

**THE DYNAMICS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE: A QUALITATIVE  
STUDY OF TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UMLAZI  
TOWNSHIP, SOUTH OF DURBAN**

**By**

**Bawinile Joyce Mthanti**

**A Thesis in the Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**In**

**The School of Education**

**Discipline: Education Management Leadership and Policy**

**University of KwaZulu-Natal**

**Supervisor: Professor V.S. Mncube**

**Co-Supervisor: Dr S. Ntombela**

**2013**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My earnest gratitude goes to Almighty God for creating the space to walk this journey. I extend my profound gratitude to my promoters Prof. Vusi Mncube and Dr Sithabile Ntombela. Your guidance, conscientiousness, meticulous attention and untiring advice were instrumental in the production of this thesis. Thank you, Prof. Mncube and Doctor Ntombela, for assisting me to “walk the walk” and talk the esteemed language of research. May you be blessed as abundantly as you so unstintingly continue to assist others.

This acknowledgement will be incomplete without mentioning, Linda Coertze, Dr Nestar Joseph (Principal: Whetstone Primary) and Prof. Lynn Davies (Birmingham University) for their profound, meticulous and selfless editorial inputs. May you be blessed profusely.

This research would not have been possible without the generous support of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, who provided financial assistance for this project.

### **My earnest gratitude also goes to:**

- My research participants: the learners, teachers and school management, SGBs and support staff. Thank you for offering your precious time; I was thrilled by your enthusiasm.
- The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education, for permission to work in their schools and with their officials.
- My husband, Xolani, for his profound and unselfish input, patience and constant encouragement.
- Luyanda and Lwethu, my children, for their patience and love.
- Dr Dirk Coertze (MUT) for his meticulous comments and encouragement.
- Pastor Thomas Radebe (Ekhaya Christian Fellowship church) and Pastor Mveli Mkhize (The Porter’s House Bible church) for their philosophical and selfless words of wisdom.
- The UKZN Cohort Doctoral supervisors and colleagues in the Cohort programme, for their support and critical inputs.

## **DEDICATION**

The study is dedicated to my parents, my husband and our children, Luyanda and Lwethu.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AOD	:	Alcohol or drug abuse
CJCP	:	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
CSVR	:	Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DBE	:	Department of Basic Education
GBH	:	Grievous bodily harm
GBV	:	Gender based violence
GEM	:	Girls' Education Movement
LRC	:	Learner representative council
MSPT	:	Multi-faceted Systematic Perpetration Theory
ODRs	:	Office discipline referrals
PAM	:	Personnel Administrative Measures
SASA	:	South African Schools' Act
SA	:	South Africa
SDSSC	:	School's Disciplinary, Safety and Security committee
SGB	:	School governing body
SMT	:	School management team
TLO	:	Teacher liaison officer

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

<b>TABLES</b>		<b>Page</b>
Table 3.1	: Violence and education: A typology	38
Table 4.1	: Data collection plan	89
Table 4.2	: Summary of participants	98
Table 9.1	: Summary of recommendations	269

<b>FIGURES</b>		
Figure 1	: Foucault's Panopticon	18
Figure 2	: Levels of victimization in SA Schools	61
Figure 3	: Multi-faceted Systematic Perpetration Theory	267

## ABSTRACT

School violence has been a topic of international concern throughout the last decade as shootings, stabbings and physical and emotional violence have taken place in both public and private schools. The study reported in this thesis was a qualitative case study of two secondary schools in Umlazi, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal province.

The study was informed by a qualitative, interpretive paradigm and followed a phenomenological design, allowing participants to create meaning around the phenomenon of their vulnerability to school violence. Data analysis in the study was informed by social constructivism as the overarching framework, as well as by Foucault's Discipline and Punish theory. My own experience in relation to violence in general is also relevant in this study. I have witnessed a number of incidents of violence and crime. At the institution where I used to work, students were regularly gang raped, stabbed, thrown out of their residence windows by their boyfriends, and victimised verbally or otherwise during student bashes and festivals.

Various key findings emerged from the study. They were the following:

It was established that the majority of participants of both schools felt unsafe within the school premises. In many instances learners were treated badly and unfairly by teachers and some were even coerced to leave the school for an inordinate period of time. As had been envisaged, school violence had an adverse impact on learners which, in turn, affected their academic performances and attitudes. It was also established that the schools were not in possession of some of the documents which are required to record incidences of violence. Moreover, the level of conflict in one of the schools under study was escalating and unmanageable; this was evident where teachers reported that learner disciplinary issues were a way of life and they simply dealt with it on a day-to-day basis. It was established that the schools became a spill-over of social violent imbalances of the immediate environment as people from the community used the school as a playground for violence. The study further revealed that security guards were also vulnerable to violence in schools.

Based on the above findings, the study concluded that school violence impacted negatively on school stakeholders as a whole, and in particular on the teaching and learning processes. Moreover, it was concluded that violence was on an upward spiral as it was multi-faceted, systematic and further perpetrated by role players within the school environment. The few measures to stem violence were ineffective and will remain so unless the full complement of teachers commit to their core function and start teaching and disciplining learners in novel and effective ways; principals move from their current position of denial of the realities of violence in their schools and fully respond to their leadership role; provincial DBE officials support and monitor educational practices in the schools; and trade union bias is rooted out.

It therefore follows that future research should focus on a new way of looking at school violence as a multi-faceted systematic perpetration of violence which requires multiple theoretical lenses to illuminate understanding of violence as the rigorous involvement of all stakeholders within schools.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Declaration	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Dedication	iii
Acronyms and Abbreviations	iv
List of Tables and Figures	v
Abstract	vi

---

---

### CHAPTER 1

#### INTRODUCTION, KEY CONCEPTS AND THEMES

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Definition and typology of violence	2
1.3	Problem formulation	5
1.4	Rationale and motivation of the study	6
1.5	Significance of the study	8
1.6	Focus of the study	8
1.6.1	Study objectives	9
1.6.2	Critical questions	9
1.7	Organisation of the study	10

---

---

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORIES OF SURVEILLANCE, DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH**

2.1	Introduction	13
2.2	Theories of discipline and punish: Foucault, 1975	14
2.3	How the school itself internally operates as violent institution	22
2.3.1	Corporal punishment	22
2.3.2	Testing and examination	27
2.4	Gender based violence	30
2.5	Why South Africa is so violent	37
2.6	Apartheid policies and school violence	42
2.7	Conclusion	44

---

---

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE OUTCOMES OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT FORMS OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS**

3.1	Introduction	45
3.2	Direct forms of violence within the school	46
3.2.1	Physical and psychological forms of violence	46
3.3	External forms of violence which affect schooling	56
3.4	Forms of indirect violence within the school	57
3.4.1	Bullying in schools	62
3.4.2	Learner exclusion in schools	65
3.5	The Links between school culture and violence	68
3.6	The links of physical violence to discrimination	70
3.7	Initiatives to mitigate school violence	71
3.8	Conclusion	75

---

---

**CHAPTER 4**  
**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

4.1	Introduction	76
4.2	Research approach: Case study	76
4.3	Sampling plan and its description	77
4.3.1	Target population of the study	78
4.3.2	Relevance of participating schools	78
4.4	Sampling	78
4.5	Data collection plan	79
4.6	Research paradigms	84
4.7	Study context	87
4.8	Research methods and instruments	89
4.8.1	Semi-structured interviews	91
4.8.2	Observations	93
4.8.3	Documentation reviews	94
4.8.4.	Reflective journals	95
4.9	Data analysis	95
4.10	Ethical issues	97
4.11	Issues of quality in qualitative research	99
4.11.1	Authenticity	99
4.11.2	Trustworthiness and credibility	99
4.12	Validity and reliability of the study	100
4.12.1	Validity	100
4.12.2	Reliability	100
4.13	Entering the field and development of rapport	101
4.13.1	Gaining access to schools	101
4.14	Limitations of the study	101

4.15	Conclusion	102
------	------------	-----

---

---

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION: LEARNERS, TEACHERS, AND SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS' EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

5.1	Introduction	104
5.2	External factors and school safety measures	104
5.2.1	Discussion	120
5.3	Leadership and management in schools	122
5.3.1	Discussion	123
5.4	Victims' experiences of school violence	125
5.4.1	Discussion	127
5.5	Conclusion	128

---

---

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SCHOOLS' CULTURE IN PERPETRATION OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

6.1	Introduction	131
6.2	Poor school organization and management	131
6.2.1	Discussion	146
6.3	Low levels of teacher professionalism	147
6.3.1	Discussion	152
6.4	Lack of support	153
6.4.1	Discussion	158
6.5	Conclusion	159

**CHAPTER 7**  
**DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION: IMPACT OF SOCIAL**  
**STRUCTURES, MEASURES AND INITIATIVES TO MITIGATE SCHOOL**  
**VIOLENCE**

7.1	Introduction	161
7.2	Violence typologies and the effect of socio-economic status on school violence	161
7.2.1	Discussion	171
7.3	Spaces of violence that facilitate violence in schools	172
7.3.1	Discussion	180
7.4	Strategies to cope with school violence	182
7.4.1	Discussion	187
7.5	Initiatives taken by the schools to reduce violence	188
7.5.1	Discussion	194
7.6	Conclusion	195

---

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THEMES EMERGING FROM THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

8.1	Introduction	199
8.2	Levels of school violence	203
8.2.1	The influence of school culture	203
8.2.2	Hotspots of violence	209
8.3	Causes of violence in schools	226
8.3.1	Absence of leadership skills	226
8.3.2	Lack of meetings and parental involvement	231
8.4	The impact of violence in schools	233
8.4.1	Harassment and bullying of girls	233
8.4.2	Fatal reactions of victims of violence	237

8.5	The outcomes of violence	241
8.5.1	Learner exclusion	241
8.5.2	School theft	246
8.6	Strategies to cope with school violence	248
8.7	Conclusion	250

---



---

## CHAPTER 9

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1	Introduction	253
9.2	Summary of findings addressing research questions	253
9.2.1	Research question one: What are the perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, school governors and support staff of school violence?	253
9.2.2	Research question two: How do wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status shape violence production within schools?	256
9.2.3	Research question three: How do policies, measures and initiatives taken by schools promote a violence-free school environment?	258
9.3	Theoretical contributions of the study	259
9.4	Discussion	269
9.5	Recommendations	269
9.6	Possible themes for future research	271
9.7	Limitations of the study	271
9.8	Conclusion	272
	LIST OF REFERENCES	277
	LIST OF APPENDICES	302
APPENDIX A	: Request to conduct research	302
APPENDIX B	: Approval to undertake research	305

APPENDIX C	: Interviews schedule: learner A – Victims	306
APPENDIX D	: Interviews schedule: learner B – Perpetrator	308
APPENDIX E	: Interviews schedule: Focus groups	310
APPENDIX F	: Interviews schedule: Life Orientation teachers	311
APPENDIX G	: Interviews schedule: teachers	313
APPENDIX H	: Interviews schedule: principals	314
APPENDIX I	: Interviews schedule: support staff	317
APPENDIX J	: Interviews schedule: SGB	319

---

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION, KEY CONCEPTS AND THEMES

### 1.1 Introduction

School violence is a global phenomenon and has become a topic of international concern throughout the last decade (Akiba, LeTendre, Baker and Goesling, 2002). Shootings, stabbings and physical and emotional violence have taken place in both public and private schools (Harber, 2002; Wright, 2005; SAIRR, 2008; Rossouw, 2008). School violence is also a growing problem in South Africa (HSRC, 2010). While recognizing the actual benefits of various forms of schooling, the concern here is with the depressing part of schooling: in particular with how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status (SES) shape violence production in schools. This study explored the dynamics of school violence in one education district in South Africa.

