the community as some of the violence occurrences in schools may extend to the community and end up being faction fights. Both our parents and the community leadership are very cooperative when their involvement is sought by the school. It happened twice that we needed the intervention of Izinduna and this is when learners from different areas quarrelled and secondly when a learner from one induna area stabbed another learner from the other induna. On all these cases both parents and izinduna were highly co-operative.

Traditional Leadership was not only involved when there were problems at school but also in other school activities like awards day and Heritage Day when they were invited and given the platform to address the invited community members including parents, teachers and learners.

This was divulged by Mrs Ngwenya again. She said:

The school also work very close with the traditional leadership and this does not happen only if there are problems at school, for example, during awards for best performing learners and teachers, traditional leadership is always given the platform to address parents and learners.

Mrs Ngwenya further highlighted that in the School Safety and Security Committee traditional leadership was represented as per departmental policy:

The school has a safety committee as per departmental policy and the majority of members are community members including traditional leadership and parents and as such the interest of the community in our school is maintained.

Co-operation between the school and traditional leadership was at a high level, Mrs Biyela (Parent C) remembered the case where Inkosi helped the school by asking some men in the community to come and volunteer as security guards at school since the security guard who had been there had retired and the school had no security guard. At that time the department was not replacing retired security guards and administration clerks due to budget cuts. Only transfers were possible. She said:

I remember there was a time when a school did not have a security guard, parents decided to talk to Inkosi so that some men were asked to volunteer and take turns during the day and be visible in the school premises. Parents also decided to contribute some money so that these volunteers are given something to buy lunch when at school. We also heard that teachers also saw to it that these volunteers had something to eat during the day which showed a high level of team spirit. This took two months and the department provided the school with a security guard who applied for a transfer from the other school. We were afraid that the absence of a security guard was going to tempt learners either to play truancy or to bring in to the school unwanted things or even invite their friends to come and cause chaos during break times.

The intervention of traditional leaders motivated parents to also take part in the education of their children.

7.3.4 The benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence

The expected outcomes of strong school-parent collaboration are benefits to the school. Participants gave the following account on how the school benefited from the collaboration with parents. Learners' enrolment at Khanyisani Secondary School grew on a yearly basis from 490 in 2020 to 742 in 2025. According to Mrs Mngadi, the Principal, the increase in learner enrolment was attributed to good matric results that had been consistently good for six consecutive years. She said:

Parental involvement has benefited this school through an increase in learner enrolment due to high learner academic achievement. A school where parents do not partake in their enrolment as parents remove their children from such school.

Mrs Mngadi also revealed that the school was able to attract learners from afar, citing that 297 of 742 learners were not from local homes but were children from distant areas, with parents renting homes in the area. She again said:

Although I have said 297 learners come from afar and are renting in the area, their parents are as co-operative as the parents of local learners and the reason is they know what they want for their learners, this is why they did not enrol them in their local schools but choose to come to our school. In our area we do

not have many households hence we are able to accommodate learners from afar.

Teachers of Khanyisani Secondary School were motivated by the strong school-parent collaboration. Mr Nzuza, the Departmental Head revealed this:

... learner enrolment increases on yearly basis, teachers get motivated as they see that parents are also part of the process of developing their children academically and socially.

The integrity of Khanyisani Secondary School changed as the school became respected by the community and by other schools in the District and among other things this was due to the discipline at school which also led to the development of a peaceful and safe environment. Mr Nzuza again commented about this:

The school gets respected by the community. The involvement of parents in the education of their children changes the integrity of the school completely as well as develop a safe and peaceful environment where there is respect for everyone.

Violent occurrences were reduced at Khanyisani Secondary School, and this gave teachers enough time to focus on teaching and learning hence good academic results. Mrs Ngwenya (Teacher A) remarked about this:

This causes learners to behave well which results to reduced violence occurrences at school. Reduction of violence gives teachers enough time to focus on academic activities as they do not have to discipline learners all the time.

Due to the respect the community had for teachers in this school, the community took ownership and protected the school, hence no burglary or theft happened for four consecutive years in the school. This was divulged by Mrs Ngwenya again:

If there is discipline in the school, learners' academic attainment improves and the community respects teachers and the ownership of the school develops in the community which makes every member of the community to protect the school and its infrastructure. This is what we are seeing in our school as for four consecutive years we have not had any theft or burglary at school.

Miss Mtambo (Teacher B) suggested that increased learner enrolment led to the school getting more funding and more teachers from the Department as funding and teachers are allocated as per enrolment. She stated:

Increased enrolment makes the school to get more funding and more teachers.

Mr Ngobese, SGB Chairperson also emphasised the point of teachers who got motivated due to strong school-parent collaboration resulting in the school performing well academically as learners became disciplined: He said:

If teaching and learning go on without disturbances learners' performance improve and the school becomes one of the good performing schools. In this way the school attracts many learners from different areas like our school. This increases learner enrolment and the image of the school is enhanced. Once this happens teachers get motivated as once you taste success you always want to succeed.

As one participant mentioned, that violence occurrences were reduced at Khanyisani Secondary School, Mr Zikhali (Parent B) confirmed that indeed a school with strong school-parent collaboration has less behavioural problems. He stated:

A school that has its teachers and parents forming a team has less behavioural problems as learners know that their parents are always in touch with the school and again parents always guide and monitor their children as they do not want their relationship with the school to be jeopardised.

Data in this theme confirmed that indeed the school benefited from the strong school-parent collaboration.

7.3.5 Complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence

The previous theme discussed benefits of strong school-parent collaboration. The discussion revealed that the school benefited from such collaboration. However, this situation does not rule out challenges in utilising this approach. Challenges may emanate from the side of the school as well as from the side of parents.

7.3.5.1 Complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence emanating from parents

It was difficult sometimes to get some parents as quickly as the school needed them. This was because some learners were from afar and only rented accommodation in the area. If, for

example, a learner was sick, the school had to see to it that the learner received help as soon as possible and they informed parents later. Mrs Mngadi, the Principal said:

Sometimes parents may not be available as quick as he or she is needed, for example, in the case where a learner is sick and needs to be taken to hospital it becomes difficult to wait for a parent who may arrive after three or four hours to attend to a learner in his or her renting place and the school due to healthy relationship has to act and only direct the parent to the hospital when he or she arrives.

Mrs Mngadi also mentioned that the fact that as some learners were from afar made the attendance at meetings fluctuate because of factors like the weather and availability of transport for parents coming from afar. However, Mrs Mngadi stated that what was good about these parents is that the majority of them reported when they were going to be absent from meetings. She stated:

Due to many learners coming from afar the attendance of meetings by parents fluctuates depending on different factors, for example, weather, transport availability and parents' schedule but parents due make reports if they will not be available and request information through communication platforms.

This did not suggest that all local parents attended meetings. Mrs Mngadi further indicated that some of local parents had an attitude when it came to attendance at meetings. This is how she put it:

Not that all local parents attend, there are those who used to complaining and saying “abatshene zona izingane sozwa ngazo” if there are meetings [let them tell children about what they want to say in the meeting, our children will tell us].

One participant emphasised the fact that some of the challenges the parents experience are genuine as he observed that parents and the community were very supportive of the school. He also mentioned the issue of some of them staying afar and who thus could not physically attend at soon as the school wanted them to, but communication was always alive. Mr Nzuza stated:

Therefore, the difficulties we come across are genuine, for example, as it has been mentioned that more than a quarter of our learners come from afar and are renting, it becomes difficult to physically meet their parents as urgent as we would like but communication is always open and flowing and sometimes work schedule of parents are a hindrance as some of them work shifts.

There were still one or two parents who spoiled their children. They believed them more than they believed teachers and that made it difficult for teachers to deal with or discipline those learners, as such parents were quick to say some teachers did not like their children. Mrs Ngwenya, Teacher A revealed this:

Some parents believe their children more than they believe teachers and they end up developing the attitude that some teachers do not like their children which makes it difficult for teachers to discipline their children.

Mrs Ngwenya further indicated that there was a tendency among some parents to believe that male teachers could discipline their learners better than female teachers and they wished that their children should be given male teachers as class teachers. This caused bad blood among staff members: She stated:

Single female parents rely more on male teachers to discipline their male children and therefore end up wanting their children to be given males as class teachers. These parents start looking at female teachers as weak teachers and this create a little bit of division at school.

Some parents, when invited by the school sent representatives who might be an aunt, uncle or older siblings and this did not serve the purpose in many cases. This was reported by Miss Mtambo (Teacher B):

Some parents who are working have a tendency of sending representatives when they are needed at school, this might be an uncle, aunt or older sibling. This does not enhance collaboration as the interest of a representative may not be like that of a parent. However, these are few cases and these parents end up finding time to come to school.

The extracts above has shown that there were challenges and complexities surrounding the availability and participation of parents in all critical areas of the school's operation. Nevertheless, some solutions to this problem were found.

7.3.5.2 Complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence emanating from the school

Only one out of seven parent participants mentioned a challenge experienced at school but eventually the teacher concerned apologised, and the participant understood that the teacher was in a bad state of mind when this happened. Mr Zikhali (Parent B) encountered this challenge:

I once had a problem with a female teacher who was a subject teacher to my child. She invited me to discuss the progress of my child in her subject. I was introduced to her in the departmental head's office. She left me in the office and said she was coming back. When she came back she was with my child, she was very loud and annoyed. The way she talked to me it was as if I am the cause of my child's poor performance. I apologised and promised that the child was going to improve, the child was also amazed about this. Two weeks thereafter I learnt that the same teacher was in hospital due to depression, she had problems at home with his husband and the in-laws. I realised that the behaviour was due to that. Because I could afford I hired a private tutor for my child and he has improved in that subject. The same teacher invited me to discuss the improvement. She was a totally different person. Fortunately, she still had the picture of our last encounter in his mind, she apologised profusely about what happened and told me what she was going through at that time and that when she left me in the office on the way to fetch my child she received a call insulting her from her in-laws. I have never had any parent talking about any bad experience in collaborating with the school.

Other participants indicated that they did not experience any challenges from the side of the school.

This is what Mt Ngobese, SGB Chairperson had to say:

In this school I have never experienced any challenge and I have never also had other parents in this school experiencing challenges.

As in other schools which are part of this study challenges seem to be more on the side of parents than on the side of the school. What gives hope is that these challenges have been identified and therefore it makes it a little bit easier to start addressing them as appropriate strategies could be developed and implemented.

7.3.6 The repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence

Schools alone find it difficult to reduce violence without working with stakeholders, especially parents. Many schools claim to be working with parents but on a closer look one finds that it is not a strong partnership, and parents are only given tasks to do by the school but are not involved in decision making about the education of their children. It is weak school-parent collaboration when no party feels accepted and trusted by the other and in most cases, there is no free and healthy communication. Such collaborations negatively impact academic and social development of learners and do not assist in reducing school violence. This situation used to exist in Khanyisani Secondary School before the school applied an Invitational Leadership Approach to invite parents into a collaboration with the school. Currently, collaboration is in a strong phase but the following examples were noted before that. Teachers had no support from the community as they were not even supported by parents and learners, knowing that, took the advantage and misbehaved. Mrs Mngadi, the Principal commented:

When the learning of children is not backed by parents, it means teachers do not have the support of parents. Learners on the other hand are aware that their parents do not have interest in what is happening at school and therefore, cannot take any teacher's report about learners seriously. They therefore behave in any manner, demotivating, discouraging and threatening lives of teachers and other learners.

The next thing was that the school became unsafe which led to some learners dropping out as they felt their lives were at risk due to the chaotic and aggressive behaviour of other learners. This was again reported by Mrs Mngadi:

The school becomes unsafe and some learners decides to abandon the school in fear of the lives.

Mrs Mngadi further revealed that such learner behaviour also caused teachers to dodge classes as they also feared some learners in certain classes and this led to parents removing their children from school as academic achievement had gone down. She said:

Teachers dodge classes also in fear of being harassed by learners, parents remove their children from school and the learner achievement goes down.

Teachers had a lot on their shoulders dealing with both academic and social elements of learners' development, which in most cases should be taken care of by parents. Mr Nzuzza, Departmental Head stated:

Teachers find themselves struggling to deal with both academic and social part of learners' development. Although parents also assist in academic activities but mostly they see to the social development part.

Teachers again found themselves neglecting academic activities and focusing on disciplining learners which impacted negatively on academic achievement. Teachers found themselves struggling to deal with both academic and social elements of learners' development. Although parents who are educated also assisted in academic activities, mostly they saw to the social development part. Mr Nzuza again revealed this:

If then parents are distant, learners behave badly and teachers waste a lot of time dealing with disciplining learners instead of teaching them. This impacts negatively on academic achievement of the school.

Mr Nzuza further divulged that a situation where parents removed their learners from school because of low academic achievement negatively affected teachers as they found themselves being sent to other schools where the learner enrolment was huge. He postulated:

The dropping of learner enrolment negatively affects teachers as they are transferred to other schools with increased enrolments.

All these results of weak school-parent collaboration tarnished the image of the school as the community started to disrespect teachers, viewing them as failures. This was presented by Mrs Ngwenya (Teacher A):

The community begin to disrespect teachers as they feel they are failing to do their work. On top of all this the academic achievement drops and the image of the school is tarnished.

Miss Mtambo (Teacher B) mentioned that violent occurrences increased in the school due to weak school-parent collaboration. She stated:

Occurrences of school violence increase and teachers waste a lot of time disciplining learners.

This led to greater opportunities for the school being invaded by outside gangs as there was no unity within the school premises, and the environment was not safe. Mr Ngobese, the SGB Chairperson stated:

It becomes easier even for the gangs outside to invade the school and terrorise everybody.

Mr Zikhali (Parent B) mentioned the rate of absenteeism especially on the side of learners which went higher as learners feared being victimised by other learners when there was chaos at school.

He said:

Learners who are responsible and well behaving gets distorted and start absenting themselves from school in fear of victimisation by the bullies.

The school Principal at that time had a huge problem as teachers decided to stop disciplining learners themselves but took every case, no matter how small it was, to the Principal's office which was a sign of being fed up. In other words, this weak school-parent collaboration had the potential to demotivate and divide the staff. This was again stated by Mr Zikhali:

Teachers get discouraged and end up getting used to the chaos. They withdraw from disciplining learners in fear of being victimised as well. The principal loses direction as teachers have withdrawn from disciplining learners and they have begun to take any case no matter how small it to the principal's office. The principal now sits for the whole day in his office disciplining learners.

Data in this theme indicated that schools which still choose to go it alone and leave parents behind suffer the consequences. No matter how many challenges or complexities might be there, schools must try by all means to develop teachers, firstly to be kind, inviting and accepting of parents so that everybody would have the same objective of gaining the trust of parents so that they could come closer to the school and be strong partners in the education of their children.

7.3.7 Strategies to navigate challenges of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach in reducing school violence

School-parent collaboration to reduce school violence can be affected by many challenges which cause difficulties in managing the collaboration by both teachers and parents, leading to the collaboration becoming weak. It is, therefore, the responsibility of both parties to come up with strategies to strengthen the collaboration. Khanyisani Secondary School participants revealed some strategies that they developed and which were implemented by the teachers and parents of their school. The school gave parents enough time to plan for school meetings by issuing dates of all mandatory meetings during the first quarter, three weeks after the school opening. These meetings include parents' meetings and grade meetings. Parents' meetings were

held four times a year and grade meetings were also scheduled four times a year. This was to allow those parents who were working to make arrangements at work and other parents were advised to not plan their commitments on the same dates so as to enhance attendance at the meetings. This was the comment by Mr Mngadi, the Principal who said:

Our arrangement is that on quarterly basis each grade holds a meeting with parents where academic and social behaviour of learners is discussed. Each grade also arranged and kept a record of parents coming to school to view their children's work and have a one on one with teachers and this happens once in six months. Looking at the reports of these meetings and visits, the response of parents is satisfactory as not less than 80% of parents attend grade and one on one meetings. Other parents from remaining 20% do come to school but not on specified dates due to different challenges on their side. We also have parents' meetings on quarterly basis. Dates and times for all parents' meetings are issued in the first quarter for the whole year so as to allow parents ample time to plan.