Schools can reproduce violence. For example, male teachers engaging in serious misconduct with underage female learners is common in South Africa where teachers have been known to rape, sexually assault and otherwise sexually abuse girls (Harber and Mncube, 2011). Sexual relations between teachers and learners do not always involve the overt use of force or threats of force; teachers can abuse their authority by offering better grades or money to pressure girls for sexual favours or “dating relationships” (Harber and Mncube, 2011, p. 5).

In early 2011 the National Minister of Education declared that schools in Soweto had become unruly (SABC, 2009). This followed incidences of teachers coming to school drunk, teachers sending learners to purchase alcohol during school hours, and learners carrying weapons instead of learning materials to school.

Children who are victims of violence both at home and at school tend to manifest such abuse themselves at a later stage:

“... a 14-year-old boy abused [other] children – even though he is still a child. This children-abuser’s story is tragic: his violent father left when he was just seven. Since then his role models have been the steady stream of abusive boyfriends who beat up his mother and abused him and his half-sister. His victims have been his fellow pupils at school” (Childline KZN).

According to Childline S.A., the abused child, like many adolescents, found support in gangs which are believed to be the main perpetrators of child-on-child violence. In South Africa child-on-child violence has escalated. Shocking stories of 14-year-olds and below who prey on other children have been reported in KwaZulu-Natal (SABC, 2011). This phenomenon has also spilled into school environments, and has subsequently become the focus of this study.

## **1.2 Definition and Typology of Violence**

The term violence and its typology are worth defining in this study before embarking on the definition of the term school violence. Violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, threaten or actual harm against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation (World Health Organisation, WHO, 2000). Among other definitions, the term violence also refers to a wide range of violent behaviours including physical or verbal assaults, robbery, homicide and harassment a (Hatzichristou, Polychroni, Issari and Yfanti, 2012). There are a considerable number of different types of violence. Salmi (2006), for example, distinguishes four types of violence: direct violence (murder, harm, slavery); indirect violence or violence by omission (the

failure to provide protection); repressive violence (human rights violations such as freedom of religion) and alienating violence (racism, ostracism, living in fear).

School violence is a multidimensional construct with no definitive statement about its dimensions, Furlong and Morrison (2000) argued that school violence is composed of the school perpetration of violence, violence victimisation, antisocial behaviour, criminal behaviour, fear/worry beliefs, school climate/discipline, among other aspects, Akiba et al. (2002) define school violence as disrespect to teachers and administrators, theft, and physical assaults, while another study (Hatzichristou, et al., 2012) define it as severe behaviours such as rape, robbery, homicide, harassments and assaults among learners and teachers.

In the same vein, Harber (2004) distinguishes between three levels of school violence: firstly, the violence itself (e.g., injury, sexual violence, crime and vandalism); secondly, incivilities (humiliation, lack of respect); and thirdly, symbolic and institutional violence (irrelevant schooling, power relations between teachers and learners). Social analysts such as Bourdieu (2001) would add instruktural violence - the violence perpetrated by dominant groups in society based on social structures such as race, gender, social class or religion - by which certain groups are systematically denied opportunities or rights. All these four categories of violence are equally prevalent in South African schools (Harber, 2010), making our schools unsafe places for both learners and their teachers. This has serious implications for the quality of teaching and learning taking place in these institutions.

According to Greene (2006), aggression is another form of violence which is generally defined as a form of low-level violence that includes verbal, physical or gestural behaviour intended to cause minor physical and psychological distress, intimidation or induction of fear in another. Further, Greene (2006) contends that aggression can also be indirect or

relational, for example, a student can be ostracized through the circulation of horrible rumours or through the treacherous behaviour of others. The newest form of adolescent aggression is where students increasingly disseminate negative, compromising or humiliating messages through electronic means, which is known as cyber bullying. However, this study contends that not only learners bully one another, but that teachers can also be bullies and that principals can bully teachers, or vice versa.

Greene argues that institutional forms of racism and sexual oppression and an unwelcoming school atmosphere or school climate also form part of structural or systematic forms of school-related violence. Systematic school-related violence has been evident in school contexts where teachers will at times physically and emotionally abuse learners due to their institutional power and the responsibility entrusted to them.

This study explored the dynamics of school violence using a case study in each of two secondary schools. The next section outlines the problem statement; study focus; rationale and motivation for the study; significance of the study; review of the related literature; theoretical frameworks; research aims; study objectives; research questions; research methodology and design; ethical issues; validity and reliability; limitations; the study program; and the budget. In this study school violence is defined as an intentional behaviour in which one person aggressively threatens, attempts to harm, or harms another person physically or psychologically (Greene, 2007). This type of violence could take place on school grounds, on school-supported transportation, and at school-sponsored activities (Green, 2008). This definition is supported by Meyer (2005) who stated that any act that physically or psychologically harms people or damages property in a school setting is considered as school violence. It could take many forms, including physical bullying like pulling hair, kicking, biting, and spitting as well as verbal bullying like swearing, shouting and screaming. There is also psychological bullying such as humiliating others.

### **1.3 Problem Formulation**

Education White Paper 6 - Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001) - identifies factors that place children and teachers at risk and that create barriers to learning and development. Barriers would be anything that interferes with the teaching and learning process, causing breakdown or exclusion. As such, violence in schools should be taken seriously as it has the potential to destabilize schools and negatively affect the teaching and learning process. This means that schools should be safe havens where teaching and learning can take place in harmony and where learners are free from crime and violence. Any instance of crime or violence at school not only affects the individuals involved, but it may also disrupt the educational process and affect not only the school itself, but also the surrounding community (Henry, 2000).

Fear of violence is at a peak among learners as it has been reported that only 23% of learners feel safe in South African schools (SAHRC, 2006). Similarly, Harber (2001) refers to schools as war-zones; his study revealed that schools stand empty while gangs hit out across playing fields. At these schools teachers teach and learners learn as their eyes suspiciously watch the door, half-expecting to be held up by a bunch of gun-wielding thugs. A study conducted by Burton, Leoschut and Bonora (2009) reported feelings of fear in South African schools, with 11.6% of female learners and 8% of male learners feeling unsafe in schools.

Learners and teachers are equally exposed to violence. The study conducted by Rossouw (2008) reveals that teachers are subjected to physical and psychological violence in South African schools. In one incident a pregnant teacher was kicked and injured by learners, and in one of the Western Cape schools, the school principal was allegedly beaten up by a parent (Rossouw, 2008). In spite of attempts to protect the interests of teachers through the

Employment of Teachers Act 76 of 1998, teachers don't feel safe in schools. Many teachers plan to quit and others demand armed guards at schools (Rossouw, 2008). Furthermore, to mitigate violence in schools, several documents have been put in place since 1994 by the National Department of Education (now the Department of Basic Education). These documents are cascaded down from national level to provinces to schools, and they attempt to address violence in schools by fostering a positive culture and school climate (Barnes, Brynard and de Wet, 2012).

A survey of recent media reports has shown numerous incidents of violence against teachers. For example, a female teacher was stabbed in the stomach in class in one of the public schools in Soweto, Gauteng (SABC., 2011). A study conducted by the South African Medical Research Center (MRC) (2003) for the Department of Health in South Africa, provides statistical data for violence in schools. The study involved 23 schools in each province, sampling 14 776 learners. A quantitative report revealed the following statistical data: 17% of learners carried weapons in schools, 41% of learners were bullied, 14% belonged to gangs, 15% had been sexually abused, 15% had been threatened or injured, 19% had been injured in fights and 32% felt unsafe at school (Wilson, 2006, p. 4). Wilson (2006) further revealed that 50% of learners had experienced violence either as victims or perpetrators.

#### **1.4 Rationale and Motivation of the Study**

When talking to critical friends like Prof. V.S. Mncube and Ms F. Khanare, my interest was stimulated and I was prompted to conduct this study. Prof. Mncube further motivated me by inviting me to research meetings on education related fields. He also probed for reasons why I was not doing my doctoral studies after I had completed a Master of Education degree. He further invited me to be part of the then international project on violence which was led by Bielefeld University, Germany. I was enthused to be part of the project. I was motivated by the knowledge that it would be possible for me to register for a

Ph.D. Professor Mncube's stories channelled my interest towards doing this study on violence. Reading the latest report by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR, 2010) and listening to the reports about a serial killer who had robbed, raped and murdered poor, innocent women in Gauteng province, made me realize that our country was still grappling with strategies to reduce violence and that something needed to be done soon. As a South African citizen I realized that I could add value to the efforts to stem the tide of violence in our country, and by conducting research on this phenomenon I could suggest specific measures to reduce violent crime in schools.

My own experience in relation to violence in general is also relevant. I have witnessed a number of incidents of violence and crime, mainly related to drug and alcohol abuse. At the institution where I used to work, students were regularly gang raped, stabbed, thrown out of their residence windows by their boyfriends, and victimised verbally or otherwise during student bashes and festivals. At times resident students were the worst victims of crime and violence as, during weekends, people from outside would access residences and victimise learners by stealing their belongings such as cellular phones, clothing or computers. A number of students were killed; they were mainly gunned down by robbers when they were en route to the institution. Such crimes usually went unreported and also undocumented.

The death of a teacher on 29 June 2010 in a school that my own children attended further motivated me to conduct this study. The incident was linked to school violence because the culprits were ex-learners of this school and the deceased had been their teacher. This means that the victim was known to them. Two months later a learner from the same school was stabbed to death by a school friend. I was motivated to do this study because violence in schools does not only cause instability in schools, but it is a challenge to everyone, especially parents. As a parent I felt directly responsible and knew I had to conduct the study in my endeavours to explore how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status (SES) could shape violence production in schools.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The primary contribution this study will make to society is the Ph.D. thesis which contains strategies to reduce violence in schools currently and in the future. It is hoped that the findings of the study will be useful to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to inform policy on how to reduce or address violence in schools, thus contributing to making South African schools safer spaces for learning and development. Additionally, outputs of this study include a set of indicators and case studies of good practice for the prevention of violence in schools. Moreover, it is envisaged that the study will contribute in to the pool of knowledge through the extension of theories and methodologies in the study of violence in schools.

Although numerous studies have been conducted on violence in South African schools, few studies have examined the role played by the entire school community. This study attempted to fill this gap by using role-players in the entire school community namely educators, learners, school governors and support staff. Most studies have used police documents and data to study violence (Haffejee, 2006; CSV, 2010). The study on violence in selected provinces in South Africa by the CSV (2010) utilised documentary analysis only, namely South African Police Services docketts and the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS). The current study used semi-structured interviews, observations, documentation reviews and reflective journals.

### **1.6 Focus of the Study**

This study formed part of a bigger national project that was conducted in six of the provinces of South Africa namely Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape. This study was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal. The project utilised a comparative framework across the six provinces. This individual project

aimed to explore the dynamics of school violence within two secondary schools in Umlazi, Durban. In identifying the dynamics of violence in schools, the study foci were learner-on-learner violence and teacher-on-learner violence.

### ***1.6.1 Aims and Objectives of the Study***

The main research problem is that there are high levels of violence in schools; reasons for this violence include inter alia gender inequality, poor management in schools, low teacher morale, influence of substance abuse, and persistence use of corporal punishment as a major tool to discipline learners. Therefore the main aims of the study are to understand different ways in which violence manifests in schools.

The following objectives of the study were developed to achieve the main aims of the study. These are:

1. Elicit the perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, school governors and support staff about school violence;
2. Explore how wider social structures such as gender, age, and socio-economic status shape violence production within schools;
3. Assess the effectiveness of measures and initiatives taken by the schools to promote a violence-free or secure environment in the school.

### ***1.6.2 Critical Questions***

To realise the objectives referred to above, the study attempted to answer the following critical questions:

- a) What are the perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, school governors and support staff of school violence?
- b) How do wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status shape violence production within schools?

- c) To what extent do policies, measures and initiatives taken by schools promote a violence-free school environment?

## **1.7 Organisation of the Study**

This work is divided into nine chapters which are presented as follows:

In chapter one I presented an introduction of the study as well as the problem formulation. In addition, I expounded on the significance of the study, the rationale and motivation for the study, critical questions, and the study objectives. This chapter distinguishes between four levels of school violence: firstly, the violence itself (such as injury, sexual violence, crime, and vandalism); secondly, incivilities (humiliation, lack of respect); thirdly, symbolic and institutional violence (irrelevant schooling, power relations between teachers and learners); and fourthly, structural violence (the violence perpetrated by dominant groups in society based on social structures such as race, gender, social class or religion, by which certain groups are systematically denied opportunities or rights). This chapter further explores how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status (SES) shape violence production in schools.

Chapter 2 explores the theoretical frameworks which served as lenses through which the phenomenon of school violence was viewed. Discipline and Punish theory was examined (Foucault, 1975). This theory proposes that organisations like factories, schools and hospitals resemble prisons (Giddens, 1997). It is thus hypothesised that schools have become one of the new organisations of social control along with prisons, hospitals and factories as they use continual surveillance in order to avoid social fragmentation and to create order and docility (Harber, 2002).

Chapter 3 explores the global trends of school violence. It examines the effects of violence in schools and focuses, in particular, on how wider social structures such as gender, age

and socio-economic status (SES) shape violence production in schools. Research studies have revealed that the core of the problem of violent crime in South Africa is a culture of violence and criminality which is associated with a strong emphasis on the use of weapons. Moreover, specific factors sustain this culture such as inequality, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalization (CSVN, 2007). The high level of violence in our schools reflects a complicated combination of past history and recent stresses on individuals, schools and community levels in a society marked by deep inequalities and massive uncertainty and change within school settings (Vally, Dolombisa and Porteus, 1999).

Chapter 4 provides the information on the research design of the study. This chapter reports on my critical engagement with the research paradigms that guided this research inquiry. The discussion elucidates the research approach that was followed. This is followed by a discussion of the sampling plan and the descriptions of the two schools and their participants. I detail how research techniques and their related tools were used, with specific focus on a breakdown of the participants. I also expound on the process of data analysis which was a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Furthermore, the chapter deals with a number of issues pertaining to research namely ethical issues, issues of quality in qualitative research, authenticity, trustworthiness, validity and reliability.

Owing to the quantity of data collected, it was necessary to divide the findings into four chapters namely Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. Chapters 5 and 6 report on the perceptions and experiences about school violence elicited from learners, teachers, school governors and support staff, while Chapter 7 aims at addressing two objectives: i) exploring how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status shape violence production within schools; and ii) to assess the effectiveness of measures and initiatives taken by the schools to promote a violence-free school environment. Chapter 8 presents a discussion of

the themes that emerged from the findings. Finally, Chapter 9 comprises of a summary of the findings as well as conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORIES OF SURVEILLANCE, DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to explore the theoretical frameworks which served as lenses through which the phenomenon of school violence was viewed. Theories provide complex and comprehensive conceptual understanding of behaviours that cannot be pinned down: how societies work, how organisations operate, why people interact in certain ways. They give researchers different ‘lenses’ through which to look at complicated problems and social issues, focusing their attention on different aspects of the data and providing a framework within which to conduct their analysis (Shumba, 2011, p. 34). The theoretical framework is concerned with the manner in which the research is framed, as research cannot be conducted in a theoretical vacuum (Henning, van Rensburg and Smit, 2010, p. 2).

This study was underpinned by the Panopticon theory of “discipline and punish” (Foucault, 1975). This theory proposes that organisations like factories, schools and hospitals resemble prisons (Giddens, 1997), thus hypothesising that schools have become one of the new organisations of social control, along with prisons, hospital and factories, that use continual surveillance to Discipline and Punish in order to avoid social fragmentation and to create order and docility (Harber, 2002). In this study different perspectives of Discipline and Punish theory by Foucault (1975) was used. Available evidence indicates that levels of violent crime, as measured by the murder rate, and overwhelmingly high rate of rape, are exceptionally high in South Africa as compared to other countries (CSVR, 2007, 2010; Schonteich and Louw, 2006). For these and other related reasons of crimes it is imperative for this study to theorise on why South Africa is so violent, why young girls and all categories of women are sexually assaulted and murdered on a day to day basis, and how children in general acquire deviant behaviours.

## 2.2 Theories of Discipline and Punish: Foucault (1975)

Michel Foucault, the French philosopher, was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, in his book *Discipline and Punish*, written in 1975, he gave people a new way to view the prison system (Mason, 2013). In his book, Foucault describes the history of prisons. Prisons have continued to be popular and widely used despite their inability to increase socially conformity rather than deviant behaviour. In support of Mason, (Strauss, 1991) argued that while physical punishment by parents and/or teachers may produce conformity in the immediate situation, but in the long run it tends to increase the likelihood of deviance disorder which include criminality behaviour (robbery, assault, child abuse) as an adult. This is a dilemma since the main objective of punishment of children is to increase socially conformity rather than deviant behaviour.

Theories of *Discipline and Punish* posit that schools do not necessarily have much to do with education, but they are mainly institutions of control where certain basic habits must be inculcated and controlled (Harber, 2004).

*Discipline and Punish* (1975) lays out Foucault's thoughts on how the elite in society dominate and control the rest of society. Foucault believed no societal advancements have occurred since the renaissance, only technology has grown, further enslaving the human spirit. Foucault is almost an anarchist in his dislike of societal rules and their effect on the human spirit. For him there was no higher purpose of human being than being your own unique person. The ideas forced upon people by society do not allow this to happen (Maier-Katkin, 2000). Even as a social philosopher, Foucault's ideas about government's role in oppressing people's behavior and true identity have been related to why people commit crime (Mason, 2013).

When reading Foucault's works I immediately realised his passion for history. In *Discipline and Punish*, he details the history of the French penal system during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century. Foucault's interpretation of historical events identifies the domination of the

human spirit. Foucault theorises as to why the penal system evolved into the system it is today and how it allows for the control of the masses in society. As public tortures and executions continued, the people subjected to torture became heroes, especially if the punishment was too excessive for the crime committed. The convicted person was given a chance to speak prior to the execution. This gave him/her an opportunity to repent for his crimes, but often it was used as an occasion to speak against the throne and the executioners. On many occasions the crowds gathered around to view the event would riot against the executioner, stopping the event from continuing. Toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, protests against public execution and torture continued. The public cried out for punishment without torture, which led to the invention of prison. Deprivation of liberty became the main form of punishment. Liberty is the one thing that is equal to everyone. Fines hurt the poor more than the rich, but taking away freedom caused the same level of discomfort to all.

Prisons became more than just places where liberty was deprived; they were places where discipline could be instilled. Discipline was a drive to instill useful, social qualities into the convicts. It was an attempt to reform the criminal so upon his release, he would be less likely to re-offend and more likely to be a contributing member of society. The discipline that prisons tried to instill in criminals was similar to the discipline in military units and it is similar to the discipline in schools where delinquent learners are corporal punished for misbehaving (Foucault, 1975). He argued that basic idea of discipline is that one will be rewarded for achievement, and be punished for lack of achievement or non-conformity. Forcing the prisoners to live and work under strict guidelines instilled discipline (Foucault, 1977). The prisoners were forced to “constructively” use every minute that they were awake. This was social training to prepare criminals for a life of productivity when released from jail. For schools learners are disciplined and punished to prepare for a life of productivity and good university students once out of basic schooling system (Mason, 2013).

To monitor the progress of prisoners required constant supervision. A prison warden monitored criminals at all time to ensure they followed the guidelines. In schools learners are always under constant supervision by their teachers and other staff members. Learners are controlled and monitored in every movement and action they make, for example; when to eat, when to play and when to talk. In addition, to monitor the progress and productivity of learning in schools teachers and school officials constantly supervise and observe learners during schools days and now over the weekends. Harber (2004) contends that in the quest for conformity, learners are monitored in their movements. For example, they are required to seek authorization to leave the room while their activities are directed and timed and their learning is scheduled into periods of work followed by short breaks.

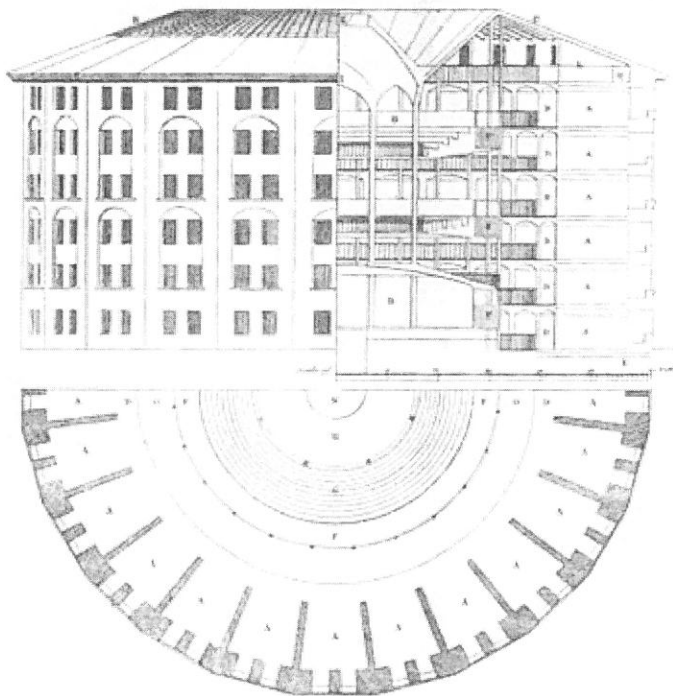
According to Foucault (1975) constant supervision led to the development of institutional designs like Jeremy Bentham's panopticon. The panopticon had cells built around a central tower. The cells opened in the front so the guards in the tower could see inside. The cells had windows in the rear of the cell backlighting the prisoner making him/her easy to watch. The windows of the tower had Venetian blinds allowing the guards to see out, but preventing the inmates from seeing inside. The prisoner never knew at any given moment if he/she was being supervised or not, therefore he constantly obeyed the rules.