Mrs Mngadi further revealed that the school organised workshops for parents on social issues and parenting. Parents appreciated these as they felt the school was interested in their welfare. She stated:

We believe in our school being involved in community development, for example, organising workshops for parents with the assistance of the governmental departments, for example, Health, Social Development, and others. The last workshop we had was on benefits available with Social Development for different health and social challenges and Health explained the screening process where beneficiaries need to get a doctor's or hospital referral when applying. This was during the first term of 2024, very good attendance and appreciated by attendees. Although these are arranged for our parents we do not turn back members of the community who are not our parents as long as we still have space in the hall.

There were decisions that the school was supposed to take, but it purposefully left them for parents to take, for example, starting a matric camp to improve matric results. This confirmed the involvement of parents in decision making. It happened like this according to Mr Nzuza:

Some decisions are left for parents to take, for example, the introduction of matric camp. The school analysed the previous year results in a parents' meeting which

was ranging from 70 to 79% for the past three years. The school made it clear that they are not satisfied with these results, what more could be done. It came up that some learners do get disturbed during examination period and are not able to study well, many things in our homes can disturb learners. It is parents who suggested a camp. Yes, the school wanted a camp but led parents to making that decision and since then parents have a great contribution to matric camp.

It was mentioned before that 279 out of 742 learners were not from local areas but were renting in the area. The school decided to help parents by monitoring the stay of their children through working with the landlords. Each teacher was allocated a group of learners (not more than ten) to act as a parent figure by checking in with them on cell phones and also by communicating with the landlords. Not all 279 learners were allocated as those staying with relatives were not involved in this plan. This was a way of making parents comfortable about the stay of their children away from home. Mr Nzuza again said:

Each teacher is allocated a group of learners from the renting group (not more than ten) to monitor their welfare and communicate with the land lord. The land lords are also given numbers of these teachers. The parents of learners are first people the land lord must communicate with but in case there is an emergency and a parent is not reachable the teacher concerned can be contacted. It happened three months back that one learner got sick in one of these homes and it could take a parent more than two hours to arrive since parents did not have their own transport. The land lord phoned both the parent and the concerned teacher. The teacher phoned the principal and the learner was taken to hospital within an hour. This is one strategy that makes parents to trust the school and allow their children to come and rent.

The school also had an arrangement for parents to come and see teachers by appointments in case they wanted to discuss some issues concerning academic activities or the conduct of their children. This was further divulged by Mr Nzuza:

The school also allow parents to make appointments to come and visit either to discuss learners work with teachers or to check on their children's conduct especially if parents did not attend parents' meetings or grade meetings due to different challenges.

The school took a decision that when parents attended meetings they should be offered lunch as some of them came from afar and others had different medical problems which required them to take medication. It was Mrs Ngwenya who voiced the following:

The SGB resolved that when parents are invited for meetings they must at least be offered snacks or light lunch because some of them take medication and others have diabetes.

Mrs Ngwenya further stated that the principal always told the parents about their importance, and this made parents take the education of their children seriously. She stated:

The principal and SGB always assure parents of their importance to the school and to the education of their children.

The school acknowledging that in any collaboration enhanced communication is key. This was achieved by introducing a number of communication platforms so that both sides were up to date about what was happening around the child, be it academic or social. It was Mrs Ngwenya again who commented on this:

Our school uses multiple communication platforms like WhatsApp, face book, communication books, mass messages and sometimes personal contacts (phones) to make sure that parents are up to date with what is happening at school. Therefore, communication is key to school-parent collaboration.

The school introduced an awards day held every year to congratulate learners who excelled academically the previous year. This brought teachers and parents together in appreciation of the good work done at school and it improved the relations between teachers and parents. This was indicated by Miss Mtambo (Teacher B):

The school has an awards function on yearly basis where parents are invited to come and congratulate learners and teachers who excelled academically the previous year. Parents are given an opportunity to present an item, they choose one parent to deliver a speech on their behalf.

Miss Mtambo again emphasised the importance of communication and stated that the principal and teachers were approachable and open to parents:

Communication in this school is wide and it is not top down but parents are free to approach teachers and principal with any idea or concern.

Miss Mtambo further commented that the school organised Heritage Day on a yearly basis and invited parents and traditional leadership to be part of celebrations. She had this to say:

Planning cultural events like Heritage Day and inviting parents to be part from the planning stage and also inviting traditional leadership is another strategy to make parents come closer to the school.

Mr Ngobese, the SGB Chairperson appreciated the fact that the school principal was visible in the community, he attended many funerals as well as other functions which sent a message to the community that he was sociable and approachable. This made the community feel free to approach him or the school on any issue that concerned education. He indicated:

The visibility in the community by teachers especially the principal, attending funerals and functions make people see that the principal is approachable.

Mr Zikhali (Parent B) appreciated the manner in which meetings were conducted at this school, mentioning that parents were given enough opportunity to raise issues and take decisions. This made parents continue being part of school activities as they were part of deciding about them. He said:

The manner in which discussions during the meeting are handled show that we all have the common goal, for example, in most cases parents do not just sit and listen to the school and then walk out. I remember that even the idea of a matric camp was raised by one parent who said although we have good results in this school it does not mean that we should be satisfied as there are still schools who perform at 100% with quality results and why don't we have matric camps as other schools do. Parents applauded that and it was resolved that each beginning of the year members of the planning committee should be reviewed so as to replace those who are no more parents as their children has passed matric and left the school. Since then parents have been part and parcel of the matric camp.

This indicates that the school and parents wanted this collaboration to work hence having these strategies to counter challenges.

7.3.8 Conclusion

Perceptions of the Principal, Departmental Head, Chairperson of the SGB, parents and teachers were discussed in this chapter. Data generation was done from the viewpoints of Khanyisani Secondary School. Seven themes emerged from the analysis, and they influenced the organisation of the discussion. The themes that came out are stakeholders understanding of

violence and its consequences for safety and the functionality of the school, establishing and maintaining collaboration between schools and parents to reduce school violence, the intervention of community leadership – traditional leadership in reducing school violence, benefits of strong school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, challenges of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence, repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence and strategies to navigate challenges of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ZEBRA STRIPES: EMERGING PATTERNS FROM THE FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

The preceding three chapters have presented the findings from the data that was generated in three case study secondary schools on the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration. This chapter shifts the focus from what was presented by the participants to the analysis of what the participants said and the reasons behind their narrated stories. In short, Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven presented a descriptive analysis of the findings, but this chapter presents a second level of analysis of the findings, utilising both the literature and the theoretical framework to enhance the discussion.

In analysing the findings from the descriptive data, I commence by charting the similarities and differences of the three school profiles. I thereafter move to comparing and contrasting communities and further move to compare and contrast the participants. Patterns emerging from other aspects of the data concerning similarities and differences in the participants' comprehension of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence are discussed thereafter. Finally, I conclude the chapter. The zebra stripes metaphor in this chapter's caption is an attempt to explain the nature of patterns emerging from the schools, communities and participants' comprehension of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence. Zebra stripes are prominent for their eye catching black and white colours which are viewed as contrasting but are harmonious at the same time and enhance the zebra's beauty. The zebra stripes metaphor encourages the notion of embracing the uniqueness and celebrating differences and this is how patterns emerge from data generated in different research sites.

8.2 Similarities and difference in participating schools

All the participating schools were situated in rural areas under the authority of traditional leaders as contemplated in both the Traditional and Khoi-San Act, No. 3 of 2019 (RSA, 2019), and the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act, No. 5 of 2005 (KwaZuluNatal, Legislature, 2005), as well as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, No. 41 of 2003 (RSA, 2003). All three schools had a common town that was

a hub of economic activity for these communities. Distances from these schools to town differed but what was common was the same main road through which these schools could be accessed. The three schools were on the land suitable for farming. This can be seen by a lot of sugar cane farms around their areas.



Figure 3: Emalaleni community typical of the settlements in all the three communities

All three schools had four blocks of classrooms, a staff room, a kitchen for the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). All three schools were fenced and had security guards at the gates. Water was available in these schools except that Phakama and Khanyisani used taps and water tanks whereas Qhubekani had a borehole with tanks on stand. All the three schools were electrified so they could do all things that needed electricity like printing, photocopying, typing, keeping the NSNP fruits and vegetables in fridges as well as other things that needed electricity. Staff rooms were available in all three schools as well as principals' and deputy principals' offices. All three secondary schools used pit toilets. Pit toilets are a health and safety hazard for all at school and surrounding communities. In primary schools, there have been incidences of young learners (Grade R and Grade 1) falling into the toilet pits. The Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal is trying to change this situation in rural areas by providing hygienic flushable toilets which will also restore dignity to the children and their teachers. The only challenge to such a move by the provincial Department of Education is the availability of water in rural areas (Breadline Africa, 2025). These three schools had administration clerks who also had their working spaces. All three schools were Quintile 2 schools meaning they were serving the poorest communities (SASA, 1996b).

There were some points of difference as well. Not all three schools had school halls, as only Phakama Secondary had a school hall. In other schools, there were two or three classrooms that were separated by sliding doors that could be open to provide more space when many people needed to be accommodated, otherwise, these normally functioned as classrooms. From what I got from the participants, these schools resorted to such buildings because there were no funds to build classrooms as well as school halls. Literature (Gislason, 2011; Watters, 2015; Veloso et al., 2015) attaches academic value to such buildings and they are called ‘innovative learning spaces’. According to Siguroardottir et al. (2021), such buildings provide teachers with freedom to group classes in numbers that they feel to be relevant at that particular time, and not being restricted by space. Siguroardottir et al. (2025, p. 63) further state “to invest in innovative school buildings and try out new design forms, can be viewed as an opportunity to enhance learning processes and improve outcomes for learners”. The same study also acknowledges that such designs, also known as ‘pedagogical walk throughs’ have their weaknesses, for example, technical challenges in opening and folding these partitions. Fortunately, in these schools the slides were opened and closed manually. Phakama Secondary School also had a library and a laboratory whereas, Qhubekani and Khanyisani had container laboratories but no proper libraries. Even though there was a library at Phakama, no librarian was employed by the Department of Basic Education. The policy of the Department of Education in KZN provides that schools should have libraries and librarians in all KZN schools. Therefore, the availability of librarians in schools plays a supportive role to teaching and learning. For example, they help learners in the acquisition of reading skills, work together with teachers to infuse information literacy into the curriculum and other roles. Schools without librarians lack this support and are therefore, disadvantaged (Mngomezulu, 2020). For the contexts of the schools to be well understood, the following discussion will be on similarities and differences of the communities around the three secondary schools.

8.3 Similarities and differences in communities

These communities were situated in rural areas under the indigenous leadership of traditional leaders and municipal councillors and mayors. This means that the community was subdivided into areas called *izigodi* under the leadership of *izinduna* who reported to *Amakhosi*. The three rural communities fell under Ingonyama Trust and Amakhosi were custodians of the land. To assist the readers in understanding the structure of traditional leadership in the province of

KwaZulu-Natal, I have attached a figure below which shows the various levels in the structure.

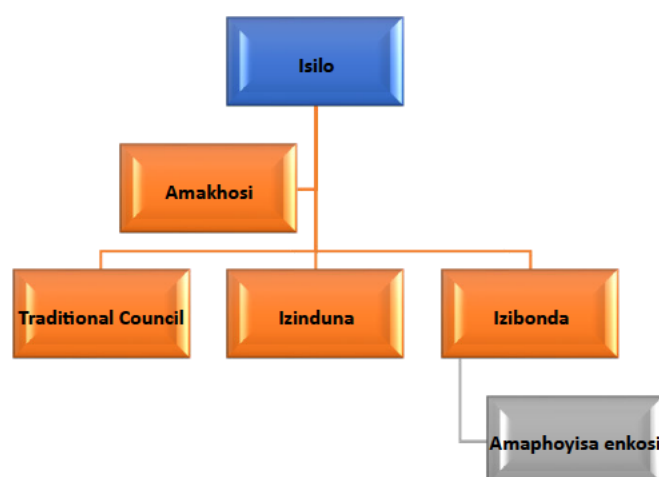


Figure 4: Traditional leadership structure in KZN (Source: Mbokazi, 2016)

The table below indicates the profile of the three communities, and the summary is provided immediately after the table.

	Emalaleni area for Phakama	Bomvini area for Qhubekani	Khanyisani area for Khanyisani
Total population	6 675	5 900	2 578
Female headed households	3 711	3 086	1 379
Population density per square km	429	358	132
Number of households	1 317	1 014	507

Table: 19 Household utilities in all communities (Adapted from Stats SA, 2022)

What is noticeable in all these communities is that more than 50% of households in each community were headed by females. The level of unemployment was high in all communities and as a result many people in each community depended on social grants and pensions. Unemployment correlates with school violence as Lesole (2022) states that unemployment and poverty affect levels of violence in schools and this was due to the finding in his study that 40% of the surveyed learners had experience of violence and they were all (40%) from poor working-class area. Their communities were plagued by poverty, unemployment and gangsterism. Poverty as a cause of violence is a global phenomenon. One of the challenges was the level of illiteracy that was lofty in all three communities. Most people with qualifications beyond matric left the area to work in townships and towns where work opportunities were

better. A large number of people did not reach matric. This caused many learners to drop out of schools to go and look for work in order to support their families.

Level of education	Emalaleni Phakama	Bomvini Qhubekani	Khanyisani Khanyisani
No schooling	6%	5,2%	6%
Some primary	19%	15%	13.1%
Completed primary	17%	14,6%	14%
Some secondary	24.2%	29%	21%
Completed matric	29,8%	31.7%	37.7%
Higher education	4%	5.2%	8.2%

Table: 20 Formal education statistics in all communities (Adapted from Stats SA, 2022)

8.4 Similarities and differences in the participants

Participants found in all three research sites were according to the following categories: principals of schools, departmental heads, SGB chairpersons, teachers and parents. Categories consisted of similar and different aspects. I commence with the presentation of the analysis of principals in three schools.

8.4.1 School Principals – personal profiles and approaches to leadership

	Principals		
	Phakama-Mr Masombuka	Qhubekani-Mr Nene	Khanyisani-Mrs Mngadi
Age	52	60	55
Gender	Male	Male	Female
Years in position	08	09	07
Level of education	Graduate	Post-graduate	Graduate

Table 21: Details of principals in three communities

From the three principals, it is evident that it is only Mrs Mngadi who acted in the principal's post before she became principal. Other principals assumed this role from outside their current

schools. When the posts were advertised, Qhubekani Secondary School had few applicants presumably because of the high level of violence at school and teachers were not at ease to apply. The three communities did not have gender preferences when it came to principalship positions, and only the best candidates emerged. All principals held degrees from different universities with Mr Nene, the principal of Qhubekani holding a Master's degree. Their experiences as principals of schools varied and they all started to be principals where they were, meaning that they had never been principals in other schools. The longest principalship experience was that of Mr Nene which was nine years and others were eight and seven years respectively. Only one of them grew up in the area where the school was located. Although he no longer resided in the area but his parents' home was in the same location as the school. That was Mr Masombuka, the Principal of Phakama Secondary School. The Principal of Qhubekani arrived in the area to assume principalship and she was from Durban whereas Mrs Mngadi, the principal of Khanyisani started as a post level one teacher from Melmoth. All principals had the experience of working in rural areas hence their strong belief in working closely with the community and traditional leaders. These principals had similar experiences of teachers under their supervision leaving schools on transfers because of the unruly behaviour of learners before collaboration matured. These principals were able to survive and changed the situations in their schools through their collaborative leadership styles and respect for stakeholders.

8.4.2 Departmental Heads – personal profiles and approaches to leadership

	Phakama Mrs Mthethwa	Qhubekani Mr Buthelezi	Khanyisani Mr Nzuza
Age	56	55	51
Gender	Female	Male	Male
Years in position	10	06	08
Level of education	Graduate	Graduate	Post graduate

Table: 22 Details of Departmental Heads in all three schools

The three departmental heads were appointed from within the schools. Only one of them, Mr Buthelezi of Qhubekani Secondary School was appointed by a panel that included his current principal. The other two departmental heads were in these positions when the current principals arrived. All three schools had deputy principals and three departmental heads who reported to deputy principals. Mrs Mthethwa and Mr Nzuza were community members where their schools

were located, and Mr Buthelezi was from outside the area where his school was located. Their experiences as heads of departments varied but Mrs Mthethwa of Phakama Secondary School had the longest experience of ten years. Others had experiences of eight and six years respectively. All the departmental heads were graduates with Mr Nzuza of Khanyisani Secondary School holding a Master's degree. I assume that these were good leaders as they succeeded in working together with other SMT members including principals, SGB chairpersons, teachers and parents to turn volatile situations around their schools to success stories.