“Prisons do not diminish the crime rate: they can be extended, multiplied or transformed, the quantity of crime and criminals remains stable or, worse, or increases...”  
“Detention causes recidivism; those leaving prison have more chance than before of going back to it; convicts are, in a very high proportion, former inmates; 38 per cent of those who left the *masons centrals* were convicted again...” “The prison cannot fail to produce delinquents, it does so by the very type of exercise that it imposes on its inmates that is, whether they are isolated in cells or whether they are given useless work, for which they will find no employment, it is, in any case, not ‘to think of man in society; it is to create an unnatural, useless and dangerous existence’... The prison also produces delinquents by imposing violent constraints on its inmates; it is supposed to apply law, and to teach

respect for it; but all its functioning operates in the form of an abuse of power. The arbitrary power of the administration...” The prison makes possible, even encourages, the organisation of a milieu of delinquents, loyal to one another, hierarchised, ready to aid and abet any future criminal act...(Foucault, 1975, pp. 265-267)”.

Michel Foucault believed in the freedom of people, where he realised that individuals react to situations in different ways. Like many philosophical historians, Foucault’s work focused on the dominant historical and archaeological knowledge systems and practices which in his case include social contexts and nature of power exists in various societies (Foucault 1980, p. 30).

For better understanding of the Foucault’s Panopticon prison, I have inserted below the structure as an illustration to how the control and surveillance of prisoners was conducted. According to Foucault, the modern prison has its origins in the Panopticon structure, which was an ideal organisation planned by the philosopher and social thinker Jeremy Bentham in the nineteenth century (Giddens, 1997; McKinlay and Starkey, 2000). The Panopticon was circular in shape with the cells built around the outside edge, inside the Panopticon was an inspection tower with two windows placed in every cell, one facing the inspection tower and the other facing outside as depicted in the picture below (Giddens, 1997).



**Figure 1: Foucault's Panopticon:** adapted from [www.moyak.com/paper/jeremy-bentham.html](http://www.moyak.com/paper/jeremy-bentham.html)

The Panopticon was a metaphor that allowed Foucault to explore the relationship between a) systems of social control and people in a disciplinary situation and, b) the power-knowledge concept. Power and knowledge comes from observing others, it marked the transition to a disciplinary power, with every movement supervised and all events recorded.

Similarly, in schools learners are constantly supervised and monitored mainly by teachers where teachers are randomly supervised the Department of Basic Education officials. The result of this surveillance is acceptance of regulations and docility - a normalization of sorts, stemming from the threat of discipline. Suitable behaviour is achieved not through total surveillance, but by panoptic discipline and inducing a population to conform by the internalization of this reality. The actions of the observer are based upon this monitoring and the behaviours he sees exhibited; the more one observes, the more powerful one

becomes. The power comes from the knowledge the observer has accumulated from his observations of actions in a circular fashion, with knowledge and power reinforcing each other. Foucault says that "by being combined and generalized, they attained a level at which the formation of knowledge and the increase in power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process" (Foucault 1977).

For Foucault, the real danger was not necessarily that individuals are repressed by the social order but that they are "carefully fabricated in it" (Mason, 2013), and because there is a penetration of power into the behaviour of individuals. Power becomes more efficient through the mechanisms of observation, with knowledge following suit, always in search of "new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised" (Mason, 2013). Foucault (1977) contends that when only certain people or groups of people control knowledge, oppression is a possibility. Whereas when people are involved in decision making they feel the sense ownership of a decision taken. Harber (2004) contend that throughout the history of schooling there has always been a conflict between education for control in order to produce citizens and workers who are conformist, passive and politically docile on the one hand, and those who want to educate for critical consciousness, individual liberation and participatory democracy on the other.

Literature demonstrates that Foucault has not faded away in the eyes of many scholars and academic world. From his birth in 1926 until his unfortunate death in 1984, Foucault saw the world in a distinctive way where he used history as a tool for explaining his theories about power relationships (Mason, 2013). His ideas, brought to light in Discipline and Punish theory, which is continue to be used by many current scholars. These theories about society, social control and the functions of prison to maintain control were revolutionary when Foucault first expressed them in 1975, and today they continue to be debated in academic settings around the world. Giddens (1997) contends that Foucault pays a great deal of thought to organisations, like prisons, in which individuals are physically separated or incarcerated for long periods from the outside environment.

According to Foucault, organisations like factories, schools, hospitals and asylums resemble prisons. According to Foucault, the modern prison has its origins in the Panopticon structure, which was an ideal organisation planned by the philosopher and social thinker Jeremy Bentham in the nineteenth century (McKinlay and Starkey, 2000).

Currently, high tech surveillance methods are used in most countries, such as England and South Africa, to combat school truancy. For example, schools in England have introduced expensive electronic swipe card systems to keep a constant all-day check on learners' school and individual lesson attendance (Harber, 2004). One school in Manchester managed to reduce truancy from 400 a day to 50 a day. In the process to keep learners in school, the school principal endeavoured to make school more interesting. From my experience, in South Africa, schools have also introduced surveillance cameras, razor wires, time books and class registers to keep a constant check on both learners and teachers. For example, surveillance cameras were installed in a popular comprehensive secondary school in Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal. In so doing, the principal of the school is now able to check what is happening in classrooms, staff rooms, at the security gate and other areas in the school by touching a button on a television screen installed in his office. Furthermore, the use of time books and class registers in South African schools is common, as such documents are authorized by the Department of Basic Education as a means of social control over both teachers and learners. It is mandatory for teachers to sign a time book whenever coming in and leaving the school premises. For learners, class registers are used to check learner attendance. The DBE requires schools to conduct roll calls on learners in the morning and in every lesson by using the period registers, while the security guards (where present) keep constant check on learners' movement and prevent learners from leaving through the school gates before the end of the school day.

The aim of the Panopticon design was to make prisoners visible to guards at all times and to keep prisoners under close surveillance (Giddens, 1997; McKinlay and Starkey, 2000). Like prisons, schools are divided into cells (classrooms) where the inmates are constantly

watched. When people are aware that they are being observed and will be punished for infringement of any rules, it makes it easier to control and supervise them. However, this apparatus of control and surveillance which is aimed at docility does not work with all pupils as many rebel, disobey or react violently in protest (Harber, 2004).

The Panopticon promised various benefits: "... morals were reformed, health was preserved, industry was stimulated, instruction was disseminated, and public burdens were lightened ... Its aim was to strengthen the social forces – to increase production, to develop the economy, to spread education, and to raise the level of public morality (McKinlay and Starkey, 2000, p. 2). Most interestingly, the basic aim of the Panopticon was that, over time, the threat of constant observation would be internalized and that it would thereby reduce the need for discipline so that, finally, "... discipline, regulation and surveillance will be taken for granted (McKinlay and Starkey, 2000).

The Panopticon became a metaphor that allowed Foucault to explore the relationship between systems of social control and people in a disciplinary situation and the power-knowledge concept since, in his view, power and knowledge come from observing others (Jones, 2008). It marked the transition to a disciplinary power with every movement supervised and all events recorded. The result of this surveillance is acceptance of regulations and docility stemming from the threat of discipline (Jones, 2008). However, the purpose of such checking is not prosecution in the public interest or the betterment in any context, but to reassure that the powerful order is being maintained (McKinlay and Starkey, 2000). Foucault sees the methods of surveillance as effective tools that have been developed for orderly regimentation of others as passive bodies. These techniques are aimed at achieving strategic effects through disciplinary character and these disciplinary practices become widely disseminated through schools, the army, asylums and, eventually, in the capitalist factory (McKinlay and Starkey, 2000, p. 30).

In the light of the above discussion, this study argues that the surveillance techniques described are strategic to a school if they are used mainly to protect the school against various acts of violence such as theft and burglary. But if these measures are used as a means of exhibiting power or to monitor teacher and learner performance and whereabouts, such surveillance techniques are likely to be resisted by learners and teachers. McKinlay and Starkey (2000, p. 50) posit that checking always involves power relations. For many teachers constant surveillance can exhibit power over learners and learners may view this as unnecessary constant checking, resulting in rebelliousness and resistance. For Harber (2004) schooling dehumanises and therefore perpetrates and multiplies violence according to various dimensions of violence which include, inter alia, corporal punishment; sexism or sexual harassment and stress, anxiety and testing.

### **2.3 How the School Itself Internally Operates as Violent Institution**

Schools themselves operate as violent institutions in many ways; these include the persisting use of corporal punishment, the acts of sexual harassment, testing and examination, to name the few. In the following discussion, this study examined how the schools operate as violent institutions by looking at corporal punishment and testing and examination only.

#### ***2.3.1 Corporal Punishment***

Currently South African schools commonly perpetrate violence on learners through the widespread use of corporal punishment and sexual harassment. Physical violence against children in the form of corporal punishment is still widespread in schools internationally. Research findings have revealed that South African schools continue to employ physical punishment as a means of affecting discipline in schools. More than half (55.6%) of the

interviewed had been physically hurt at school for their wrongdoings (Burton et al., 2009). Corporal punishment is not only a South African problem, but a global one (Cicognani, 2004). The widespread misuse of corporal punishment as a means to instil discipline is further discussed in detail in the literature chapter.

The effects that results from the use of corporal punishment are harmful to children and can be lasting and damaging reaching well into adulthood (Cicognani, 2004). In this section I will review the socio-economic impact of corporal of punishment. Physical violence in a form of corporal punishment had been reviewed in this study widely because the major form of violence taking place in South African schools today involves the 'illegal' use of sticks on children.

International research has identified school violence as a problem that affects both developed and developing countries (Plan, 2010). In many cases corporal punishment is ignored or at worst condoned. Children on whom corporal punishment is administered are often left with physical evidence or even death of the abuse. For example, children's eardrums have been burst as a result of being boxed (UNICEF's Asian Report, 2001). Minor injuries such as bruising and swelling are common, more severe injuries such as sprains, broken fingers, large cuts, broken wrists and collar bones and internal injuries requiring surgery do occur (Human Rights Watch Kenya, 1999). In KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, teachers were arrested for allegedly beating a child so severely that he needed surgery on one of his testicles.