8.4.3 SGB Chairpersons – personal profiles and approaches to leadership

	SGB chairpersons		
	Phakama Mr Mnguni	Qhubekani Mr Zulu	Khanyisani Mr Ngobese
Age	57	57	41
Gender	Male	Male	Male
Years in position	04	07	04
Level of education	Diplomate	Grade 11	Grade 12

Table 23: Details of SGB Chairpersons in all three schools

This category was male dominant. To me these parents were not elected just because they were males as when I went through attendance registers for parents' meetings as well as grades meetings the indication was that these parents attended school meetings regularly and when going through minutes of meetings, I also noticed that they were active participants in the meetings. In such rural communities it is female parents in most cases who consistently attend school meetings but since strong school-parent collaboration began the number of male parents attending meetings grew in these three schools.

There were differences in qualifications of these SGB chairpersons. Among the three Mr Mnguni was the most educated with a diploma in medical technology. Mr Mnguni was one brilliant person who well understood the processes and policies of the Department of Education as well as those policies and strategies crafted by the school. He also served in the traditional council of *isigodi* led by induna and therefore he was the right and relevant person to represent the school in the community. Mr Mnguni worked in different areas including one medical

university where he served as the laboratory assistant. His education though not in the direction of governance brought influence to the functioning of SGB, for example, he could read, understand, interpret and facilitate departmental policies and systems to other SGB members and the entire parent body. On the other hand, the two other SGB chairpersons were also working well with their schools. Mr Ngobese of Khanyisani Secondary School had the advantage of being young and well to do in a thinly populated area. He had an interest in seeing his community developed and that could be seen in the way he executed his responsibilities as the SGB chairperson. Teachers spoke well of him and the community respected this young man. Mr Ngobese passed his Grade 12 and could not proceed with his education as he had to take over his deceased father's businesses. Mr Zulu of Qhubekani was also doing well in his school. Mr Zulu also had an advantage of being a brother to Inkosi of the area, therefore he commanded respect from the community. Most of all he was known as a humble person. He worked very well with the school principal and other members of the SGB.

8.4.4 Teachers - personal profiles

	Teachers					
	Phakama		Qhubekani		Khanyisani	
	Mr Ndlela	Mr Ntombela	Mrs Mhlongo	Miss Mgenge	Mrs Ngwenya	Miss Mtambo
Age	47	40	51	37	49	37
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Years in position	11	06	17	09	21	12
Level of education	Graduate	Graduate	Graduate	Graduate	Graduate	Graduate

Table 24: Details of teachers in all three schools

Female teachers dominated this category as they were four out of six. Mr Ndlela of Phakama Secondary School and Mrs Ngwenya of Khanyisani Secondary School were residents of the areas where their schools were located. All these teachers had been in their schools for more than five years with Mrs Ngwenya having been in her school for 21 years which is the longest period compared to other teachers. All these teachers were graduates with university degrees. All the teachers were happy to be where they were as they said their schools had become better

than many other schools. Some of them confirmed that before they used to think of getting posts in other schools because of violent situations they experienced.

8.4.5 Parents – personal profiles

	Parents					
	Phakama		Qhubekani		Khanyisani	
	Mr Ntuli	Mr Nhlabathi	Mrs Nkabinde	Mrs Skhakhane	Mr Zikhali	Mrs Biyela
Age	51	42	54	40	39	40
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Years in position	04	01	01	04	04	01
Level of education	Grade 11	Grade 11	Grade 09	Grade 12	Graduate	Grade 12

Table 25: Details of parents in all three schools

In this category the gender was balanced as we had three males and three females. When going through attendance registers and minutes of meetings, I discovered that four of these parents were consistently in attendance in SGB meetings. The two parents who were Mr Nhlabathi of Phakama and Mrs Biyela of Khanyisani did attend most of the meetings, and for the few they skipped, they apologised. This gave an indication that these parents were elected because they were serious about the education of their children as even their attendance at parents' meetings was good. I also concede that I may be wrong in making such an assumption. According to other participants, these parents had a huge contribution in the governance of the three schools. Three of them were elected for the first time as SGB members in 2024 during the SGB elections and the other three were elected for a second term; hence, their years in position is one for the first three and four for the second three. The most educated of all of them was Mr Zikhali with a B.Tech degree and the least educated was Mrs Nkabinde with Grade 9.

8.5 Emerging patterns and themes from the findings

In this section the discussion is of the patterns that emerged from the findings presented in the three preceding chapters. The multi-site cross case analysis is brought to the fore in this section. Similarities and differences are revealed by this data. My focus is on six facets in this section, namely: (a) The participants' understandings of the contexts and impacts of school violence, (b) The role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence, (c) Non-attendance of school activities by some parents, (d) The support of traditional leadership, (e) Communication between schools and parents. (f) Invitational leadership practices of schools.

8.5.1 Patterns in the participants' understandings and experiences of school violence and its impact on safety and functionality of the school

In this theme I analyse the participants' understandings and experiences of school violence as well as the impact that school violence has on school safety and school functionality. This analysis cuts across all three case study schools. According to Sylaj (2020), parents understand the experiences and behaviours of a child before teachers do and continue witnessing and understanding these experiences even when the child is at school; hence, the importance of knowing their views about school violence and its impact on safety and functionality. The understanding of school violence and its impacts is a strong starting point for parents to realise the significance of their working with the schools so as to help enhance and protect the academic and social development of their children. I note that many scholars in the literature that I reviewed for this study concur that involvement of parents in dealing with school violence is critical and it benefits learners as well as the schools (Sitoyi, 2020; Soliman et al., 2018; Sylaj, 2020). This theme is therefore divided into three sub-themes for lucidity in the three areas which are understandings and experiences of school violence, impact of school violence on school safety and impact of school violence on school functionality.

8.5.1.1 Understandings and experiences of school violence

The understanding of school violence by Principals, Departmental heads and teachers of all schools was more extensive than the understanding of school violence by parents. All teachers understood school violence as violence that occurred among learners due to intentional

aggressive behaviour which threatens, attempts to harm or harms another learner. This may be physical, emotional, psychological or sexual. When asked where school violence takes place, teachers were able to give school violence localities, for example, within school premises, during school events and on the way to home from school. Although participants did not define school violence in similar words, they all associated it with physical and emotional harm in their comments. Their comments are detailed in Section 5.3.1 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.1 of Chapter Six and Section 7.3.1 of Chapter Seven. The understanding of school violence by school principals, departmental heads and teacher of all three schools matches the understanding of school violence by Greene (2008, p. 12) who also includes the school violence locality in his definition of school violence as he said:

.....as violence that occurs on school grounds, on school-supported transportation and at school sponsored activities. It is an intentional form of behaviour in which one person threatens, attempt to harm or does harm another person. Aggression is generally defined as a low-level violence that includes verbal, physical or gestural behaviour that is intended to cause minor harm, psychological stress, intimidation, or to induce fear in another.

With parent participants, all of them had similar ideas to those of the teachers, but when asked about its locality, parents limited school violence to within school premises. Although some of the parents did not exactly say ‘*within school premises*’ but said during school hours, and when asked to explain that they said, “*as learners enter the school gate in the morning to when learners exit the school gate after school*”. I did not see any difference between ‘*within school premises*’ and their explanation of ‘*during school hours*’. These participants’ views are supported by Gupta (2023,) as he states that school violence includes violence on school premises, on the way to or from school and at school trips or events, although they focussed on violence on school property only. All participants also understood school violence as threatening the safety of their children because they said there were times when they heard about dangerous, violent occurrences that their children encountered or ran away from. To them, school violence and unsafety of their children were intertwined.

The three secondary schools that were the research sites were selected after an observation which indicated that they were succeeding in reducing school violence. The reason behind their selection, among others, was to use findings from the data generated through the interviews with them to offer other schools the opportunity to learn how they went about reducing school

violence. As a result, participants indicated that some of the violent occurrences and experiences are a thing of the past in their schools but because they went through them to be where they were, they felt the need to reveal that it was possible for other schools to move from violence to peaceful and safe situations if they involve parents as collaborators in the education of their children. Participants in this case shared the view of Naite (2021) that parental involvement makes it possible for parents to be part of policy development in their children's schools and that places them in a better position to channel their children's behaviour to be in line with the expectation of the school and the society. The participants from the three secondary schools had almost the same experiences of school violence. All schools had experienced forms of violence previously before school-parent collaborations became strong and they still had a few violent occurrences that they were dealing with. There were similarities in the forms of violence experienced by these schools. These were bullying and physical violence or assault which cut across all three schools. Mrs Ngwenya, a teacher at Khanyisani Secondary School mentioned that due to high levels of bullying in the school, psychologists from the Department of Education were invited to come and address parents on the effects of bullying for both the perpetrator and victim. This was done so that parents could join the school in assisting to curtail bullying in the school. Bullying was mentioned by all seven participants in Phakama Secondary School, it was mentioned by four out of seven participants in Qhubekani Secondary School and five out of seven participants in Khanyisani Secondary School. These participants gave their understanding of bullying as ill-treatment or physical aggression due to power imbalances between different stakeholders. In this instance, it could refer to a learner who believes he/she is more powerful than another and then ill-treats the powerless learner verbally, physically and otherwise. When I asked other participants if they did not experience or had not heard about bullying in their schools, they said that there was bullying but they classified it under physical violence. I found this proper as sometimes bullying is in the form of fighting or physical aggression or extends to fighting; hence, the definition by UNESCO (2024) that bullying is a harmful social practice that is marked by power imbalance. It is repeatedly performed and is an offensive social behaviour between learners causing physical, social and emotional damage.

The feeling of participants about bullying was that if it was not reduced or curtailed it could cause a lot of psychological and emotional harm for learners, thus hindering their academic and social development. This is confirmed by Dube (2020) who states that the results of

bullying for the victim are less self-confidence, and greater stress and emotional challenges which can lead to suicide. Although bullying and physical violence were prevalent in all schools, Phakama and Khanyisani Secondary Schools had bullying as their most prevalent form of violence followed by physical violence. This situation is related to the finding by Cloete (2022) who in his study on violence in South African schools found that physical violence or assault was the second most prevalent form of violence following bullying. I must mention that I am aware that sometimes bullying and physical violence are one and the same thing but there are also cases where they are different forms of school violence, for example, a learner who gets into a fight because he or she is defending his or her sibling who is being bullied or learners fighting due to teenage dating and other incidences. The three schools had their levels of bullying and physical violence reduced dramatically after being joined in collaboration by parents.

On top of bullying and physical violence, these three schools experienced other violent occurrences like verbal abuse, sexual harassment, vandalism and others but these are not consistent across all three schools. Qhubekani Secondary School experienced a lot of faction fights for a long time until 2019. These faction fights resulted in parents further distancing themselves from the school as they felt it was not safe to be at school anymore. The feeling of participants was that parents were also worried about the safety of their children because of frequent faction fights. Miss Mgenge, a teacher, indicated that these faction fights were so frequent that they would start even during the middle of the Grade12 final examinations and lead to learners writing their examination under heavy police guard. Many participants in the school mentioned how dangerous the situation became when these faction fights started. They said the faction fights had the potential to turn learners into killers as well as turning the community members against one another as quarrels that led to these faction fights emanated from community gatherings during weekends or school holidays. This would even involve community elements who were not learners. Mrs Nkabinde, one of the parents said:

When these fights break up it escapes your mind that these are learners due to different types of ammunition they carry and use to assault each other. Even teachers are not able to control them when these fights start as they also get traumatised, only police intervene. This has happened for a number of years in our school.

This situation relates to Mthiyane's (2013, as cited in Dube, 2020) statement that access to dangerous weapons by learners causes school violence to be out of control in South Africa. Mr Zulu, the SGB Chairperson of Qhubeka Secondary School, expressed his appreciation for teachers and parents of this school as he wondered how and where this school would be if the collaboration had not happened, leading to the total curtailment of faction fights. This clearly reveal the danger of 'bowling alone' by schools as metaphorically expressed by Putnam (1995) when he emphasised the significance of employing social capital as it brings together different people to pave the way for the realisation of a common goal. Putnam (1995) is the proponent of Social Capital Theory, which complements Invitational leadership theory by Purkey and Novak (1984) as the theoretical framework of this study. In this case it means the coming together of teachers and parents to collaborate in the education of children helped the school to overcome this problem.

8.5.1.2 The impact of school violence on school safety

Participants across the three schools were all aware of the cruciality of safety for the successful existence and operation of their schools. Participants' awareness was in line with the Council of Europe – Children's Rights' (2022) concern that the prevalence of school violence develops terror and anxiety which is destructive to the overall climate of the school and interferes with the rights of learners to be educated in a safe, harm free environment. They also shared their awareness of the fact that school violence had a negative impact on school safety as suggested by the Council of Europe – Children's Rights (2022). Most parents were not aware of the fact that they were also responsible for the safety of learners even when they were at school, as per the prescription of the Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996). They thought when children were at school only teachers were responsible for their safety. Ngidi (2018), Kreifels and Warton (2018) concur that South Africa has various legislation designed to protect the learners' rights to safety, human dignity, equality and freedom as well as the right to basic education and therefore, violence in schools violates these constitutional rights. The South African Constitution (RSA, 1996a) through Chapter 2 anticipates parents to be in the forefront of children's rights protection. All parent participants understood what teachers and learners went through because of violent occurrences, especially because these occurrences compromised or negated the school climate and instilled fear in teachers and learners as they knew they were not safe. These were times when schools were not safe at all.

All three participating principals of these schools viewed school violence as threatening the safety of learners and teachers as they were always afraid of getting hurt. This confirms the level of unsafety that once existed in these schools. These schools appeared to have been tormented by safety-threatening occurrences. In fact, all three schools went through a phase of being unsafe because of school violence and participants shared how the unsafe conditions of their schools frustrated them. This view is in line with the Council of Europe – Children’s Rights (2022, p. 1) when they said “violence in schools create insecurity and fear which harm the general school climate and infringe pupils’ rights to learn in a safe, unthreatening environment. One other similarity in this section was that all three schools acknowledged the need for safety for teaching and learning to be successful. All schools realised the damaging effects of unsafe school environments. This acknowledgement of the need for safety by schools meant that something that had not been done before needed to be done and that was a solid school/parent collaboration to maintain learner discipline in order to reduce violence in schools (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). As a result, all these schools, although not concurrently, eventually pushed for the inclusion of parents as part of the solution which led to schools gradually becoming safer. In this regard, the Safety and Security sub-committees representatives of the community members and traditional leadership were strengthened in order to become effective. During the time of interviews, the situation had changed, and schools were safer than before, and participants attributed that to the collaboration of schools and parents.

8.5.1.3 The impact of school violence on school functionality

In all schools, functionality was once negatively affected because of violent occurrences. The similarities across all schools, as far as the signs of dysfunctionality were concerned, were the rate of absenteeism of learners rising as some learners feared to be at school due to unsafe conditions. It was also mentioned, especially by teacher participants, that the rate of learner late coming in all three schools also rose. Further, teaching and learning processes were weakened as teachers wasted more time dealing with disciplinary issues. Again, the participants felt that the teachers lacked authority as they feared the learners due to their aggressive conduct and that made learners take advantage and did as they wished, including leaving the school at any time of the day (playing truant). Mngomezulu (2020) states that secondary school teachers

confirm that they have a problem in dealing with unruly learners. This results in compromised academic activities as happened in these three schools and as a result the rate of learner drop out also increased and, as far as participants were concerned, the reasons for dropouts among others were a lack of motivation because of the chaotic situation in schools as teachers were also demotivated. Learners encountered challenges but could not be helped as teachers had no authority over learners and parents were at a distance from the school as well as from the school issues of their children.