In Egypt, 80% of boys and 67% of girls have suffered corporal punishment (Plan, 2008). Still in Egypt, a defence lawyer of one teacher who beat a learner to death for not doing his homework claimed in court that his client had not broken the law because 'hitting a child is not banned in schools'. Deaths of children as a result of corporal punishment have been reported in countries like Kenya (Cicognani, 2004). Those who favour corporal

punishment hold the view that corporal punishment instils discipline to learners and compliance. Cicognani, (2004) contends that although compliance is often obtained, the effect of the punishment leaves children feeling more resentful as opposed to have learnt correct behaviours, while children who are spanked have a less trusting and affectionate relationship with the punisher and feel less remorse about misbehaviour attitudes. Punishment reinforces uncertainty and an identity of failure (UNICEF's Asian report, 2001). It reinforces rebellion, revenge, resistance and resentment. Furthermore studies demonstrate (Straus and Yodanis, 1999) that adolescents who experience frequent corporal punishment are at a greater risk of assaulting spouses later in life. Majority of children got injured as a result of corporal punishment meted out to them; many drop out of school or run away from school/home because of physical abuse. But there is a much greater number that suffer in silence, knowing no way of protecting themselves against adult malevolence (Arshad, 2008, p. 1).

The psychological effects of corporal punishment may be just as harmful as the physical effects, and may include loss of self-esteem, an increase in anxiety and fear, damage to ego functioning, creation or enhancement of feelings of loss, helplessness and humiliation, enhancement of feelings of aggression, and destructive and self-destructive behaviours, a shortened attention span, attention-deficit disorder, and impaired academic achievement. Apart from the evidence, research studies revealed that the administration of corporal punishment conveys the message that it is acceptable to express one's feelings of anger by hitting someone (Childline S.A.). Children are born imitators and they learn through modelling (Berk , 2009). When children learn that hitting is the way of solving problems, they don't learn creative ways in solving problems. If beaten they learn that it is acceptable to hurt others smaller than themselves physically. This notion has most negative bearing on the formation of an ability to establish meaningful relationships (Oosthuizen et al., 2003, pp. 464-465).

The social impact of violence in schools is often devastating for individual children, and can have wide-reaching social and economic consequences. It is impossible to quantify the true scope of effects of corporal punishment because children are often too ashamed or too afraid to tell anyone about it, or are not aware of how or where to report it. One study revealed that 9 Kenyan learners in one class were whipped with an electric cable for not completing their English homework. One learner was injured on his back, arm and abdomen. The estimated medical costs for this learner were between US \$5 and US \$10. Given that most Kenyans live below the poverty level of \$1 a day, this was likely to represent up to two weeks' earnings and have severe consequences for the family (Pereznieto, et al., 2010, p. 6).

Since violence is a major factor of keeping children out of school, it lessens their chances of working their way out of poverty. It further takes valuable resources away from essential services, and by reducing educational achievement and subsequent earning capacity, lowers tax revenues (Pinheiro, 2006).

The economic impact of corporal punishment had been documented globally. According to Pereznieto, et al., (2010, p. 10) in Guatemala and Argentina, early drop-out from school is nearly 59% and 11.4% of GDP respectively. In Egypt, nearly 7% is lost in potential earnings. In the UK, 16 year-olds who were punished and bullied at school are twice as likely not to be in education, employment or training, and to have a lower wage levels at age 23 and 33. In Morocco, it costs of a woman US \$274 to get help from the justice system following an incidence of domestic violence including physical violence. It means getting justice and treatment would cost a fifth of woman total income.

To conclude this discussion on corporal punishment, I present a wide range of alternatives to corporal punishment that can be used in the process of disciplining a learner. Below are the alternatives to corporal punishment as initiated by Childline S.A.:

*Give praise.* If you praise children when they obey or do things well, this encourages them to model their behaviour on positive reinforcements. Praise also encourages them to learn self-discipline. Lead by example. If a child is not allowed to use dirty language or to swear, neither should the teachers nor the caregivers. Basically, practice what you preach!

*'Restorative Justice'.* Children can often provide answers that will result in an acceptable compromise so encourage them. For instance, a useful technique with most children is used in 'restorative justice' practices (which are well-known in African culture). 'Restorative justice' involves both 'victim' and 'offender' in a meeting aimed at planning a way to repair any harm caused. In addition, some may set plans to prevent future misbehaviour by all concerned. These techniques have been successfully used by school governing bodies seeking alternative punishments in the school system in South Africa.

*Don't threaten or shout at children.* Bad prophecies for children, for example, "You are just lazy/stupid/fat/bad" may lead a child to giving up on themselves.

*Be respectful.* It is vital to treat any person, including a child, with respect. If there is respect for a child's thoughts and feelings, they will be more likely to act respectfully and perhaps be more open even when punishment is being meted out to them.

*Children learn by doing.* Give the child a non-abusive task to perform, preferably one that is related to what the child has done wrong. A child who has to fix, clean and tidy something that he or she has broken or dirtied will be less likely to repeat that behaviour in future (Supra, p. 5). Therefore, alternative measures should be used as a means to mitigate violence in schools. In resorting to alternative measures in disciplining learners, teachers should ensure that they do their best or do something whenever the act of violence has been reported or witnessed in schools. Ignoring violence further perpetrates violence.

### *2.3.2 Testing and Examination*

Schools' communities at large are run under stress and anxiety. Control through regulation, standardisation, classification and surveillance involves regular measurement and ranking through testing, examinations and other forms of assessment. Schools themselves are increasingly judged, inspected and ranked in the process. Secondly, there is political control of schools through accountability mechanisms which include evaluating the success or failure of pupils in examinations. Schools are now increasingly more competitive and test-driven than any other branch of society. Harber (2004) contends that learners (and teachers) are treated not as individual human beings with multiple dimensions to their lives and learning, but as commodities in a production process that can be subject to 'quality control' through testing. Not surprisingly, such testing comes at a price for pupils who can suffer considerable stress and anxiety resulting in mental and physical harm.

After 1994, South African schools had been faced with ever changing testing and examinations policies. Recently, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) an addendum to the policy document, the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 (NCS): A qualification at Level 4 on the NQF, regarding the National Protocol for Assessment Grade R – 12, Gazette, No. 29467 of 11 /12/ 2006, was amended in year 2012. CAPS is a newly developed statements for all subjects, which are amendments from the NCS grade R-12. CAPS is a comprehensive document which covers all aspects of the subjects statements, learning and assessment guidelines (previously covered in 3 separates documents– Subjects Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines (LPGs), and Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAGs). The National Protocol for Assessments Grades R-12 is another policy document which supported the CAPS document. The National Protocol for Assessment Grades R - 12 standardises the recording and reporting processes for Grades R – 12, provides a policy framework for the management of for both internal assessment comprising School-Based Assessment and Practical Assessment Tasks where applicable,

and the end-of-year examinations, school assessment records and basic requirements for learner profiles, teacher files, report cards, record sheets and schedules for Grades R – 12.

The National Protocol for Assessments Grades R-12 document was promulgated and repealed in the Government Gazette and supposed to become effective in three sections, that is, a) January 2012 in Grades R-3 and Grade 10; b) January 2013 in Grades 4-6 and Grade 11; and c) January 2014 in Grades 7-9 and Grade 12, and it is supposed to be implemented as gazetted in the policy document (CAPS Grades R-12; National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 section 32). However, in my view the implementation of the newly approved CAPS and its supporting document – The National Protocol for Assessments Grades R-12 will in the long run be faced with challenges of poor implementation and communication from the National office down to schools as it was the case with the NCS Grades R-12 (CAPS Grades R-12). This is likely to result in poor implementation because the National Department of Basic Education left the critical task of training and general implementation of the policy documents in the hands of various teacher unions at the beginning of the year 2012. Each union represented its members at school level and thus each union was supposed to train their constituencies. From my experience as a trainer the trainer for CAPS document in March and April 2012, the mass training of teacher trainers coupled with teacher training was faced with numerous challenges ranging from poor delivery of trainings by teacher trainers, poor attendance of teacher stakeholders, and so forth. Instead of continuation, the project rose and fall within two months of its inception. The majority of teachers were left untrained while they are expected to work with the newly approved policy documents. Currently, the trainings for CAPS is run at an adhoc basis by district officials who were at the beginning not part of the trainers during the first phase of training the teacher trainers.

In addition, the University of South Africa (UNISA) (2012) report on violence and education contends that schools continue to be violent by looking at various characteristics

and/or factors, including: i) disorganized schools/teacher absenteeism; ii) dysfunctional schools; and iii) authoritarian schools. These factors are elaborated below:

**Disorganized schools and teacher absenteeism:** In South Africa, the problem of disorganized schools has been recognized as a serious challenge in this new democracy. UNISA (2012) contends that teachers are absent from schools without reason, some arrive late or leave early, and others are perhaps at school but not in class. Teachers use funerals, council duties, union meetings and sports or school events as a convenient excuse to be absent or to come late. The use of funerals and other excuses by teachers is not very common. Teacher absenteeism which includes strikes and stay-aways, examinations to improve their qualifications, and council activities have been eliminated in South African schools. Fridays become 'early closing' days and on paydays non-attendance is the norm in many schools. Learners exhibit similar traits in schools faced with the challenges of teacher absenteeism and late coming. Such teacher behaviour varies from one school to another, but in schools where the problem is endemic, learners lose valuable instructional time. The SA media reported that the State President, Jacob Zuma, called on teachers to be "...in class, on time and teaching" and to spend the rest of the day on preparation and marking (Mail and Guardian, 2-8 September, 2011). Undoubtedly, loss of learning time negatively affects achievement, outcomes and progression.

**Dysfunctional schools:** The challenges of disorganized schools persist. These manifest in a form of low teacher morale, lack of accountability and non-attendance of children. These challenges and others, like teacher absenteeism, lack of enthusiasm and various forms of corruption, contribute to dysfunctional schooling (UNISA, 2012). In addition, dysfunctional schools in South Africa are evidenced by poor educational outcomes and a lack of internal organisation. The problems manifest in serious challenges regarding schools' infrastructure in terms of buildings, the supply of electricity and water, libraries, laboratories, clean water, the availability of computers and proper toilets. Furthermore, it was notable that there is an immense difficulty in recruiting competent principals to manage all 27 000 schools in South Africa. According to UNISA (2012, p. 15):

Authoritarian schools: This is the last key factor of why violence persists in schools when, instead, they should foster learning in a safe and secure environment. Scholars (Pineiro, 2006; Harber and Mncube, 2010) argue that in spite of most countries having signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, for the majority of learners schooling is an authoritarian experience which has an implication for various sorts of oppressions and violence. The degree of harshness and repression within authoritarian schools varies from context to context and from organisation (school) to organisation. For the majority of schools, control over what is taught and learned, how it is taught and learned, where it is taught and learned, when it is taught and learned and what the general learning environment is like is not in the hands of the learners. In schools, decision-making predominantly rests in the hands of government officials, the principals, teachers, and on a small scale, in the hands of the school governing body, but not in the hands of the learners. In this authoritarian situation of comparative powerlessness and disregard of learners' human rights, they can be maltreated violently or be influenced by potentially violent practices because of dominant norms and behaviours within the wider society and the schools.

The opposite of an authoritarian school is a democratic one. It must be made clear that the alternative to these authoritarian forms, which is more democratic relationships in schools as a means of reducing violence, does not mean a lack of discipline or order. Schools that are organized along democratic lines have a culture of mutual respect, civility and politeness as well as the freedom of all agents to offer constructive criticism and engage in free and open debate (Harber and Mncube, 2011, p.18).

## **2.4 Gender Based Violence**

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread violations of human rights (UN Entity for gender equality and the Empowerment of women) It can include physical,

sexual, psychological and economic abuse, and it cuts across boundaries of age, race, culture, wealth and geography. It takes place at home, on the streets, in schools, the workplace, in farm fields, and everywhere else. It has many manifestations – from the most universally prevalent forms of domestic and sexual violence, to harmful practices, abuse during pregnancy, so called honour killings and other types of femicide (UN Entity for gender equality and the Empowerment of women). In South Africa, in particular in KwaZulu-Natal the most brutal violence against women is the rape and killings of old-aged women (70 years and above). In March 12, 2011, a 26 year old man was found guilty of raping a 85-year old disabled women in her room at old aged home in Paulpietersburg part of KwaZulu-Natal (Sapa, 2013). In September 2012, a 70 year old granny in Mandeni outside her shack (KZN Network on Violence against women). Another 22 year old man was imprisoned in Pietermaritzburg high court for raping an 85 year old granny (Sapa, 2013).

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a term that broadly incorporates various behaviours that cause physical, sexual or psychological damage to women or girls (Greene, 2005). Pinheiro (2006) contends that gender-based violence stems from inequality, stereotypes and socially imposed roles. In addition these harmful cultural stereotypes that degrade children due to their sex or suspected sexuality create environments in which children can be abused with impunity, including adults in positions of trust and authority such clerics in religious schools, boarding masters in boarding schools. For example, Pakistan's Minister reported in 2004 that 500 complaints of sexual assault by clerics in religious schools had been reported. Historically, many cultures have had hierarchical social structures where those in positions of power have controlled those who are powerless through violence and threat of violence. These structures and practices have extended to families and the relations between men and women and between parents and their children. They have also extended to schools and the relations between school staff and children. In both families and schools, corporal punishment and other forms of cruel and degrading punishment have been widely favoured methods of "discipline" perceived as "taming" the ungovernable

child, training the presumptuous child to take “proper place” in the society, and hardening the unseasoned child to the difficult, brutal and abrasive world (Pineiro, 2006, p. 115).

The violence experienced by learners within schools is distinctly different for girls and boys. Girls are the victims of rape, harassment and sexual assault, whilst boys are mostly victims of assault and bullying. Male learners who are suspected of being homosexual are also beaten and abused by their male counterparts (Burton, 2007, p. 47). Sexual violence and harassment towards girls may be motivated by the desire to punish or humiliate girls because of their sex or sexuality, or by sexual interest and bravado (Pineiro, 2006). Studies suggest that sexual harassment of schoolgirls is common worldwide, to varying degrees by teachers themselves as well as by other learners (WHO, 2005; Health and Domestic Violence, 2005).

Using a gender frame of reference, gender violence can be broadly clustered into two overlapping categories: explicit gender (sexual) violence and implicit (verbal and physical) gender violence. Explicit gender (sexual) violence includes sexual harassment, intimidation, abuse, assault and rape (Wilson, 2006). Explicit gender violence is more gender overt and is sexual in nature and implies sexual desire and erotic responses and might be physical and/or verbal in nature. It includes acts of harassment, intimidation, abuse, sexual violence, assault and rape (Dunne et al., 2006, p. 81). Sexual violence is best defined in a study by Wilson (2006), as “...any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts of traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexual [sic] using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work”.

Implicit gender violence includes corporal punishment, bullying, stabbing, verbal and psychological abuse, teachers’ unofficial use of learners for free labour, and other forms of aggressive or unauthorised behaviour that are violent in nature (Wilson, 2006, p. 3).

According to Wilson (2006), the implicit abuse is gender specific in cases of verbal abuse that is overly sexual or psychological in nature. Gendered violence is the type of violence which is perpetrated by females (Jefthas and Artz, 2007). Jefthas and Artz argue that critical feminist reflections on criminology in South Africa have begun to extend to boundaries of criminological discourse, but women and girls remain under-represented in both criminological theory and practice. Studies on youth gang membership, school violence and young people in conflict with the law largely ignore the role of female youth in contributing to, facilitating, or colluding in acts of violence, destruction of property, intimidation, bullying, theft and a range of other criminal or antisocial activities (Jefthas and Artz, 2007, p. 40). Therefore, studies on gendered violence in South African schools are also under-represented.

Violence in schools may be analysed through the lenses of symbolic interactionism. The concept of symbolic violence was first coined by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to account for the silent almost unconscious modes of cultural/social domination occurring within the day to day social habits maintained over subjects (White and Klein, 2003). Symbolic power accounts for discipline used against another to confirm that individual's placement in a social hierarchy. This type of violence involves a misrecognition of actions by the those who are involved. Individuals and groups are regularly marginalised and dominated in society (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Symbolic violence is perpetrated by both the dominator and the dominated subconsciously through the use of classification systems, gift giving, and participation within the society. Gender violence is perhaps the most obvious form of symbolic violence. For example, women who have been raped often blamed themselves (and/or are blamed by others) for being at fault. Statements such as "I should not have worn that tight skirt" place blame on the victim of violence rather than on the perpetrator (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

The link of authority and masculinity relations is crucial to comprehend the gendered nature of school violence. Boys' performances of masculinity are an attempt to subordinate

female teachers according to gender order in school and society and thus challenge male teachers' authority position in the school hierarchy (Dunne et al., 2006). In some cases, this gender hierarchy is reinforced by the female teachers themselves who use their male colleagues to administer corporal punishment on their behalf (Wilson, 2006).

The study by Guzzo, Lacerdo and Filho (2006) revealed that in Brazilian schools, teachers' positions of authority and control are used to blame learners for initiating violence in schools. Because of their authority, teachers and school staff rarely are identified as the source of violence and are protected by their power. Additionally, research by Greene (2008) contends that the "who" of school violence is most frequently understood as learner-on-learner aggression or violence; ignoring the many other versions of violence among teachers, staff, administrators, and learners; for example, teacher-to-learner bullying or coercion.

The question about what constitutes violence in the school environment has born differing definitions in the published literature; these vary from very narrow excessive physical force to broad definitions which include psychological or emotional violence, intimidation and incivilities (Dunne et al., 2006). Dunne et al, (2006), express that wider social conditions have a powerful influence on schools setting, that is, through self-regulation and their regulatory power with learners and that teachers are viewed as critical agents in the production of the institutional gender regime within schools. That is, those in positions of authority (e.g. teachers, prefects, and so on) and those with, for example, physical or economic advantage (e.g. senior male learners, male teachers) may use a range of regulatory sanctions against young women.

The institutionalisation of power of the teacher is confronted by the gender regime as the older boys "come of age" and contest teacher authority, particularly that of female teachers (Dunne et al, 2006). Wilson (2006) concurs with Dunne et al, by emphasising that the age/authority relations between teacher and learner are a fundamental facet of schooling that interacts with the gender regime. The institution of schooling officially condones

teachers' regulation and control of appropriate learner behaviour through, for example, allocation of rewards and sanctions, the distribution of their time and the extension of class. In this way by using their authority power position, teachers "normalise" certain aspects of male behaviour.

Additionally, most of gender-based school violence; especially sexual violence is left unchecked and has negative impact on the educational and emotional needs of girls and acts as a barrier to attaining education (Wilson, 2006). Rape and other forms of sexual violence place girls at risks of contracting the *HIV/AIDS* virus which has in turn taken its toll in disrupting the educational system and may lead to learner drop-outs. Schools in many countries turn a deaf ear to the female learners' complaints and many girls do not even complain because of fear of reprisals, especially from teachers, but most because they believe that nothing will be done (Wilson, 2006). Harber (2004) posits that by doing nothing or ignoring a negative or dangerous aspect of the surrounding society – bullying, infection by *HIV/AIDS*, racism, gendered sexual violence and violence itself – the role of schools can be said to be reproductive.

Sexual violence in schools has manifested itself in various ways. To understand the factors related to violence in schools, it is important to appreciate that the problem is not only a South African phenomenon. Girls in Nepal reported being harassed by male learners and subjected to inappropriate touching by male teachers. These acts involved touching their buttocks, breasts and even undoing their brassieres. Unfortunately, most of these unwanted sexual harassment acts went unreported (Dunne et al., 2006). Female learners in Papua New Guinea also described their fear of sexual assault and violence both in schools and in society in general.

Dunne et al. (2006) argue that sexual violence in schools is not a new phenomenon. Research reports illustrate that sexual relations between teachers and schoolgirls in sub-

Saharan Africa were common in the 1950s. This phenomenon has been made more common place by the bias and prejudice that exists against women in general. One survey indicates that eight in ten young men believed that women were responsible for causing sexual violence and three in ten thought that women who were raped “had asked for it”; consequently, female victims of sexual violence are often reluctant to report the incident to the police or their family (Wilson, 2006, p. 2; Dunne et al., 2006). Schools in many countries turn a deaf ear to female students’ complaints and many girls do not even complain because of fear of reprisals, especially from teachers, but mostly because they believe that nothing will be done (Wilson, 2006). Accordingly, in many schools administrators, the community and ministries of education largely ignore the phenomenon of violence against girls.

Research studies have also shown that gender violence in schools is mainly driven or influenced by peer pressure. Young males need to be seen to be brave, yet to have a girlfriend can lead to criminal incidents (Jefthas and Artz, 2007). These authors allude that dominant male and female peer group cultures encourage learners to conform to certain stereotypical behaviours which render girls vulnerable to sexual violence. Burton (2007) contends that such stereotypical behaviour applies to all South African boys. This researcher further argues that the situation is aggravated by structural inequalities. The statement of structural inequalities as another source of school violence is supported in a study by CSV (2007) entitled “Tackling armed violence”, which notes that the core of the problem of violent crime in South Africa is a culture of violence and criminality that is associated with a strong emphasis on the use of weapons. Some specific factors sustain this culture such as: inequality, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalisation.