Principals and departmental heads from the three participating schools mentioned that the school functionality was so negatively impacted that academic achievement in the three schools became poor. This, according to the participants, resulted in parents removing their children from current schools to other schools with the hope that the situation would be better there. All those were the signs of the severe harm school violence brought to the education of learners in these schools. What was different was that in Qhubekani Secondary School, which was engulfed by faction fights, functionality was impacted to the extent of having learners writing their final matric examinations under the heavy guard of police officers for two years in succession. Section 6.3.1 of Chapter Six provides more details of how functionality was compromised at Qhubekani Secondary School. I could read from the tone and facial expressions of participants that those were difficult times for the school, especially because teachers were alone with only some of the SGB members in this situation. During this time the school mostly relied on Traditional Leadership for survival as all cases and threats of faction fights were reported to both the Circuit Management and Traditional Leadership for them to work together in resolving the situation. At that time most parents could only come to meetings to discuss these faction fights when invited by Traditional Leadership or when knowing that Traditional Leadership would be present. The negative impact on school functionality had brought the school to that level. The issue of school-parent collaboration did not exist at this time as parents were also afraid of the behaviour of their children. A similar situation was shared by Moreroa (2022) after finding that parents and communities were at a distance from the school programmes and disciplinary processes, yet many teachers believed that the involvement of parents, working together with schools could improve functionality in schools. With the other two schools, functionality was also negatively affected although the signs or results of the impact were not as bad as at Qhubekani.

These perspectives of participants in this study made me feel that somehow these schools lacked good leadership at that time. My feeling was in line with World Health Organisation – WHO (2019) as they stated that poor leadership may cause frustration and confusion, negatively impacting school functionality and eventually leading to chaos in schools. Although the negative impact on school functionality was caused by the prevalence of violent occurrences in these schools, the statement by one teacher from Phakama Secondary School convinced me that no matter how bad the situation is, good leadership will always win. She said, *“In 2018 the new school principal arrived and that was the beginning of change in this school”*. In other schools, no new principals arrived but the very same principals changed their leadership styles and also invited parents and the community to be part of their children’s education through engaging with policy decisions and programmes of the school. Section 6.3.2.2 of Chapter Six explains how the situation was turned around at Qhubekani Secondary School which is interesting, because it was a parent that initiated a strategy that was accepted and acted upon by the principal. This is the reason why, after narrating the previous encounters and situations, all participants credited Principals, SGBs, teachers and parents for the eradication of all signs of dysfunctionality. This does not mean 100% curtailment, but the situations are now totally under control, for example, when learners are absent they report and the reasons are acceptable, teachers have regained their authority and there is no more chaos in schools. This proves the power of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence.

8.5.2 The role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence

This section reflects the patterns in the participants’ understanding and performance of their roles as members of the collaboration to reduce school violence. The emerging picture is that both sides did not have a common understanding of the roles in the collaboration to reduce school violence and therefore they did not perform those roles until the leadership in schools began to prepare teachers through workshops so that they would be able to work with and maintain good and successful relationships with parents. Initially, teachers had the opinion that it was difficult for parents to approach the schools about school violence, however, schools made it easier by intentionally as well as unintentionally inviting parents to be part of school-parent collaboration. The advance of inviting other people into programmes and processes that are purposefully devised for developmental purposes is a characteristic of one of the theories making up the theoretical framework of this study, which is Invitational leadership theory by

Purkey and Novak (1984). As mentioned before, schools made it a point that they workshop teachers before inviting parents. What principals did for their teachers was in line with what Alatawi (2023) advocates, that schools should organise training on the development of collaboration skills for teachers. However, it is not all parents who accepted the invitation as quickly as schools wished, there were those who jumped at the opportunity of being part of their children's education, for example, a particular parent of Phakama Secondary School who went as far as funding the building of a hall valued at R1 200 000,000 and further donated a cow each year for food during matric camps at school since 2022. This is reflected in Section 5.3.2.2 of Chapter Five. Other parents had cold feet even when schools had their hands open for them, they kept on being somehow problematic for schools by not cooperating. Such parents were found in all schools but in small numbers at Phakama and Khanyisani Secondary Schools; most of them were at Qhubekani Secondary School where the school had been overwhelmed by faction fights and most parents were still afraid to be part of school activities although they later responded well as exemplified in Section 6.3.2.2 of Chapter Six. Even though teacher participants from all schools had similar ideas of what needed to be attended to by the collaboration (roles), they had contrasting opinions about how and to what extent should parents be involved. This was addressed by continued workshops for both teachers and parents. According to Sitoyi (2020), school-parent collaboration plays a very important role in the lives of the school and its processes, the teachers, the learners and parents, as they all benefit from the collaboration.

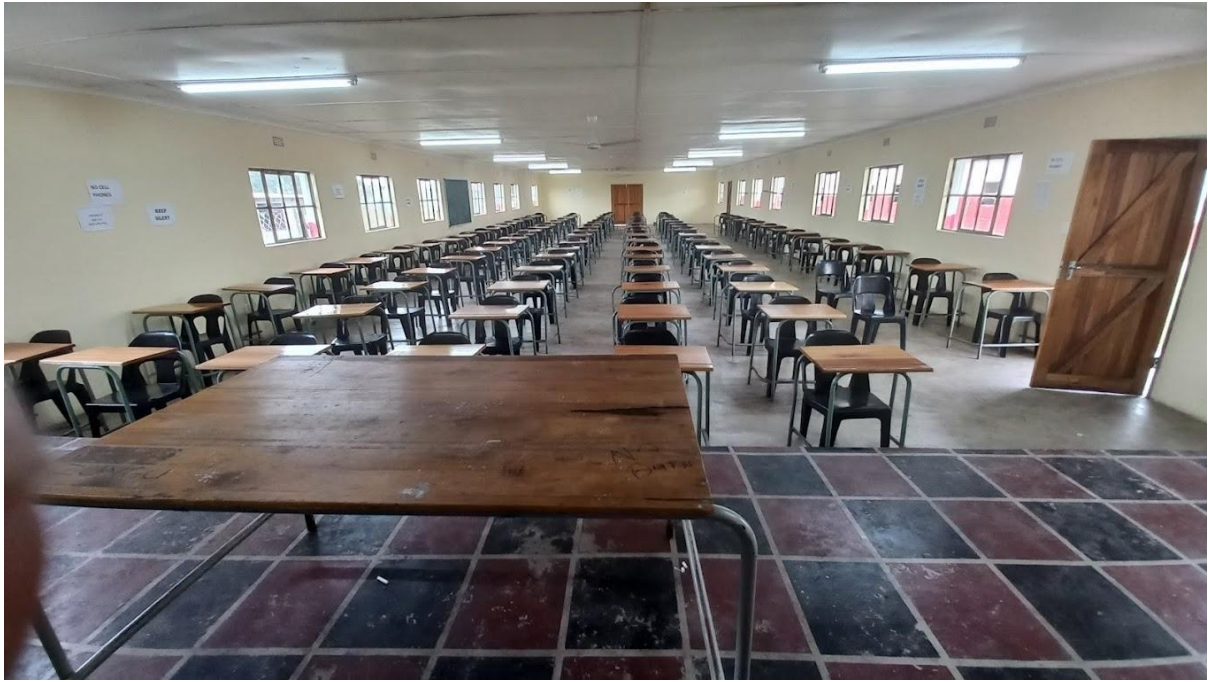


Figure 5: The inside of a school hall sponsored by a parent of Phakama Secondary School

The following sub-themes were some of the roles played by school-parent collaboration in the three secondary schools.

8.5.2.1 Transformation of learner behaviour

The three schools were chosen to be part of this study because they had been observed as involving parents in reducing school violence. This puts it clearly that the three schools were experiencing school violence before school-parent collaboration became strong. The violent occurrences experienced by three schools were not all exactly of the same nature and extent, for example Phakama Secondary School once experienced a situation where a learner who was absent from school arrived late and entered a classroom with the female teacher in front of the class, the learner went straight to another learner and hacked him with a tomahawk and left the class when he thought he was dead. This is reported in Section 5.3.1 of Chapter Five. On the other hand, Qhubekani Secondary School had a serious problem of faction fights to the extent that they sometimes even wrote matric examinations under the heavy guard of SAPS. These faction fights turned learners to ruthless human beings carrying dangerous weapons and threatening the lives of teachers and other learners regularly at school and these faction fights eroded the culture of teaching and learning in this school as Section 6.3.1 of Chapter Six

reflects. School-parent collaboration played its role in these schools as it propelled the change of these learners' behaviour. Workshops conducted by schools for parents instilled better parenting skills and they began to have discussions with their children about social issues including social conduct. Yigzaw (2019, p.31) states "However in preparing the ideal citizens, the role of parents is pivotal because family is the first agent of socialization to inculcate the conscience of good and bad". The involvement of parents motivated teachers to fully implement the code of conduct which was developed together with parents as SASA (RSA, 1996b) mandates. Teachers developed regular communication with parents which made learners aware that whatever wayward behaviour they exhibited, their parents were going to know. Epstein (2018) confirms the importance of communication in school-parent collaboration as she claimed that positive communication from school to parents is known to fully influence the involvement of parents and their collaboration. Mr Buthelezi, the Departmental Head of Qhubekani Secondary School explained that the fact that learners became disciplined did not mean the total eradication of conflicts at school, but strong school-parent collaboration made learners realise the importance of helping each other in solving their own conflicts. He said:

Yes, parents' participation is beneficial to the school. I will make an example about our school, since parents became interested in being part of their children's education we have seen a lot of changes. First of all, the behaviour of learners has been amazing after 2019, this does not mean that there are no conflicts at school but most of them do not even reach teachers' attention as learners themselves are able to resolve them.

This is a strong indication that school-parent collaboration not only changed the behaviour of learners from bad to good but also made them supportive of each other.

8.5.2.2 Optimisation of teaching and learning time in schools

School violence negatively impacts teaching and learning by creating an unsafe environment, causing psychological trauma, reducing concentration and increasing poor academic performance. Teachers waste a lot of time in managing disruptions rather than teaching while learners experience fear, depression and difficulty in focusing, all of which hinder the educational process and the overall wellbeing of the school. This was the case in the three secondary schools before school-parent collaborations became strong. Such situations are

reported in Sections 5.3.6, 6.3.6 and 7.3.6 of Chapters Five, Six and Seven. This negatively affected teaching and learning time as teachers spent valuable time addressing violence related issues, and because of this violence, teachers developed fear and anxiety, causing some of them to absent themselves from school or to dodge classes. The environment created by violence in these schools diminished teacher output and their connection with learners. In his study, Mngomezulu (2020) confirms the pressure placed on teachers under such circumstances when he says that secondary school teachers confirm that they have a problem in dealing with unruly learners. This resulted in compromised academic activities in these three schools. One teacher participant, Mrs Mthethwa of Phakama Secondary School commented like this:

The school becomes chaotic as learners do as they wish since teachers cannot report them to parents. In such a way the school climate becomes negative and unsafe. This leads to some teachers beginning to dodge some periods if the class they must be going in has some troublesome learners as they are afraid to be abused.

Learners were also highly compromised by this situation as violent occurrences led to difficulty in concentration and a lack of focus which resulted in poor academic performance and higher failure rates. Violence could also lead to psychological trauma, depression, and anxiety in learners making it difficult for them to engage in their education. Faction fights forced many learners from Qhubekani Secondary School to absent themselves from school as they were afraid that the fight could start anytime; some of them became late comers on a regular basis as they did not want to be found at school alone by bullies. This is reflected in Section 6.3.6 of Chapter Six. All these situations ate deeply into teaching and learning time. Qhubekani Secondary School was the most heavily affected because of regular factions fights, with their potential to disrupt the whole school at once for more than a day or two. I agree with Sibisi (2021) when he postulates that a crucial part of learning and development is the feeling of safety. It is the collaboration of schools and parents that brought safety to these schools. Things began to change as school-parent collaborations became stronger in each school. Change did not take place simultaneously in all schools, given that schools did not experience the same forms of violence nor the extent. They also did not start seeing the need to invite parents to the collaboration at the same time but what is evident is that as each school progressed in working with parents, teaching and learning time slowly began to be accorded the priority and respect it deserved. The transformation of learner behaviour reduced opportunities for further violence in all schools and this started at Phakama Secondary School and other two secondary schools

followed. Schools began to realise that in fact they needed more time than they had during school hours and so they started extra classes as well as matric camps. Schools had begun to utilise teaching and learning time optimally. Table 6 of Chapter Four tells the story in numbers. In 2018, matric results were 64% for Phakama Secondary School, 52.9% for Qhubekani Secondary School and 52.9% for Khanyisani Secondary School. This was before the interventions to reclaim teaching and learning time by school-parent collaboration. Things improved year by year in the following years. In 2024, showing that teaching and learning time had been claimed back from school violence by the school-parent collaborations, matric results were as follows: 96% for Phakama Secondary School, 93% for Qhubekani Secondary School and 90% for Khanyisani Secondary School. The results for years in between are found in Table 6 of Chapter Four as mentioned above.

The participants appreciated the respect and trust that was exhibited by the teachers and the parents in the collaboration as one of the reasons for successfully reclaiming teaching and learning time as this had to do with decreasing the levels of school violence, first through working together. Trust is a central and common element in both theories that constitute the theoretical framework guiding this study. According to Purkey and Novak (1984), in Invitational leadership theory it is the responsibility of the school through its SMT and SGB to initiate the formation of collaboration and exhibit trust and readiness to accept parents when they accept the invitation. On the other hand, the Social Capital Theory of Putnam (1995) states that social capital is about collaboration of a collective to achieve a common objective and this collaboration can only be possible if there is trust among the members of the collective. This is exactly what was exhibited by the relationship of teachers and parents in the three schools. The participants also mentioned that the strong school-parent collaboration in their schools resulted in improved academic achievements as results confirm in Table 6 of Chapter Four. The improvement of situations and academic results is in alignment with Naite's (2021) postulation that parental involvement consists of their (parents) attitudes, activities, styles, and occurrences inside and outside the school atmosphere in order to bolster the academic and behavioural success of their children in schools.

8.5.2.3 Creation of safety in schools

All participants in the three schools were emphatic that their situations were not pleasing at all before the relationship between teachers and parents matured. By this they meant the school-parent collaboration was very weak or not present. This situation had negative effects in the lives of these schools; hence, participants said they did not wake up and find themselves where they were. Section 5.3.6 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.6 of Chapter Six and Section 7.3.6 of Chapter Seven present a detailed discussion about the repercussions of weak school-parent collaboration. The participants of Phakama Secondary School indicated that this phase of weak school-parent collaboration was before 2018 in their school as things started to change for the better in 2018. With Qhubekani Secondary School, the phase of weak school-parent collaboration was before 2020 as, according to participants, the school violence indaba held at the school was in the middle of 2019 and thereafter, the school experienced change. Also, at Khanyisani Secondary School, the situation started to improve in 2020; hence, the increase in learner enrolment the following year. All the participants shared a similar viewpoint that during the weak or non-existing school-parent collaboration, all three schools experienced negative developments, mostly emanating from learner behaviour. The participants revealed that all three schools experienced a lack of safety within their premises due to increased violent occurrences. This situation confirmed what was found by Sabo et al. (2021) in a study conducted in the same context as this one. Sabo et al. (2021) found that the majority of the participants felt that parents' endeavours and interest in the partnership with schools would yield preferable school safety and their divorce from this partnership would result in schools being unsafe. The participants of all participating schools felt that other similar problems in all schools were emanating from this safety issue. According to the participants from all schools, these problems were: high levels of absenteeism by learners due to fear of being victimised by bullies in schools and teachers had to spend more time disciplining learners instead of focusing on teaching and learning. This is why among other things, the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996a) wants parents to make sure that they participate in creating a conducive and fruitful teaching and learning atmosphere. Further, it encourages partnership with other stakeholders in education and being fully involved in the education of children. The principals of all three schools felt that this shift in teachers' focus from teaching and learning resulted in low or poor academic achievements. This shift of focus by teachers and poor academic results was certainly due to weak school-parent collaboration as literature reveals that planned and

effective school-parent collaboration decreases deviant behaviour, enhances school climate as well as increases academic achievement (Caridade et al., 2020; Myende & Nhlumayo, 2020; Naite, 2021).