Greene (2008) and Burton (2007) assert that sexual abuse may occur anywhere inside school premises, suggesting that in many schools there are few, if any, safe places for girls. Studies have revealed that girls are raped in school toilets, empty classrooms, hallways, hostels and dormitories. A study that revealed such incidences (Burton, Leoschut and

Bonora, 2009) reported that 14.6% of the study sample indicated that there were particular places at school they were afraid of, for example toilets (48.9%), playing fields/sports areas (12.5%) and classrooms (9.1%). While schools are regarded as unsafe places and school responses to abuse are seen as unsatisfactory, no mechanisms are in place to protect or educate girls on gender-based violence (Haffejee, 2006). If anything, this issue is either treated superficially or dismissed. Schools as sites that house captive adolescents on a daily basis need to be at the forefront in promoting equal rights, empowering young women and teaching both young women and young men about the non-acceptability of violence. This argument is supported by the fact that girls in South Africa have been reported to be unable to concentrate, that they are not interested in school, that they transfer to different schools, and that some drop out of school due to experiences of sexual harassment (Wilson, 2006).

## **2.5 Why South Africa is so Violent?**

Recently a number of studies ranked South Africa among the highest violent countries in the world (Schonteich and Louw, 2006; Pinheiro, 2006; The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), 2007; CSVR 2010; and SAHRC, 2006). This notion has been depicted in among others studies, which was conducted in 37 countries conducted by JSTOR (2002) titled "*Student Victimization: National and school system effects on school violence.*" In this study, South Africa was among the highest 4 countries out of 37, in which the percentage of students who become victims of school violence at least once every month were reported. Levels of recorded crime in South Africa began to increase in the mid – 1980s – dramatically so in the 1990s, and the expectations that violent crime would decrease after 1994 have not materialised (Schonteich and Louw, (2001); CSVR, (2010). Current evidence indicates that levels of crime, as measured by rape and murder rape are extraordinarily high in South Africa as compared to other countries (CSVR, 2009).

South Africa is still very high in violence if not worse, in 2007, aggravated robbery, rape and assault rates per province was reported per province, for example Kwa-Zulu Natal scored 98%, Western Cape scored 122%, and overwhelming 212% in Gauteng (CSVR, 2007). Various authors (Schonteich and Louw, (2001), CSVR (2007), CSVR, (2009), and CSVR, came up with various explanations on why South Africa has consistently high levels of crimes? From these various explanations, there is no single adequate answer to this question, but rather a combination of explanations which assist to explain the outrageous high number of crime plaguing the country (Schonteich and Louw, 2001).

There are a number of factors which distinguish South Africa as a country with an extraordinary high level of violent crime, these are: inequality, poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion and marginalisation; perceptions and values relating to violence and crime; the vulnerability of young people, linked to inadequate child rearing and inappropriate youth socialisation; weaknesses of the criminal justice; the availability of firearms and widespread use of other weapons, the role of alcohol, attitudes of male sexual entitlement and the domestic, regional and local criminal economy (CSVR Report, 2007, p.18). The core problem of violent crime in South Africa is a subculture of violence and criminality characterised by number of reasons, which include inter alia young men who are invested in a criminal identity and engaged in “criminal careers” which involve active criminal lifestyles and often incorporate multiple forms of violence; the common use of weapons, including firearms as well as knives or other instruments of “sharp force”. The ability to operate and achieve within this subculture is strongly related to one’s readiness to resort to extreme violence using a weapon (CSVR 2007, CSVR 2010).

The greater part of the problem of violent crime in the South African provinces, particularly in townships and inner city areas is associated with young men who tend to be invested in some kind of criminal identity and associate with other like-minded people. Those involved fall across a spectrum which ranges from criminals who operate as

individual rapists or robbers to large numbers affiliated to mainly informal (but sometimes more formal) groups or gangs (CSVR, 2010). Informal groups of these young men are probably the key driver of the problem of aggravated robbery as well as associated with many of the group rapes which in Gauteng, for instance, tend to be stranger crimes. These informal gangs are a training ground for participants in the more organised groups. According to CSVR, (2007), an examination of the criminal records of persons arrested for involvement in crimes such as murder and rape shows that perpetrators of these types of crime have been associated with a diversity of offences in the past, including a variety of violent offences. For example, it was reported that only 5% of rape suspects with criminal records had previous convictions for rape only; while a big 95% had previous convictions for offences such as robbery, murder, attempted murder or assault, as well as for other offences such as drinking, driving or drug related offences.

The high level of inequality is also represented by statistics for example, in 2008, the richest 10% of households in SA earned nearly 40 times more than the poorest, the richest 10% earned 150 times more than the poorest 10%. Worldwide survey consistently reveals that societies with high levels of inequality tend to have high levels of violence indicating that inequality itself is a key driver of violence (CSVR 2007, CSVR 2010).

Poor childhood rearing of young people and youth in SA involves multiple levels of challenges including poverty, unstable living arrangements, abstract of parents, indifferent or violent fathers and alcohol or other substance abusing parents or relatives. Consequently South African children are exposed to various risks factors which then enhance the opportunities that they will become involved in criminality and violence at later stage (CSVR 2007, CSVR 2010). This study contends that after 19 years of South Africa's transition to democracy, nevertheless the legacy of apartheid continues to be relevant in understanding of violence schools. South African communities continue to be violent thus the schools inevitably grow with such violent behaviours as they are situated within communities.

School violence starts out mainly with the bully on the playground, or the pushing and shoving during lunch times, but given the right set of circumstances what might have been prevented with some supervision instead turns into something deadly. School violence does not necessarily start in the school; most behaviours are learned responses to circumstances and situations that are exhibited in our everyday life (Last, 2001; Burton, 2008). Home life conditions are influences on children, if for example a child grew in a family where one of the parents is abused, whether verbally or physically a child will take this as a norm. Studies (CSVR, 2010; HRSC, 2010; Burton, 2008; Last, 2001) have proven that a child living in an abusive home will himself become an abuser, and that children who see violence view it as a solution to the problem. They see the stronger of the two components as a winner in the situation, and want to emulate the behaviour. A study by Last (2001) shows that parenting practices of severe discipline and uttering negative attitudes towards young boys around the age of ten result in an increase of aggressive behaviour in the school's setting. Also the use of coercive methods to control children, such as threat of violence for disobedience is another pathway of violent behaviour.

In addition to severe discipline by both parents and teachers, the family settings where both parents work, the consequence of both parents out of the house results in a lack of supervision for the children (Kreiner, 2000). There is usually a breakdown in the general governing system of the home allowing the children to be involved in the decision making that would be those of parents, in essence a child becomes his own boss (Last, 2001). Day (2001, p. 21) contends that lack of discipline can also cause a child to become self-absorbed. For example, where a parent indulges a child is in fact instilling in a child's feelings that he can do no wrong. A child may act out with knowledge that he will not be punished. This child will grow up with a lack of empathy for others, and be void of moral values for his fellow man.

Television viewing has no exception in fuelling violence. Last (2001) and Burton (2008) assert that violence on television is learned from a very early age with watching of cartoons. These funny harmless shows that make us laugh are the first viewing of violence that our children see. What these shows are telling our children is that violence is acceptable; it actually makes them numb to the horror of the actual violence happening around them. Music also plays even a bigger role in the learning of violence with its violent lyrics and cult following. For instance, MTV, rock concerts specialised in mocking authority through glorifying of guns; and portray women as victims of violence, often mentioning them as deserving of punishment. The performers of some of the artists seem to emphasise the violent nature of their music through for example, their attire, use of offensive language, and these forms of communication only add to cynicism of already troubled children.

The deadly connection of gangs, drugs, guns and alcohol have influence of violence on learners; in fact these aspects are viewed as the worst evil way of fuelling violence (Last, 2001). Day (2001); Last (2001) contend that there are various reasons why young children choose to join gangs. In the school setting learners who are underachievers, poor learners or language difficulties view themselves as losers in the academic world. They can be approached by a gang and be recruited into the organisation. Here they become “someone”, part of the organisation for kids just like themselves. The gang leaders often recruit youngsters who are unhappy and struggling. They lure them with a promise of fraternity and brotherhood hence the children then spend more and more time with them. The gangs usually have plenty of money to spend on drugs and alcohol, for example. There are various types of gangs ranging from unorganised to well organised gangs. Last (2001); Kreiner, (2000) provide three different types of gangs which include “scavenger gangs” (those who are unorganised, have different leaders all the time, and perform random crimes). The second type which is higher than the scavenger gangs are “territorial gangs” (these are turf loyal, well organised, ritualised, wear the same clothing types, and are sworn to secrecy). Lastly, the “corporate gangs” (these are the most highly structured, focusing on

selling of drugs for profit; they have strict codes of behaviour, and harsh punishment for those who break rules.

## **2.6 Apartheid Policies and School Violence**

A multitude of apartheid and draconian internal security laws were placed on the South African statute books from the 1920's, the 1950's, and behaviour which was considered normal in a democratic society was criminalised. For example, political motivated strikes, living or playing in areas reserved for people of another race, interracial, the possession of revolutionary literature, were at one time a criminal offence (Schonteich and Louw, 2001; CSV, 2007). Schonteich and Louw (2001, p. 2-3) contend that during this time the distinction between criminal and political behaviour became hazy, and those involved in "the struggle" justified forms of violence as legitimate weapons against the system. In South Africa, the anti-crime campaigns were launched in townships in the 1980s, but the post 1990 negotiation period broke these nexus: state repression weakens, violence also social controls, and transition brought into intra-community conflict producing marginalised groups reliant on crime for livelihood. This further led to an increase in levels in participation to various crimes among township youth. Violent crime, robbery, car hijacking were the most recorded. Recorded violent crime increased consistently since 1994. In 1994 some 618 000 incidents of violent crime were recorded, increasing to 751 000 in 1999. Between 1994-1999, violent crime increased by 22%, property crime increased by 15% over the similar period, commercial crime 7%, arson and malicious damage to property also 7% (Schonteich and Louw, 2001).

In South Africa, race and ethnic tensions remain at the centre of much violence in the country, despite the end of apartheid (Vally et al., 1999). Vally et al. (1999) argue that the high levels of violence in our schools reflect a complicated combination of past history and recent stresses on individuals, schools, and communities in a society marked by deep

inequalities and massive uncertainty and change within school settings. Even with the enormous political changes that have been effected in South Africa in the past 18 years since 1994, immeasurable social and economic challenges remain. This study contends that not only do social and economic challenges remain, but that they are deepening at a fast rate. Where the HIV/AIDS pandemic keeps on affecting large portions of the poor black communities and youth, high mortality rates promote child-headed households and poor economic growth which are coupled with high unemployment, poor job security and high levels of crime rates, to mention just a few.

Excerpts from the study entitled “Violence in South African Schools” by Vally et al. (1999) and a study by Wilson (2006) respectively are presented here to illustrate the manner in which violence remains intertwined with racism in South African schools. They argue that racism persists in schools despite school desegregation. “The legacy of racial segregation in South African schools were [sic] through the legislative provisions contained in the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, The Coloured Persons Act of 1963, the Indian Education Act of 1965 and the National Act of 1967, education for Black South Africans was explicitly linked to the political, economic and social domination of all black South Africans.”