Qhubekani Secondary School experienced low levels of safety because of constant faction fights. Section 6.3.3 of Chapter Six give more details about these faction fights and how they originate. Participants from Qhubekani Secondary School painted a clear picture on how unsafe the situation was in their school. This is the reason why, for a long time parents distanced themselves from school activities as they feared the unsafe environment of the school. One parent from Qhubekani Secondary School, Mrs Nkabinde, had this to say about these constant faction fights in her school:

School violence is learner on learner violence taking place during school hours and in our school it was mostly in the form of faction fights. When these fights break up it escapes your mind that these are learners due to different types of ammunition they carry and use to assault each other. Even teachers are not able to control them when these fights start as they also get traumatised, only police intervene. This has happened for a number of years in our school.

Unlike other schools where the first step to school-parent collaboration was taken by school leadership, at Qhubekani Secondary School the first step was taken by one parent who came up with the idea of organising a school violence indaba day where government departments would be invited, alongside two *Amakhosi* where most learners in the school came from, *izinduna*, regional and local municipalities, The Premiers' office, community, parents and learners were also included. He also invited government departments, including Health, Safety and Security, Sports, Social Development, Home Affairs, Agriculture and Education. All these departments contributed to catering and other needs of the day. Departments like Health, social Development and Home Affairs had their tents where they rendered their services to the attending community like solving birth certificates and identity documents problems, screening the community for different diseases and so on. Speakers included former learners who had made it in the corporate world, Amakhosi, senior officials of some departments and the district Director of the Department of Education. Everything they said was about discouraging violence and highlighting its negative effects on the lives and progress of youth, especially. The programme was successful and really changed the attitude of learners and parents of Qhubekani Secondary School. What was left was for the school to take advantage of the situation, which

it did, and parents accepted the invitation which was the beginning of school-parent collaboration activities, including the workshopping of parents by the school. Faction fights became a thing of the past and safety in the school prevailed. The other two secondary schools experienced improved safety before Qhubekani as teachers and parents were already working together. This is reflected in Sections 5.3.4, 6.3.4 and 7.3.4 of Chapters Five, Six and Seven. Participants confessed that their school environment as well as their behaviour became invitational after a number of workshops. What these three schools did was to first create intentionally inviting environments which is part of the Invitational leadership theory by Purkey and Novak (1984).

Purkey and Novak (1984) define an intentionally inviting environment as an environment which is optimistic, respectful, trustworthy, as well as empowering, engaging and energising. From what participants said it was clear that these three schools were guided by Invitational leadership theory which is one of the two theories making up the theoretical framework within which this study is framed. This theory has three principles which are respect, trust and optimism. The schools, first aligned with the principle of respect as schools realised that without parents adopting the collaboration, no reduction of violence would take place. As a result, schools attached value to parents and saw them as responsible people they could work with to reduce school violence. In this way parents were given the dignity they deserved by schools. According to Purkey and Novak (1984), respect makes leaders approach their colleagues and stakeholders respectfully, thus causing them to be convinced that they have something to offer and are eventually welcome into a mutually beneficial relationship. The respectful approach that participants described shows it is important how schools approach parents in the school-parent collaboration. From the comments of participants, it was clear that parents also reciprocated the respect offered by the schools and things started to work well between teachers and parents. The participants also highlighted that the attitude of parents also began to change and they felt that it was because parents felt that teachers accepted them as they were without looking at their levels of education or economic and social status. From what participants revealed it was clear that there had developed trust between teachers and parents and according to Purkey and Novak (1984) trust is the second principle of Invitational leadership theory.

The parent participants indicated that it was clear to them that schools trusted them to be part of the relationship and therefore the collaboration was built on trust. They said they accepted being

part of the collaboration because they also had faith from the way they were approached and also trusted that teachers were going to lead them well in this collaboration so that they could play their roles effectively. What the parents said was in line with Fretz (2015), Purkey and Novak (1996), Smith and Hunter (2007), who concur that it is the responsibility of the school through the SMT and the SGB to initiate the formation of the collaboration and show trust and readiness to accept parents. When parents felt they were trusted and considered valuable by the school they responded positively. Edsource (2019) is also one scholar that believed that trust is central to any collaboration as he said when two sides trust each other, the willingness and confidence of working together develops and this is exactly the picture that was painted by participants in this regard. Also, Brown (2019), Epstein (2018), and Massuco (2021) agree that for effective collaboration between schools and teachers, trust and honesty are key. All three schools now experience safe, friendly teaching and learning environments.

8.5.3 Non attendance of school activities by some parents

Participants reported poor attendance of school activities by parents before the establishment of school-parent collaborations. The attendance was embarrassing as it could not even make up 20% of the total number of parents in each school. This situation changed when school-parent collaborations matured as all three schools experienced improved and better attendance, however, some parents still had problems in attending school activities. Details about the complexity of some parents still not attending meetings are discussed in Sections 5.3.5.1, 6.3.5.1 and 7.3.5.1 of Chapters Five, Six and Seven. Participants mentioned that some parents could not attend school activities because of their hectic personal schedules. This is confirmed by Mr Masombuka, the principal of Phakama Secondary School as he said:

Events and meetings scheduled during working hours or traditional school hours may not be convenient for all parents as parents with demanding work schedules or multiple responsibilities find it difficult to attend these meetings, school events, or volunteer opportunities.

This non-attendance because of demanding work schedules or multiple responsibilities for some parents posed a threat to the school-parent collaboration. What saved the collaboration was the fact that most of these parents were committed to being part of their children's education and therefore were able to find time and make appointments to go and see teachers at school. This challenge is in line with the findings of a study conducted by Berry (2019) in Farmington,

United States, which was that parents expressed one major problem; they said that they had hectic work schedules which did not allow them to have time to be part of their children's education. These participants went further and stated that in some cases, both parents are workers and there is little or no time at all for other activities (Baker et al., 2016; Berry, 2019; Kang et al., 2017). According to participants this was a similar case in all schools, but the extent was not the same as employment statistics were not the same in the three communities where these schools were located. With Khanyisani Secondary School, the most problematic issue was the fact that 297 out of 742 learners were not from the local households but were from afar and rented accommodation in the area as reflected by Section 7.3.5.1 of Chapter Seven. This suggests that more than 200 parents did not stay locally which had an impact on attending school activities. It was difficult sometimes to get some parents as quickly as the school needed them. This was due to the same fact that some learners were from afar and only renting in the area. If, for example, if a learner was sick the school had to see to it that the learner received help as soon as possible and then they had to inform parents later. Mrs Mngadi also mentioned that the fact that some learners were from afar made the attendance at meetings fluctuate because of factors like the weather and availability of transport for parents coming from afar. However, Mrs Mngadi stated that what was good about these parents was that the majority of them reported when they were going to be absent from school activities. She indicated that this did not suggest that all local parents attended school activities all the time but the majority of them did. This again posed a threat to the collaboration as sometimes some decisions were very sensitive and needed the presence or input of almost all involved. The collaboration at Khanyisani survived because Mrs Mngadi indicated that those were responsible and committed parents who made it a point to apologise if they were not going to be available for a particular activity. Also, the improved communication by the school made it possible for the interaction between the school and these parents to stay alive.

Another different dimension that came up from the participants of Qhubekani Secondary School was that of learners left with their grandparents while their parents had left the community to seek employment in afar places. Because of age and physical weakness grandparents sometimes ended up making older siblings take care of younger sibling, thereby adopting parental roles. For example, one teacher participant, Mrs Mhlongo, indicated that some learners at Qhubekani Secondary School played the role of being parents and even attending parents' meetings for their siblings in primary schools because at home, they stayed

with grandparents, meaning that when it was their turn for parents to attend meetings at Qhubekani Secondary School, no one attended as the grand-parents were old and sickly. This had an unpleasant impact on these learners' schoolwork and even on their social conduct as sometimes they experienced emotional situations while taking care of themselves and their siblings. These learners came to school exhausted because of the challenges and sometimes became arrogant as they had a lot on their shoulders. This is reflected in Section 6.3.5.1 of Chapter Six.

8.5.4 The support of traditional leadership

It is imperative to explain that there is no research question that directly ask about the input or role of traditional leaders in the study. There was also no question in the interview schedules that directly spoke about traditional leaders. The question was “How do you deal with violent occurrences in your school? Do you deal with them alone as a school?” This question was in the interview schedules of all categories of participants (principals, deputy principals, departmental heads, SGB chairpersons, teachers and parents). When participants responded to this question it was obvious that schools and parents could not solely deal with the issues of faction fights and quarrels between learners from different areas under different *izinduna* without involving traditional leadership, as all three secondary schools were located in rural areas under the authority of traditional leadership. Community leadership in these areas was not only traditional leadership but there were also local municipal leaders known as municipal councillors or ward councillors. The difference between the two kinds of leadership is that traditional leadership at the level of *Amakhosi* are not voted for but their positions are hereditary and as a result they were in a better position to know and have authority over all families in the area. They are responsible for the well-being and safety of all people and their property in the area. They also preside over all issues concerning land and its use. Traditional leaders are also responsible for custodianship of the culture and norms of their communities (Matsilisa, 2024). Their authority was respected and supported by most families if not all in the area. Municipal Councillors were voted into their positions for five years, unless voted for again. Their focus was on service delivery issues, for example, the availability of water, electricity, infrastructure like roads, housing and other issues. They did not exercise any authority over any person in their area but worked as middlemen between the municipalities and the people. This is the reason why schools worked with traditional leadership when it came to issues of safety and

learner behaviour in schools. All participants agreed that it was difficult to have parents and other members of the community respecting schools without the traditional leadership supporting schools. The participants explained why they said this, their explanation portrayed *Amakhosi* as having huge authority and enjoying respect and followership from most of the population in their areas. The participants felt that people in these three rural areas believed in *Amakhosi* in such a way that anything that was not embraced by *Amakhosi* would also not be embraced by them. *Amakhosi* had different people who were their extensions in their different areas and these people were called *izinduna*. Each of the three schools in this study was located under a particular *induna*.

Presentations in Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven indicated how the cooperation between traditional leadership and schools transpired with the aim of preventing violence in schools and disciplining learners involved in some violent cases. These responsibilities were outsourced by the schools to traditional leadership in all three schools. The principals and the SGB chairpersons mentioned that they weighed cases when violence occurred in their schools and outsourced those that they felt needed the attention of other levels of authority, for example, the Head of Department or traditional leadership. Although outsourcing of cases to traditional leaders is not mandated by the Department of Basic Education through any legislation, the fact is when major disciplinary challenges arise in schools and the SGBs have exhausted all the other avenues, principals do not hesitate to approach traditional leadership for a solution (Bhengu & Mbokazi, 2009). Cases, including faction fights are referred to traditional leadership as in most cases they emanate from community gatherings, quarrels that involved families as well as cases that were seen as having a potential to cause unpleasantness in the community. Other cases that involved members of the community as victims, perpetrators or witnesses fell within the responsibility of traditional leadership as schools did not have any authority over community members. This is in the spirit of a study by Mngomezulu (2020) where one participant mentioned that although schools adopt a code of conduct for learners, the involvement of community members in some cases brought dimensions that were not part of the code of conduct for learners and as a result, such cases were outsourced to traditional leaders as schools did not have authority over community elements. According to the SGB chairpersons, the last thing that traditional leaders wanted in their communities was the closure of any of their schools. I view this as one reason that makes traditional leaders so supportive as closure of any school would not speak well about the community and its leadership.

Emerging patterns of intervention approaches utilised by traditional leaders suggest that different approaches were utilised, for example, at times, traditional leaders would wait for schools to report an issue or issues before acting, which is reactionary and in other cases, traditional leaders would initiate ideas that could resolve the problems. Mngomezulu (2020) in his study which carried out in the very same context as this one found that traditional leadership were 'reactionary' or 'ad hoc' in their approaches to assist in learner discipline which is the case in this study as well. As far as participants were concerned this happened in all three schools, but the initiating of ideas by traditional leaders happened more often at Qhubekani Secondary School because of high prevalence of faction fights.

The principals and the SGB chairpersons of all three schools shared a common opinion about the ability of traditional leaders to defuse situations that were seen by the schools as having the potential to disrupt school functionality. The principals and the SGB Chairpersons also revealed that some of these situations were not known by schools but were reported by traditional leaders after they had dealt with them. I feel that the leadership of all three schools fulfilled two principles of Invitational leadership (Purkey & Novak, 1984) which were respect and trust when approaching traditional leadership to request their cooperation and support in school matters including safety issues. Traditional leaders, being aware that schools were an extension of the community confirmed their readiness to act where schools needed their support. On the other hand, the traditional leaders also fulfilled the very same principles as they accepted working with schools and later the element of trust developed as they invited one another to discuss issues of school violence. In this case Invitational leadership was used in closing the gap between communities and schools (Bhengu & Myende, 2015) The participants appreciated the humbleness of their traditional leaders who were always there for school matters. In doing this the schools were acting in the spirit of Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 1995). In this case schools acted in line with linking social capital constructs.

Putnam (1995) defines linking social capital as hierarchical power or authority-based relationship where people are at different levels or statuses as in the case of three schools' leadership and traditional leadership. The participants held a common viewpoint in that the intervention of traditional leadership helped to strengthen the collaboration. When I asked participants why they said so, they said that the majority of parents believed in traditional leadership and respected their authority, and therefore, seeing their leaders working with the

schools convinced them it was a good thing to do and they did likewise. This is confirmed by the study of Bhengu and Mbokazi (2009) where participants highlighted the need to include *izinduna* in the SGB as they understood the extent of respect and authority *izinduna* wielded in their communities, especially in the maintenance of learner discipline. It was revealed by the participants that traditional leaders helped in solving many behavioural challenges in all schools. The principal and parents of Qhubekani Secondary School shared the view that their school was on the verge of being closed because of frequent faction fights that had harmed the culture of teaching and learning at this school but due to traditional leadership's intervention the Department of Education at a district level ended up working with the traditional council in monitoring and managing the situation in the school. None of the principals hid the fact that they had no other option except seeking cooperation from traditional leadership as they were the only people who could scare unruly learners and make them toe the line and also make their families accountable to the community. This was alluded to by Bhengu and Mbokazi (2009) who suggest that when principals of rural schools need a solution after exhausting all avenues they do not hesitate to approach traditional leadership for help. However, they (Principals and SGB chairpersons) indicated that they were sometimes worried about the fact that the approach used by traditional leaders was not the approach prescribed by the SASA (RSA, 1996b) in dealing with learner indiscipline as, for example, traditional leaders would summon the perpetrator and his or her family to tribal court and render a judgement that sometimes included canning or flogging (corporal punishment) but regardless, schools needed the intervention of traditional leaders. Participants also said the fortunate part was that parents understood all this as correcting the behaviour of their children and they appreciated traditional leaders for it. My observation in this situation is that somehow the policies of the Department of Basic Education were compromised by pressure that was exerted on schools by the prevalence of violence. This is an indication that the negative impact of school violence goes a long way.

8.5.5 Communication between schools and parents

Participants from the three secondary schools appreciated that schools opened doors for parents to be able to communicate with them whether personally or electronically. Participants also highlighted a similar fact, that schools dramatically improved their communication to suit all parents. As a teacher myself, I concur with Yigzaw (2019) when he postulates that once the parent sees that the teacher has an interest in the development of his/her child, the parent

develops trust and feels free to communicate things that can assist the holistic development of a child. According to the participants' comments all three schools enhanced communication and introduced several communication platforms, for example, WhatsApp, Facebook, communication books carried by learners and cell phone calls. This was done so that all parents would be in a position to receive information from schools and respond if necessary. This relates to the views of Sitoyi (2019) who postulates that lively collaboration, warmth and open interaction between teachers and parents causes worthwhile relationships and this will avoid problems associated with a communication breakdown. The participants also appreciated schools for having taken the responsibility of workshopping both teachers and parents on collaborative skills, parenting skills and other social issues and expectations from both parties in the partnership. These schools were taking their cue from the Department of Basic Education (2001) which said schools should select teachers responsible for promoting parental involvement and these teachers should organise workshops that would train parents on how to be involved in their children's education. As per the participants' information, the three schools also organised and administered meetings for parents (for school, grades and SGB sub-committees). Parents felt that those meetings were fruitful and contributed to taking the schools forward. Teacher participants in the three schools also appreciated parents for fair attendance at all meetings. It also emerged from the deliberations with the participants that principals of schools and the SGBs motivated parents by appreciating them for being fully involved in the education of their children during meetings. By so doing, the principals and the SGBs were conforming with Massuco's (2021), views which indicate that beginning and sustaining effective relationships with learners' parents needs a lot of time as it is a long process involving, motivation, honesty and open interactions. This is contained in Sections 5.3.2, 6.3.2 and 7.3.2 in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. Mr Masombuka (Principal) of Phakama Secondary School emphasised that the school kept its doors open for parents so that whenever they felt the need to access the school they did so. He also mentioned that the school practised an open door policy where parents were allowed to visit the school on any day between 13h30 and 14h30 to inspect and have discussions about their children's academic and social behaviour. These parents made appointments with the Deputy Principal who further consulted and made arrangements with relevant teachers. Some parents directly contacted teachers who gave all the details of the visit to the Deputy Principal for effective management of these visits. Similarly, all schools had the same arrangement for parents although the management of the visits was not the same. In other schools, parents phoned relevant teachers without involving the deputy

principal, but all schools similarly avoided disturbing teachers while in class. Participants revealed that improved communication by schools strengthened the collaboration and made learners avoid behaving badly as they knew that teachers and their parents were in constant communication. According to the participants, all schools were aware that communication was central to a healthy school-parent collaboration. Therefore, they made it a point to improve communication by establishing and sustaining two-way communication regimes in the schools. The efficacy of such an approach is shared by Sibanda (2021) who says that one of the SGB participants stated that the reason for the school being dysfunctional was that there was no effective communication, and the principal only communicated with the SGB when the school needed money. Many other scholars also emphasised that without healthy communication, there is no school-parent collaboration (Epstein, 2018; Masucco, 2021; Sylaj, 2020). Considering the above, and due to attendance challenges, these schools made it a point that no parent lacked information by enhancing communication and introducing communication platforms that parents were in a position to make use of. For example, WhatsApp, Facebook, communication books, cell phone calls and others, were encouraged. Even parents who could not attend meetings were able to get information through these platforms. The participants, teachers in particular, stated that through open, honest and friendly communication learner behaviour in all three schools improved and this was followed by a decline in the number of violent occurrences. Eventually, learners and teachers began to feel safe within the school premises. Therefore, I argue, based on these findings and literature (Caridade, 2020; Naite, 2021; Sitoyi, 2020; Sylaj, 2020) that school-parent collaboration enhances learners' behaviour, thus lessening the chances of learners being aggressive. Teacher participants stressed that they could feel that the school climate was positive meaning it was warm, lively, friendly and professional and at the same time, inviting, motivating and empowering to all. This situation reflects the views of Caridade et al. (2020) who postulate that a positive school climate encourages good relationships, school relatedness, prevents dropouts, decreases absenteeism levels and lowers hostility and violence. All that found by Caridade et al. (2020) in their study is what was mentioned by participants as having taken place in their schools.

During my stay in these schools for interviews I observed that they were not chaotic; they had order, there was no late coming or it was very minimal, especially on rainy days, the relationship among learners or between learners and teachers was friendly but professional. The participants also appreciated the respect and trust that was exhibited by the teachers and

the parents in the collaboration. Trust is a central and common element in both theories that constitute the theoretical framework guiding this study. According to Purkey and Novak (1984), in Invitational leadership theory it is the responsibility of the school, through its SMT and SGB to initiate the formation of collaboration, and exhibit trust and readiness to accept parents when they accept the invitation. On the other hand, Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 1995) states that social capital is about collaboration of a collective to achieve a common objective and this collaboration can only be possible if there is trust among the members of the collective. This is exactly what was exhibited by the relationship of teachers and parents in the three schools. The participants also mentioned that the strong school-parent collaboration in their schools resulted in improved academic achievements.

8.5.6 Invitational leadership practices of schools

The interactions between principals showed a stable relationship characterised by the principles of invitational leadership. The interactions were also extended to traditional leaders as it became clear that not all violent occurrences in schools could be handled by schools and parents alone. The initiatives of traditional leaders were voluntary, uncompelled but significant in the reduction of school violence in schools located in their communities. Their initiatives also had features of invitational leadership principles. Even some parents in their dealings with schools displayed these principles of invitational leadership. For example, a parent of Qhubekani Secondary School who came up with the idea of how to tackle the issue of school violence, sold the idea to the SMT and SGB and later to the circuit manager; the idea was about inviting all provincial governmental departments, local and district municipalities that the school was located in, the District Director of the Department of Education at King Cetshwayo District, teachers, parents, former students of the school that were successful in their careers, amakhosi and *izinduna* to ‘the school violence indaba’ day. Chapter Six has the details of this initiative. From the first meeting where all departments were represented and where the task team to plan for this ‘indaba’ was formed, the spirit was that of invitational leadership until the day of execution. The spirit of invitational leadership has the power to convince people to do right. This initiative was followed by a strong school-parent collaboration at Qhubekani Secondary School which saw to the reduction of school violence. This approach of inviting others to participate in processes and programmes that are intentionally designed to invite development is a characteristic of invitational leadership (Purkey & Novak, 1984). The use of the term

‘inviting’ is not just based on the act of schools inviting parents and other stakeholders but is based on the deep meaning associated with the core values and principles of invitational leadership. These have informed them that they are able, responsible and worthwhile. For example, all people who were invited to plan and execute the school violence indaba programme at Qhubekani Secondary School attended, up to the execution day. I take this as a sign that people realised that they were valued and viewed as able to assist in the reduction of school violence. This is the same feeling that parents and traditional leaders had when they were invited by schools.

These invitations are communicated through the leaders’ interaction with staff and other people, programmes and practices in the organizational set up, and the physical environment (Purkey & Novak, 1984). According to Invitational leadership theory, the ways a leader interacts with others will display either invitation or disinvitation. One participant from Phakama Secondary School mentioned that things started to change for the good at school immediately after the arrival of the new principal. The participants mentioned that parents started to attend meetings, and a good relationship began between not only parents, but the community and the school. It is clear that the community was attracted to school through the invitational approach of the principal. The ‘disinvitations’ metaphor refers to messages to people (intentional or unintentional), which are uncaring, demeaning, devaluing, intolerant, discriminatory, and hurtful (Purkey & Novak, 1984). The three secondary schools are evidence of what an intentional leadership approach does to sustain relationships among people or collaborations.

In this study, school leadership saw the need to collaborate with parents to reduce school violence. Later, the mutual trust and respect developed and they shared information, took decisions and implemented them in order to reduce school violence. Invitational leadership was evidently used to traverse the metaphoric boundaries between schools and communities. I therefore argue that invitational leadership in this study contributed immensely towards the reduction of violence in schools.

8.6 Conclusion

A pattern emerging from the findings across all research sites has been developed in this chapter. I have explained in this chapter what is indicated concerning school-parent

collaboration in reducing school violence. The working relationship of schools and parents was similarly felt across all communities in this study. All participants agreed that the initiation of school-parent collaboration should be done by schools, and this was the case in this study. The findings from the study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

THE ROLE AND COMPLEXITIES OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION IN REDUCING SCHOOL VIOLENCE: SYNTHESIS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Introduction

The patterns that came out from analysis across the three research sites in Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven were presented in the foregoing chapter. The cross site analysis chapter was captioned ‘Zebra Stripes’ to portray different experiences surrounding school-parent collaboration to reduce school violence. The current chapter provides conclusions reached and their implications for various stakeholders from the school-parent collaborations that are shared.

9.2 The synthesis of the thesis

My experience as a circuit manager exposed me to violent school environments that were reported to me. I would receive telephone calls from school principals, mostly secondary schools, alerting me to the fights that would have broken out between two learner factions at schools. This would take a number of days as one faction would not come to school but stay in hiding the following day so that they could ambush the other faction when going home after school. School disturbances would take up to more or less two weeks as other learners were afraid to return to school after witnessing some gruesome incidents. This confirms that school violence undermines children’s right to basic education as well as safety and negatively impacts on their development (Ward, 2017). Other studies such as that conducted by Mngomezulu (2020), underscore the importance of learning in an environment that is characterised by order and discipline, despite other factors that might disturb. The importance of leadership in addressing such environmental factors is highlighted, particularly in rural areas. The first chapter has addressed these issues and more.

The second chapter brought important conversations about how violence that exists in schools can interrupt effective teaching and learning in schools, especially in rural communities. The importance of collaboration and partnership between key stakeholders was highlighted.

Different types of school violence were touched upon, and the veracity, and ubiquitous nature of school violence was highlighted. Given the dominant view in educational leadership, which suggests that principals and schools are responsible for inviting stakeholders to the school, invitational leadership became a preeminent choice as one of the theories to constitute a theoretical framework. The other theory is Social Capital Theory which acknowledges the presence of rich and impactful resources in society that can be harnessed to address a social problem. This discussion is contained in Chapter Three. The fourth chapter explains how the study was conducted and why it was conducted in that way. The key to that discussion was the philosophy surrounding the choice of the methodology. The paradigm and the design adopted cited a study which explores the stakeholders' understandings, the meanings attached and the choice of actions which align to this belief about who is critical for ensuring the smooth functioning of the schools. The Interpretive paradigm was therefore adopted, and parents constituted a crucial partner in addressing the challenge, and the focus of the study lies on how this collaboration worked.

The fifth, the sixth and the seventh chapters presented descriptive data which enabled me to claim what I was finding. These findings were presented in seven themes that were generated through the use of Braun and Clarke's (2020) framework of qualitative data analysis. I did not utilise literature to discuss the findings presented in those three chapters. The eighth chapter moved the analysis to another level where explanations were provided about how the current study related to current knowledge in the field. These findings demonstrated that they are not unique to the participating schools but are acknowledged in other contexts as well. What Chapter Eight has highlighted in the context of rural life and rural education in KwaZulu-Natal is the intricate connection between the people, traditional leadership and education. It is becoming clear from the perspectives of the participants that no problem can be resolved if their leaders, in the form of traditional leadership are left out. That could be one of the reasons parent participants gave value to those school leaders who were visible in their respective communities. That was to show that they were together in whatever they were doing. This is the final chapter which attempts to indicate the extent to which the research questions that underpin this study have been addressed. This synthesis of the thesis does not seek to repeat the information that was shared in Chapter One. In discussing the conclusions, I am using the research questions that I posed in Chapter One. These questions are used as headings that structure the discussion of the conclusions.

9.3 Presentation of conclusions from findings

Findings are presented under the research questions. For the purpose of reminding the reader, the following are the research questions guiding this study:

- How do stakeholders explain the role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?
- What are the complexities of utilising school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?
- How can schools and parents navigate the complexities of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?

9.3.1 How do stakeholders explain the role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?

Three core findings about school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence were generated by data analysis and these are (a) Promotion of a positive school climate due to the decrease of deviant behaviour by learners (b) Collaboration enhances the image of the school and ownership by the community (c) Collaboration replaces aggression with cooperation in learners.

9.3.1.1 Promotion of a positive school climate due to the decreased deviant and violent behaviour by learners

The findings have revealed that all the participants in three research sites valued and appreciated the change of climate in the schools from being threatening to being peaceful due to strong school-parent collaboration to reduce school violence. The participants mentioned that such a positive climate was because school-parent collaboration contributed to a change in learners' behaviour which led to a decrease in violent occurrences in schools. I must be quick to say that this development motivated both the teachers and the parents to remain positive and cherish the peace that had been established through school-parent collaboration. All participants realised that their collaboration was bearing fruits. The findings have also indicated that there were complexities in utilising school-parent collaboration. Such complexities came from parents and others emanated from the schools.

These three schools had experienced the consequences of a hazardous school climate due to violent behaviour of learners, among others they mentioned that due to unruly and violent behaviour of learners, teachers' authority in the school was compromised which led to weakened teaching and learning. All schools were negatively affected by the negative school climate as violent occurrences among learners escalated and academic achievement dropped. The departmental head of Qhubekani Secondary School mentioned that the transformation of the school climate did not mean that school violence was completely eradicated but it gave learners calmness and a sense of responsibility, as they were then able to solve some quarrels among themselves peacefully without involving teachers. This was a sign of social development on the side of learners, and this also indicated that development is impossible where there is chaos and fear. Notably, both the teachers and the parents did not dream of experiencing the violent conditions they experienced before the collaboration matured. All schools indicated that a positive school climate brought about a reduction in school violence, improved learner behaviour, improved academic achievement and enhanced the relationship between teachers and parents. One conclusion to draw from these findings is that stakeholders acknowledged the strength of collaboration that had been created through invitational leadership practices. These practices are based on the principles of trust, respect, openness and optimism about the capabilities of others in contributing to a better life for all the stakeholders.

9.3.1.2 School-parent collaboration enhances the integrity of the school

The communities where the participating schools are located decided to remove their children to other schools when school violence and unruly behaviour of learners was high in the three schools selected for this study. One school, Phakama Secondary School had its enrolment going down from 709 to 571 learners in 2017 and one of the participants revealed that the school was labelled a bad school at that time. This suggests that the community no longer had respect for the school and the sense of ownership of the school had deteriorated. This happened in all three schools because of their being engulfed by school violence. The findings have indicated that when these schools initiated and sustained school-parent collaboration approaches, all that had been negative consequences of school violence began to change and communities started to see transformation in the way schools engaged with stakeholders and issues concerning the development of learners. What was more notable and appreciated by the communities around

these research sites was the involvement of their leaders in the form of traditional leadership, represented by *Amakhosi* and *Izinduna*, in the activities of these three schools. Besides the change of the images of schools brought about by this school-parent collaboration to reduce school violence, communities gained trust in the leadership of schools and rallied behind them as they felt that traditional leaders, that they highly respected, were also part of the collaboration to reduce school violence. Details of this discussion can be found in Sections 5.3.3 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.3 of Chapter Six, Section and Section 7.3.3 of Chapter Seven.

It is highly notable that when school-parent collaboration was effective in these schools, the enrolment that had dropped before increased and the manner in which the learners behaved before had changed resulting in a reduction of aggressive conduct by learners. All these eventually led to quality academic achievement as teachers had enough time to focus on teaching and learning. The picture of how academic achievement improved in all three schools over seven years since 2018 is painted in Sections 5.2.1 of Chapter Five, Section 6.2.1 of Chapter Six and Section 7.2.1 of Chapter Seven. This improved academic achievement is related to the finding by Malatji (2021) who states that school-parent collaboration is one of the most effective educational interventions as in his study, it was found that due to the reduction of school violence through the school-parent collaboration, academic performance of learners had dramatically improved at the school. These notable changes brought back the interest of the community and that of departmental officials as they began to see the schools as institutions of integrity. As I finalise this thesis, the participating schools are operating at full capacity through the interest shown by parents in them. Because of school-parent collaboration these institutions promote trust, fairness, honesty, respect and responsibility and these are values associated with integrity. Trust and respect are both central to two theories making up the theoretical framework of this study and these theories are invitational leadership theory (Purkey & Novak, 1984) and Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 1995).

9.3.1.3 School-parent collaboration replaces aggression with cooperation from learners

School-parent collaboration has demonstrated that it can bring about highly improved learner cooperation. The supportive environment created by school-parent collaboration further created the sense of being valued and motivating for learners. The working together of teachers and parents has helped them have a better understanding of learners' needs and to be in a

position to offer them continuous support. This has promoted cooperation amongst the learners, between learners and teachers, as well as between learners and parents. The participants in this study shared their observations and experience about the manner in which learners conducted themselves since the teachers and the parents started to work together. The findings have indicated that a school with teachers and parents working together has fewer behavioural problems and instead, learners themselves become part of the solution as they feel they should play their part as well. I must hasten to say that this conclusion is not generalised across all schools in the district but is limited to those schools that participated in the study. These changes were so dramatic that in some cases where parents were attitudinal and made improper remarks about the schools, learners felt that this was not necessary and reported the matter to their teachers, especially when parents were supposed to attend meetings. This is a radical change from what the situation was.

9.3.2 What are the complexities of utilising school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?

Under this research question, the analysis of descriptive data generated three key conclusions as follows; (a) Attitudinal parents denigrate the image of the school and teachers in front of their children and the community thus compromising trust, respect and acceptance in the collaboration; (b) Competing work commitments compromised and limited parents' involvement in their children's education; (c) Parents of renting learners end up not contributing enough to the collaboration as they do not stay with their children

9.3.2.1 Attitudinal parents denigrate the image of the school and teachers in front of their children and the community thus compromising trust, respect and acceptance in the collaboration

Drawing from Invitational Leadership Theory (Purkey & Novak, 1984), an invitation from the school leadership to parents to be part of the collaboration is a show of respect, trust and acceptance that working with parents can make a difference in the process of reducing school violence. In accepting the invitation, parents also indicate that they trust and respect teachers in working together towards the reduction of school violence. The findings in this study indicate that some parents exhibited negative attitudes about their involvement in the education

of their children. These attitudes are sometimes displayed in cases where parents are invited by schools to discuss issues concerning the behaviour of their children. For example, if a child has been involved in a fight at school and upon the receipt of an invitation, the parent would start to complain and label teachers as being lazy and useless as they cannot solve the issue without involving parents. Such utterances were either made in front of the children or publicly in the community. To me this belittles the dignity of the school as well as that of teachers as a third person would take it that the school is outsourcing its responsibility when the actual fact is the parent has outsourced his or her responsibility in this scenario. The findings have indicated that when parents do not attend meeting learners are asked if parents sent apologies through them. Learners tell teachers exactly what their parents said. The findings further indicate that some teachers, at some point, felt betrayed by parents and the trust and respect they were developing about parents was compromised. In addition, other parents had negative attitudes about school meetings and did not even tender their apologies for missing parents' meetings, while others did. Those parents with negative attitudes demonstrated belief in their children more than they did in the teachers. A detailed discussion on that matter can be found in Sections 5.3.5.1 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.5.1 of Chapter Six and Section 7.3.5.1 of Chapter Seven.

9.3.2.2 Competing work commitments compromised and limited parents' involvement in their children's education

The findings have revealed that although the rate of employment in three communities was high, those employed parents in the studied schools were employed either permanently, contractually or doing piece jobs. Some of the very same parents have more than one child in different schools. This makes it difficult for these parents to be fully involved in the education of their children as they must attend to work and school issues at the same time. The collaboration becomes compromised as schools cannot get hold of parent as and when they need to meet with them because of their work schedules and their involvement in the education of more than one child. Section 5.3.5.1 in Chapter Five states that events and meetings scheduled during working hours or traditional school hours may not be convenient for all parents as parents with demanding work schedules or multiple responsibilities find it difficult to attend these meetings, school events or volunteer opportunities. I must be quick to say that even if meetings are called on weekends, some of these parents work in companies where Saturdays and Sundays are workdays. Besides the schools not being about to contact parents

as and when they need them, hectic work schedules can create difficulties for parents to supervise their children's developmental activities at home, so they are in no position to share with the school necessary and relevant information. These hectic schedules can also cause parents depression and fatigue which can further contribute to their inability to contribute to proper parenting. Such situations compromise the school-parent collaboration as parents have their role to play in the development of the education of their children, whether at home or at school. This situation is confirmed by Berry (2019) as in his study, one of the findings was that parents mentioned that one challenge they have is their hectic work schedules which do not permit them to be part of their children's education. In some cases, both parents are workers and there is little or no time for other activities (Baker et al., 2016; Berry, 2019; Kang et al., 2017).

9.3.2.3 Parents of renting learners end up not contributing enough in the collaboration as they do not stay with their children

Many secondary schools have learners who are not from local families but who rent accommodation in the neighbourhood or stay with relatives. From the three secondary schools that were selected for this study, Khanyisani Secondary School had many renting learners. The number of learners who were not from local families at Khanyisani Secondary School was 297 out of 742 learners which is more or less 40%. Although the main reason for this was that the success of the school in reducing school violence and improving academic achievement attracted learners from afar, but the other reason was that the community of Khanyisani was sparsely populated with fewer learners attending secondary school, and that allowed for spaces for learners from outside the area. My argument though, is that even if spaces were available, learners from outside would not come if the school was not doing well socially and academically and therefore, improved academic and social performance due to school-parent collaboration was the main aspect attracting these learners.

According to data generated in this study, parents of these renting learners sometimes would not be available as and when they were needed by the school because of the distance they had to travel.

The findings show that even their attendance at parents' meetings depended on weather, availability of money for transport, as well as availability of transport itself. The other challenge was that parents could not account for particular issues or events involving their learners as they did not stay with them; these included conduct after school, sickness that might cause a learner to be absent from school or any other social problem affecting the learner's education. This negatively affected the school-parent collaboration as sharing of information about learners is very important in the collaboration to timeously intervene if there is need. Some of these parents saw their children once a month, which was not enough for a parent to know, understand and intervene in his or her child's social development. The findings further indicated that it was obvious that some children could easily take advantage of that situation and engage in unpleasant activities without their parents noticing anything. Further details on this issue can be found in Section 7.3.5.1 of Chapter Seven.

9.3.3 How can schools and parents navigate the complexities surrounding school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?

The findings suggest three ways in which the complexities surrounding school-parent collaboration can be navigated. These are: (a) Enhanced communication that assists in the free flow of information from both sides; (b) Workshopping all members of the collaboration (teachers and parents) to keep them informed of what the collaboration expects from them as well as how to execute their responsibilities; (c) Opening voluntary opportunities to keep parents closer and feeling being part of the school life.

9.3.3.1 Enhanced communication that assists in the free flow of information from both sides

The findings have revealed that all schools prioritised the enhancement of communication in their strategies to navigate the complexities of utilising a school-parent collaboration approach to reduce school violence. The findings further indicated that this strategy succeeded in making parents share helpful information about their children and the school, after and before being asked by teachers. It also helped in updating parents about decisions and the progress of school activities. The participants mentioned that all participating schools extended their platforms of communication and included those platforms which could be easily accessed by parents, for

example, WhatsApp, Facebook, cell phone messages, communication books carried by learners as well as personal phone calls. Further details on this strategy are found in Sections 5.3.7 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.7 of Chapter Six and Section 7.3.7 of Chapter Seven. In addition, the findings also revealed that schools viewed communication as the most basic requirement for a successful school-parent collaboration as nothing starts or moves without communication. These findings are consistent with those of Ntuli (2017) which revealed that communication is the most important and impactful strategy for successful collaboration. It cannot be possible for parents to be free in the collaboration if they are not updated about the academic and social development of their children (Govender, 2021).

9.3.3.2 Workshopping all members of the collaboration (teachers and parents) to keep them informed of what the collaboration expects from them as well as how to execute their responsibilities

Teacher participants mentioned that schools workshopped them on how to work with parents as they were never trained on this during their teacher training years. The findings also revealed how helpful workshopping teachers on collaboration with parents was, because when they invited parents to the collaboration they were ready to accept, respect and trust them. This minimised the complexities of utilising school-parent collaboration from the side of the school. Teachers were workshopped on invitational leadership theory principles and when parents were on board, they implemented the principles of social capital theory in working together towards realising the objective of reducing school violence. The findings also revealed that all participating schools had different workshops with parents as well. The findings further revealed that these workshops for parents also included aspects on social issues, for example, workshopping parents on proper parenting or dealing with social issues like drugs and unruly behaviour of children at home or in the community. For initiatives that develop a whole child, which is, academically, socially and emotionally to be successful, schools should have a training team for parents (Selolo, 2018). The Department of Basic Education – DBE (2001) postulates that schools should have three-year plans for parental involvement and schools must select teachers responsible for promoting parental involvement. The details about workshopping teachers and parents for successful school-parent collaboration can be found in Sections 5.3.7 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.7 of Chapter Six and Section 7.3.7 of Chapter Seven.

9.3.3.3 Opening voluntary opportunities that keep parents closer and feeling being part of the school activities

The findings have revealed that all participating schools invited parents to take up voluntary opportunities and assist the schools, especially where they felt free and able to participate. In one school, (Phakama Secondary School), parents availed themselves rotationally during breaks to help the school monitor the activities of learners and those outsiders, especially learners from other schools who absent themselves from their schools and come to cause trouble or trade illegal substances. In Qhubekani Secondary School, parents would always be part of trips or tours of the school to assist teachers with the monitoring of learners. What was common in all three schools was that if there were functions in schools, parents would be part of performing some tasks, for example, cooking, helping teachers in monitoring learner and others. Notably, all the selected secondary schools had matric camps every year during matric final examinations. Each of these secondary schools had a matric camp committee consisting of both teachers and parents who took care of organising, fund raising and monitoring volunteers. During the camps parents volunteer as cooks, security people, boarding masters and cleaners. No parent is forced or begged to participate, but they do it out of their own free will. The findings showed that teachers and parents of these schools work as a network with trust, respect and acceptance. The spirit of Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 1995) exists in all three schools as teachers and parents work together successfully through sharing of information, resources including human resources as well as developing one another. Because the two groups of teachers and parents come from different social settings their working together is called linking social capital. All details on volunteering in these schools are written in Sections 5.3.2.2 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.2.2 of Chapter Six and Section 7.3.2.2 of Chapter Seven.

9.4 Implications of the findings and conclusions for various stakeholders

This chapter aimsto present the conclusions from findings that were presented in the preceding chapter. The conclusions discussed in the foregoing section are based on the findings that were presented in the three preceding chapters (Chapters Five to Seven), and these conclusions have implications for principals of schools, SGBs, teachers, and parents that participated in the study.

The school-parent collaboration firstly bears implications for teachers in schools and parents of learners. The association between teachers and parents was distinguished by being trustworthy and respectful of everyone. It cannot be denied that there were a few times where tolerance had to be part of the interactions as human beings cannot be perfect. This association has proved itself to be sustainable as in one school the problems were more than ordinary quarrels and fights among learners but serious serial threatening battles known as faction fights among groups of learners. The all-encompassing approach by the teachers and the parents succeeded in turning the situation around and keeping it like that until the reduction of school violence was evident and schools became places of safety and development.

The inclusive nature of the collaboration between teachers and parents was distinguished by the ideals of invitational leadership which are openness, trust and optimism in other people's capabilities to be able to contribute to the process of school violence reduction. This collaboration also involved the principles of social capital which are trust, reciprocity and expectation. The two theories, Invitational Leadership Theory (Purkey & Novak, 1984) and Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 1995), make up the theoretical framework guiding this study. These theories have suggested that if people are genuinely honest, trusting, open and respectful towards other stakeholders, mutual trust, respect and optimism can be reciprocated. Without the trust and belief in the capabilities of others, it is doubtful if effective collaboration can occur. The three participating schools have indicated that this can happen. These conclusions and implications are not conclusive for all schools in the King Cetshwayo District, but they are limited to the participating schools.

Secondly, the findings have indicated that the collaboration of teachers and parents, as underpinned by the principles of invitational leadership and social capital was welcomed in the schools, families and communities. For this purpose, teachers and parents interacted in various ways and school violence was reduced but not without challenges. In Chapter One, Section 1.3 of this study, it was mentioned that many schools do not involve critical stakeholders like parents of learners in dealing with school violence. Also, in Chapter Four, Section 4.6 the study indicated that these three schools were selected because, among other things, they had improved in managing school violence due to collaboration with parents. To me, this indicated that the implementation of school-parent collaboration also depends on the type of leadership that exists in the school. This is confirmed by the findings that are presented in Section 5.3.6

of Chapter Five, where a participant from one school indicated that at Phakama Secondary School, things changed at the school because of the arrival of the new school principal, and they began to see the community coming close to the school. Therefore, the progression, continuity and extendability to other schools of school-parent collaboration to reduce school violence holds varied implications for both teachers and parents.

9.5 Conclusion

This is the end of the thesis on school-parent collaboration. It is evident, ultimately, that the way in which schools and parents executed their roles in a collaboration to reduce school violence was initiated by their quest to create safety in schools so as to pursue the development of future citizens in conducive environments. The collaboration of teachers and parents to reduce school violence yielded positive outcomes. School leadership saw it necessary to invite parents to work with them in the spirit of invitational leadership and social capital. Kent et al. (2022) posit that school-parent collaboration is one of the most effective educational interventions as it dramatically improves the social and academic performance of learners. In support of Kent et al. (2022), the study revealed that school-parent collaboration succeeded in reducing school violence. I believe that the findings and conclusions have added to the body of knowledge about the kind of leadership that should prevail in rural communities of KwaZulu-Natal. Without suggesting any broader applicability of the findings to all rural schools in the province, this study has added to the debates eloquently made by Mbokazi (2016) and Mngomezulu (2020), which underscore the need to be aware of and utilise local capital for the schools' institutional growth and sustainability. In all three studies, the role of traditional leadership keeps popping up as a critical element for the existence and sustainability of schools in that context.

9.6 Reference list

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APPENDIX A

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

11 December 2023

The Head of Department
KZN Department of Education

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KING CETSHWAYO DISTRICT SCHOOLS

I am Presley Velenkosini Dube currently conducting research as a requirement of the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards a degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The title of the research study is "The Role and Complexities of School-parent Collaboration in Reducing School Violence: A Multiple Case Study".

I would like to conduct research in three secondary schools in King Cetshwayo District, and this letter intends to request for your permission. The focus of the study is on the reduction of school violence through the collaboration of parents and schools and how this collaboration is experienced by parents and teachers. Therefore, I would request three principals, three departmental heads and six PLI teachers from selected schools to participate. Should permission be granted, the interviews with these departmental employees will be scheduled for dates and times that are outside working hours. Participation in this study will be voluntary and the participants will be informed about their rights, for instance, to withdraw from the study at any time, should they wish, without any negative consequence. In addition, participants will be granted confidentiality and will remain anonymous.

For more information and questions about the study, my contact details are as follows: Presley Velenkosini Dube — [REDACTED]

My supervisor: Prof T.T. Bhengu: 031-2603534 — email: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

For additional information, you may also contact the UKZN Research Office through: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thanking you in advance

[REDACTED]

Mr P.V. Dube (0798963435)

APPENDIX B



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201 **Email:**
buyi.ntuli@kzndoe.gov.za
Tel: 033 392 1051

Enquiries: Mrs B.T. Ntuli

Ref.:2/4/8/7645

Mr Presley Velenkosini Dube



Dear Mr Dube

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION IN REDUCING SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN THREE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE KING CETSHWAYO DISTRICT: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY :”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.

6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from **14th December 2023 to 31st August 2026**.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mrs Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.



Mr GN Ngcobo

Head of Department: Education

Date: 14th December 2023

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

APPENDIX C

Gatekeeper Permission (School Principals)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

07 November 2023

The Principal

Dear Sir/ Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, Presley Velenkosini Dube, am a PhD (Educational, Leadership, Management, and Policy) student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Your school has been identified as one of the schools that can contribute in data generation towards my research study. You are hereby notified that permission from KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education to conduct research at your school has also been granted (copy attached). **The topic of my study is: The Role and Complexities of School-parent Collaboration in Reducing School Violence: A Multiple Case Study.**

The study is intended to unearth parents and teachers' experiences of collaboration in reducing school violence. Given that schools have become more unpredictable, complex, dynamic and fluid in nature, parents and teachers are thus bound to work together for academic and social development of learners. The study is also intended to uncover the complexities that parents and teachers come across when collaborating to reduce school violence. The study further seeks to establish how parents and teachers navigate the complexities of parent-school collaboration in reducing school violence. The study is significant in educational leadership. You are thus purposively selected to participate in this research project since your experience, knowledge and track record as a school principal proves that you can contribute in expanding the knowledge related to the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence.

Your permission is hereby requested to conduct *semi-structured interviews* with you as you are presumed to have information that can help this study. The length of the interviews will not exceed 80 minutes and will be recorded using a smart phone or a voice recorder. Furthermore, to enhance this study, certain documents will be reviewed in this multiple case study.

Documents that will be reviewed include *log book entries; SGB minutes; learners' disciplinary records; minutes of parent-teacher meetings; records of parent-teacher communication; meeting agendas; minutes of parents meetings; learner code of conduct as well as evidence of learners, teachers and parents involvement in its development*. These documents should not be older than three years and copies will be requested at the end of the interview. Of particular importance your identity will be protected since pseudonyms will be used to disguise your identity. Also, school's name will be erased on the reviewed documents.

Data generated from this study will be used to write a research report for my thesis and an electronic copy will be widely available as PhD theses are put in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Research Space database. Information regarding your personal details and school's particulars will be kept confidential and will only be known by the researcher and the supervisor. In ensuring confidentiality and fairness, the following will be strictly adhered to:

- Your identity will not be divulged during and after the study has been concluded.
- Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and the school.
- Interviews will be audio recorded as per your permission using a smart phone or a voice recorder.
- Your participation is voluntary.
- Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- You will have access to all transcript and have a right to change, revise, and review (member checking).
- Copies of the reviewed documents will be requested and school particulars be erased.
- No financial benefits you will accrue due to your participation in the study.
- An electronic copy of the thesis will be sent to you once the study is concluded.
- Interviews will be scheduled at your convenient time.

Please read through this information sheet and then append your signature on the Declaration of Consent form supplied. Further queries concerning this research can be forwarded to:

Prof TT Bhengu (Supervisor)

UKZN School of Education

Ellen Khuzwayo Building

Edgewood Campus

Tel: (031) 260 3524

[REDACTED]

Email: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

Or

Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC)

Govani Mbeki Centre,

UKZN Westville Campus

Tel: (031) 260 7291

Fax: (031) 260 2384

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you

Presley Velenkosini Dube

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX D

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH

Dear Participant

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH

I am Presley Velenkosini Dube and I am conducting a research as a requirement at the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards a degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The title of the research is “School-parent Collaboration in Reducing School Violence in Three Secondary Schools in the King Cetshwayo District: A Multiple Case Study.

The objectives of this study are:

Main objective

- To explore how the role and complexities of school-parent collaboration reduce school violence in selected secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo District

Subsidiary objectives

- To ascertain the manner in which stakeholders explain the role of parent-school collaboration in reducing school violence.
- To explore the complexities of utilising the parent-school collaboration in reducing school violence.
- To establish the ways in which schools and parents can navigate the complexities of parent-school collaborations in reducing school violence.

This study will focus on how primary school parents and teachers experience collaboration to reduce school violence. This letter intends to elucidate the purpose of the study and to request your participation in the study

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your input will not be attributed to you in person but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 30 minutes to an hour.

- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the generated data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

I can be contacted at

[REDACTED]

My supervisor is Prof T.T. Bhengu

UKZN School of Education

Ellen Khuzwayo Building

Edgewood Campus

Tel: (031) 260 3524

[REDACTED]

Email: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

Or

Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC)

Govani Mbeki Centre,

UKZN Westville Campus

Tel: (031) 260 7291

Fax: (031) 260 2384

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent letter

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

11 December 2023

Mr/Ms/Mrs:.....

School:.....

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Presley Velenkosini Dube. I am a PhD student studying at the University of KwaZuluNatal, School of Education (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am required to conduct research. I have identified you as one of my potential research participants. I therefore kindly seek your permission to be part of my research project. My study title is: **The Role and Complexities of School-parent Collaboration in Reducing School Violence: A Multiple Case Study.**

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.

- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- The research aims at knowing how the collaboration of schools and parents assists in reducing school violence.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		

I Presley Velenkosini Dube can be contacted at:

██

████████████████

My supervisor is Prof. T.T. Bhengu, at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

His contact details: e-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za ; Phone number: 031 260 3534.

For additional information, you may also contact the UKZN Research Office through: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. In addition, I consent/not consent to the interview being voice-recorded.

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

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE/PROTOCOL FOR PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS THE ROLE OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION TO REDUCE SCHOOL VIOLENCE: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

1. Brief explanation of the purpose, rationale, significance, confidentiality of the processes and the expectations as well as the use of recorder.
2. Questions from participants, if any
3. Consent form completion and collection **Research Questions**
 1. How do stakeholders explain the role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?
 2. What are the complexities of school-parent collaboration?
 3. What strategies can be applied to navigate complexities of school-parent collaboration?

Bibliographical Questions

1. Briefly tell me some information about yourself, personally and professionally.
(Probe): What qualifications do you hold? **(Further probe):** What teaching experience do you have?
2. How long have you been working in this school? **(Probe):** How long have you been holding your position? **(Further probe):** How would you describe your experience immediately after obtaining the principal's position?

Questions addressing the research questions and theoretical framework

1. What are some of the occurrences that you consider as school violence?
2. How do you handle such occurrences of school violence? Do you handle it yourself alone or there are members of the community who assist? (Please elaborate on this.)
3. Departmental officials as well as some departmental policies encourage parental involvement in schools for the academic and social benefit of learners especially the reduction of school violence. Do you concur with this belief? **(Probes):** How would you characterise the role that parents play in assisting to reduce violence in schools?
4. Would you say that parents' participation in reducing school violence is beneficial to the school? If so, please explain how it benefits the school.

5. Would you say that your school and parents collaborate in reducing school violence?
(Probes): What do you do in this school to promote collaboration with parents? How is this assisting in reducing school violence?
6. Are there any challenges/difficulties that you experience when collaborating with parents of your learners? **(Probes):** Would you mind sharing some of these difficulties? What do you think contributes to such difficulties?
7. What I have heard in some places is that parents' attitudes play a prominent role in them not wanting to involve themselves in school activities; do you have a similar situation in this community? If so, what are some of the attitudes that parents display when they do not want to get involved? **(Probes):** What do you think may be the reasons for parents to distance themselves from their children's schooling activities? Do they do or say anything about this to their children, to you as a teacher or they speak randomly in the community?
8. Do you think it is fair to learners for their parents not to involve themselves in their education? **(Probe):** How does this disadvantage the school?
9. Do you value parents' participation in the activities of the school? **(Probes):** If you do, what strategies are you using to invite them to feel part of the school community?
10. What strategies do you believe can assist in countering the difficulties you experience in trying to enhance school-parent collaboration? Please elaborate on this.
11. Do you have any good story to tell about any change made by parental involvement in your school? What happened and how?

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE/PROTOCOL FOR SGB CHAIRPERSONS THE ROLE OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION TO REDUCE SCHOOL VIOLENCE: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

1. Brief explanation of the purpose, rationale, significance, confidentiality of the processes and the expectations as well as the use of recorder.
2. Questions from participants, if any
3. Consent form completion and collection

Research Questions

1. How do stakeholders explain the role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?
2. What are the complexities of school-parent collaboration?
3. What strategies can be applied to navigate complexities of school-parent collaboration?

Bibliographical Questions

1. Briefly tell me some information about yourself. **(Probe):** What qualifications do you hold?
2. How long have you been a parent in this school? **(Probe):** How long have you been holding your position? (If SGB member)

Questions addressing research questions and theoretical framework of this study

1. What are some of the occurrences that you consider as school violence?
2. Do you as parents and community assist the school in handling occurrences of school violence? (Please elaborate on this.)
3. Departmental officials as well as some departmental policies encourage parental involvement in schools for the academic and social benefit of learners especially the reduction of school violence. Do you concur with this belief? **(Probes):** How would you characterise the role that parents play in assisting to reduce violence in schools?
4. Would you say that parents' participation in reducing school violence is beneficial to the school? If so, please explain how it benefits the school.
5. Would you say that as parents you collaborate with the school in reducing school violence? **(Probes):** What do you do as parents to promote collaboration with the school? How is this assisting in reducing school violence?

6. Are there any challenges/difficulties that you experience when collaborating with the school? **(Probes):** Would you mind sharing some of these difficulties? What do you think contributes to such difficulties?
7. What I have heard in some places is that parents' attitudes play a prominent role in them not wanting to involve themselves in school activities; do you have a similar situation in this community? If so, what are some of the attitudes that parents display when they do not want to get involved? **(Probes):** What do you think may be the reasons for parents to distance themselves from their children's schooling activities? Do they do or say anything about this to their children, to teachers or they speak randomly in the community?
8. Do you think it is fair to learners for their parents not to involve themselves in their education? **(Probe):** How does this disadvantage the school?
9. Do you value parents' participation in the activities of the school? **(Probe):** If you do, what strategies are you using to invite them to feel part of the school community?
10. What strategies do you believe can assist in countering the difficulties experienced in school-parent collaboration? Please elaborate on this.
11. Do you have any good story to tell about any change made by parental involvement in your school? What happened and how?

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE/PROTOCOL FOR DEPARTMENTAL HEADS THE ROLE AND COMPLEXITIES OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION TO REDUCE SCHOOL VIOLENCE: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

1. Brief explanation of the purpose, rationale, significance, confidentiality of the processes and the expectations as well as the use of recorder.
2. Questions from participants, if any
3. Consent form completion and collection

Research Questions

1. How do stakeholders explain the role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?
2. What are the complexities of school-parent collaboration?
3. What strategies can be applied to navigate complexities of school-parent collaboration?

(Bibliographical Questions

1. Briefly tell me some information about yourself, personally and professionally.
(Probe): What qualifications do you hold? **(Further probe):** What teaching experience do you have?
2. How long have you been working in this school? **(Probe):** How long have you been holding your position? **(Further probe):** How would you describe your experience immediately after obtaining the principal's position?

Questions addressing the research questions and theoretical framework 1.

- What are some of the occurrences that you consider as school violence?
2. How do you handle such occurrences of school violence? Do you handle it yourself alone or there are members of the community who assist? (Please elaborate on this.)
3. Departmental officials as well as some departmental policies encourage parental involvement in schools for the academic and social benefit of learners especially the reduction of school violence. Do you concur with this belief? **(Probes):** How would you characterise the role that parents play in assisting to reduce violence in schools?
4. Would you say that parents' participation in reducing school violence is beneficial to the school? If so, please explain how it benefits the school.
5. Would you say that your school and parents collaborate in reducing school violence? **(Probes):** What do you do in this school to promote collaboration with parents? How is this assisting in reducing school violence?

6. Are there any challenges/difficulties that you experience when collaborating with parents of your learners? **(Probes):** Would you mind sharing some of these difficulties? What do you think contributes to such difficulties?
7. What I have heard in some places is that parents' attitudes play a prominent role in them not wanting to involve themselves in school activities; do you have a similar situation in this community? If so, what are some of the attitudes that parents display when they do not want to get involved? **(Probes):** What do you think may be the reasons for parents to distance themselves from their children's schooling activities? Do they do or say anything about this to their children, to you as a teacher or they speak randomly in the community?
8. Do you think it is fair to learners for their parents not to involve themselves in their education? **(Probe):** How does this disadvantage the school?
9. Do you value parents' participation in the activities of the school? **(Probes):** If you do, what strategies are you using to invite them to feel part of the school community?
10. What strategies do you believe can assist in countering the difficulties you experience in trying to enhance school-parent collaboration? Please elaborate on this.
11. Do you have any good story to tell about any change made by parental involvement in your school? What happened and how?

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE/PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS OF SCHOOLS THE ROLE OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION TO REDUCE SCHOOL VIOLENCE: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

1. Brief explanation of the purpose, rationale, significance, confidentiality of the processes and the expectations as well as the use of recorder.
2. Questions from participants, if any
3. Consent form completion and collection

Research Questions

1. How do stakeholders explain the role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?
2. What are the complexities of school-parent collaboration?
3. What strategies can be applied to navigate complexities of school-parent collaboration?

(Bibliographical Questions

1. Briefly tell me some information about yourself, personally and professionally.
(Probe): What qualifications do you hold? **(Further probe):** What teaching experience do you have?
2. How long have you been working in this school? **(Probe):** How long have you been holding your position? **(Further probe):** How would you describe your experience immediately after obtaining the principal's position?

Questions addressing the research questions and theoretical framework 1.

- What are some of the occurrences that you consider as school violence?
2. How do you handle such occurrences of school violence? Do you handle it yourself alone or there are members of the community who assist? (Please elaborate on this.)
 3. Departmental officials as well as some departmental policies encourage parental involvement in schools for the academic and social benefit of learners especially the reduction of school violence. Do you concur with this belief? **(Probes):** How would you characterise the role that parents play in assisting to reduce violence in schools?
 4. Would you say that parents' participation in reducing school violence is beneficial to the school? If so, please explain how it benefits the school.

5. Would you say that your school and parents collaborate in reducing school violence?
(Probes): What do you do in this school to promote collaboration with parents? How is this assisting in reducing school violence?
6. Are there any challenges/difficulties that you experience when collaborating with parents of your learners? **(Probes):** Would you mind sharing some of these difficulties? What do you think contributes to such difficulties?
7. What I have heard in some places is that parents' attitudes play a prominent role in them not wanting to involve themselves in school activities; do you have a similar situation in this community? If so, what are some of the attitudes that parents display when they do not want to get involved? **(Probes):** What do you think may be the reasons for parents to distance themselves from their children's schooling activities? Do they do or say anything about this to their children, to you as a teacher or they speak randomly in the community?
8. Do you think it is fair to learners for their parents not to involve themselves in their education? **(Probe):** How does this disadvantage the school?
9. Do you value parents' participation in the activities of the school? **(Probes):** If you do, what strategies are you using to invite them to feel part of the school community?
10. What strategies do you believe can assist in countering the difficulties you experience in trying to enhance school-parent collaboration? Please elaborate on this.
11. Do you have any good story to tell about any change made by parental involvement in your school? What happened and how?

APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE/PROTOCOL FOR PARENTS OF LEARNERS THE ROLE OF SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION TO REDUCE SCHOOL VIOLENCE: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

1. Brief explanation of the purpose, rationale, significance, confidentiality of the processes and the expectations as well as the use of recorder.
2. Questions from participants, if any
3. Consent form completion and collection

Research Questions

1. How do stakeholders explain the role of school-parent collaboration in reducing school violence?
2. What are the complexities of school-parent collaboration?
3. What strategies can be applied to navigate complexities of school-parent collaboration?

Bibliographical Questions

1. Briefly tell me some information about yourself. **(Probe):** What qualifications do you hold?
2. How long have you been a parent in this school? **(Probe):** How long have you been holding your position? (If SGB member)

Questions addressing research questions and theoretical framework of this study

1. What are some of the occurrences that you consider as school violence?
2. Do you as parents and community assist the school in handling occurrences of school violence? (Please elaborate on this.)
3. Departmental officials as well as some departmental policies encourage parental involvement in schools for the academic and social benefit of learners especially the reduction of school violence. Do you concur with this belief? **(Probes):** How would you characterise the role that parents play in assisting to reduce violence in schools?
4. Would you say that parents' participation in reducing school violence is beneficial to the school? If so, please explain how it benefits the school.
5. Would you say that as parents you collaborate with the school in reducing school violence? **(Probes):** What do you do as parents to promote collaboration with the school? How is this assisting in reducing school violence?

6. Are there any challenges/difficulties that you experience when collaborating with the school? **(Probes):** Would you mind sharing some of these difficulties? What do you think contributes to such difficulties?
7. What I have heard in some places is that parents' attitudes play a prominent role in them not wanting to involve themselves in school activities; do you have a similar situation in this community? If so, what are some of the attitudes that parents display when they do not want to get involved? **(Probes):** What do you think may be the reasons for parents to distance themselves from their children's schooling activities? Do they do or say anything about this to their children, to teachers or they speak randomly in the community?
8. Do you think it is fair to learners for their parents not to involve themselves in their education? **(Probe):** How does this disadvantage the school?
9. Do you value parents' participation in the activities of the school? **(Probe):** If you do, what strategies are you using to invite them to feel part of the school community?
10. What strategies do you believe can assist in countering the difficulties experienced in school-parent collaboration? Please elaborate on this.
11. Do you have any good story to tell about any change made by parental involvement in your school? What happened and how?

APPENDIX K

SCHOOL-PARENT COLLABORATION IN REDUCING SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN THREE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE KING CETSHWAYO DISTRICT: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

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