Expansion of primary, secondary and higher education for “Africans” in the 1960s and 1970s occurred in the context of Bantustan policy, in which “African” political aspirations were to be redirected to artificial and economically nonviable “homelands”. Bantustan policy was designed to fit black South Africans into subordinate positions in a racially-structured self-perpetuating division of labour. Educational funds were allocated unequally to white, Indian, Coloured, African and other Bantustan education departments. The whites were allocated four times higher than other racial groupings with Africans in KwaZulu-Natal at the lowest of them all. This expansion of poor quality education resulted in a massive political resistance among youths throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In black schools, apartheid education meant minimal levels of resources, inadequately trained and

few staff, poor quality of learning materials, shortages of classrooms, and the absence of laboratories and libraries. South Africa's transition to a democracy has been accompanied by extremely high levels of both political violence and violent crime" (Wilson, 2006). This study contends that South African schools are becoming more violent and more vulnerable to acts of violence as the country evolves with its democracy.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter presented power and social control theories which provided insights about why schools continued to be violent institutions. This chapter further provided an insight about why South Africa is a violent society where issues of inequality, legacy of apartheid and poor youth socialisation were reviewed. In addition, I presented the impact of gender based violence in schools, and how the apartheid policies of the past acted as justified forms of violence and as legitimate weapons against the system which in turn spilled over to school functioning. In the next chapter I present a literature overview on school violence both internationally and locally.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE OUTCOMES OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT FORMS OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature in local and international studies pertaining to the objectives of this study. Research has revealed that, globally, violence in schools is seen as a growing problem, but there are few systematic mechanisms to enable verification of trends and to compare incidences of violence in schools cross-culturally (Wilson, 2006). Akiba, LeTendre, Baker and Goesling (2002) argue that most research on violence has traditionally focused on individual-level variables and psycho-social models of causation, and not on system-level variables and socio-structural models of causation. Further, despite widespread international concern, little is known about school violence in terms of system-wide expression across a range of nations. Similarly, there are many initiatives to tackle violence in schools and communities in different countries, but these are not synthesized (Wilson, 2006).

Violence found in schools is broadly divided into two forms, firstly, violence perpetrated by teachers and other school staff members, secondly, violence perpetrated by learners. Violence perpetrated by teachers and other staff members include corporal punishment and other cruel and humiliating forms of punishment or treatment, sexual and gender-based violence and bullying. Violence perpetrated by learners includes bullying, sexual and gender-based violence, schoolyard fighting, gang violence, assault with weapons and cyber-bullying (Cicognani, 2004; Pinheiro, 2006). Additionally, girls in school are experiencing sexual violence and harassment at the hands of both male teachers and male learners. Males were found to fondle girls, make aggressive sexual advances and verbally degrade them (Burton, 2007). This study aimed at exploring the dynamics and frameworks

of violence by looking at the forms of violence which are external to the school but which affect the school, by looking at forms of indirect and direct forms of violence within the school in order to contribute to an international understanding of violence in schools.

### **3.2 Direct Forms of Violence Within the School**

There are various forms of direct violence that are found within the schools, this study discussed both physical and psychological forms of violence.

#### ***3.2.1 Physical and Psychological Forms of Violence***

Direct violence is a deliberate injury to the integrity of human life. This includes murder, massacre, genocide, torture, rape, maltreatment, forced resettlement, kidnapping, forced labour, corporal punishment and slavery. Salmi (2000) and Harber (2004). Corporal punishment can be described as "...any physical action that hurts a child in quest for discipline" (Harber, 20024). This could mean: hitting (which involves "smacking, slapping", spanking), pinching, pushing, shaking and kicking; depriving the child of food or rest or movement; forcing chillies, washing-up-liquid or other irritating substances in a child's mouth or anywhere on his or her body; and/or forcing them to sit or stand for any length of time (Pinheiro, 2006; Childline S.A.).

Dunne et al., (2006) assert that teachers are perceived as critical agents in the production of gender regime in schools through their self-regulation and their regulatory power over learners. Despite being critical agents for gender violence, I content that recently teachers are also the basic agents for both physical and psychological violence for all learners in schools, for example, through the persisting use of corporal punishment and humiliating threats. Those in positions of authority (like teachers and prefects) and those with physical and economic power (like, male teachers and senior male learners) may use range regulations including the use of corporal punishment by teachers and chasing of learners

from class. I fully support the statement that at times teachers are agents of a violence regime in schools in various ways. In South African schools and elsewhere, corporal punishment had been banned. Of the 223 States and dependent territories tracked to end corporal punishment of all children, about 106 now have laws banning corporal punishment in schools (Pinheiro, 2006). In addition these laws to ban corporal punishment are not effectively enforced. In some countries like South Africa and Cameroon teachers are still boasting of employing corporal punishment for “cheekiness, disobedience and academic mistakes), and 97% of Cameroonians’ schools reported that they have been physically punished by their teachers.

Other forms of psychological violence is humiliation which is very much on the cognitive level of children and lodged in the minds of many adults with painful memories of how they or their classmates were humiliated by the words and actions of school principals and teachers (Pinheiro, 2006). I contend that child humiliation does not only take place in schools but it is also enrooted with family and community settings. UNISA (2012) contends that humiliations as a form of violence can result in serious long-term physical, emotional and psychological implications for both teachers and learners. These implications include: reduced self-esteem; distress; risk of depression and suicide; reduced school attendance; impaired concentration; increased risk of teenage pregnancy; transmission of the HIV/Aids virus; fear; a diminished ability to learn; community disintegration; academic underperformance; and school drop-out. Pinheiro (2006) found in Namibia that, 19% of both boys and girls answered “yes” when asked if they had “ever been physically forced to have sex.” In Swaziland, 9% of boys and 10% of girls said “yes”. While in Uganda, 13% of boys and 25% of girls said “yes”; in Zambia, 11% of boys and 14% of girls said “yes”. Forced sex is a risk factor for HIV/AIDS and this is a growing concern in the context of schools in globally (Supra, 2006).

Harber (2004) asserts that, at times, beatings by teachers left children permanently disfigured, disabled or dead. Physical and psychological violence in schools in a form of degrading threats, beating, punching, beating or kicking remains legal in at least 65 countries, despite the statement that the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the

Child has highlighted that physical and psychological violence on children is incompatible with the Convention (World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002). These forms of violence both have adverse outcomes for both learners and the school as a whole. Violence further deepens gender and social inequalities and reduces the overall quality of life (UNISA, 2012).

A wide range of forms of implicit gender violence in schools exists beyond the banned practice of corporal punishment and other forms of physical violence. Implicit gender violence includes all forms of bullying, assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm (GBH), assault, verbal and psychological abuse, teachers' unofficial use of learners for free labour and any other forms of aggressive and violent behaviours (Dunne et al., 2006). The most common forms of bullying are verbal and, if left unattended, verbally bullying can lead to extreme violence (Pinheiro, 2006). He also revealed that a study in Israel found that bullies' feelings of suffering, humiliation and anger often explain why they move from verbal to physical violence.

Implicit gender violence in schools is perpetrated by both learners and teachers. Media reports on school violence have demonstrated that GBH violence is taking its toll in South African schools. A male learner from one of the high schools in Gauteng province was stabbed to death on 28 February 2012 by gangs from the community (SABC, 2012). The news further reported that in another high school in the Gauteng province another boy was stabbed to death during the same week. Tragically, a shortage of school furniture resulted in the death of a learner in a high school in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal province where male learners were fighting over newly delivered classroom chairs. Eventually knives were drawn and one learner died of stab wounds at the local clinic (Ndlovu, 2012).

It is not only girls who are the victims of sexual harassment, but boys are also subjected to sexual harassment. In Pakistan it was reported that some boys are enrolled in girls' schools

because families believe that female teachers are "...less likely to be sexually abusive or violent". The coercion of young men into sexual acts by older women has also been reported in Pakistan (Dunne et al., 2006). In a large nationwide survey on peer sexual harassment in Jewish and Arab state schools in Israel, boys reported much higher levels of sexual harassment (between 21 and 50.5%) than girls (between 11.4 and 35.7%), although sexual assault and rape were excluded in the survey (Dunne et al., 2006, p. 89). Bulut and Gunduz (2012) argue that bullying has no similarities with respect to gender. The study found that the proportion of female victims was 14% and the proportion for male victims was 11%. Additionally, the gender distribution of the participants who regarded certain behaviours in schools as sexual harassment, like bullying and harassment, was as follows: 67% mentioned that males committed shameful behaviours in schools, 29% stated that females committed shameful behaviours in schools, and 54% indicated that both males and females committed shameful behaviours in schools. Greece has reported relatively few incidents of school violence as compared to other European countries. The most reported form of violence in Greek schools is vandalism which comes in various forms (e.g., destruction of school equipment), verbal attacks (insults, threats), peer conflicts, and social exclusion (Hatzichristou et al., 2012).

A study conducted in Alabama schools in the USA by the Criminal Justice Information Centre in 2005 reported a trend of growing acts of school violence (Wright, 2005). There were 2 143 violent offenses and reports included simple assault, 19 rapes, 35 robberies, and 196 aggravated or severe assaults. These acts were reported to law enforcement as having occurred in Alabama public or private pre-primary, junior high or high schools (Wright, 2005, p. 3). In a similar study in Alabama Schools, out of 100% victims of violence, 51% of the victims of school violence were females, and 49% were males. The majority of the victims per race were white at 52%, followed by black at 47% and only 1% accounted for other races. The findings showed that 61% of the victims of school violence were juveniles (17 years old and younger), and 39% were adults (Supra, 2005, p. 5).

Both teachers and learners in schools are exposed to school violence in one way or other. A study by Rossouw (2008) revealed that teachers are subjected to physical and psychological violence at schools in South Africa. In one incident a pregnant teacher was kicked and injured by learners in a school in the Western Cape. In another incident the school principal was allegedly beaten up by a parent (Rossouw, 2008). In spite the attempts to protect the interests of teachers through the Employment of Teachers Act 76 of 1998, teachers don't feel safe in schools. If a teacher is suffering or not safe within the school premises, the children in his or her care will also suffer. For example, teachers hampered by stress and unable to give of their best will continue to short-change the pupils through no fault of their own. One way for an individual to cope with stress is to take it out on other people. We are all aware of the 'kick the cat' syndrome when, in frustration and anger, a person lashes out at the nearest available target. Place a person under stress in a classroom with small children and the consequences will certainly be unpleasant and could be awful. Fortunately, physical attacks on children are uncommon, but the daily classroom experiences for a child whose teacher is under stress will certainly be less than positive. Stress may manifest in shouting, verbal put-downs, short tempers, poor quality assignments, poorly planned and unimaginative lessons, work not marked, and so on (Cosgrove, 2000, pp. 117-118).

The problem of [male] teachers engaging in serious misconduct with underage female learners is common in South Africa. Teachers have raped, sexually assaulted and otherwise sexually abused girls (Harber and Mncube, 2011). UNISA (2010) argues that reinforcing sexual demands with threats of physical violence or corporal punishment sometimes occurs and that teachers sexually proposition girls and verbally degrade them by using highly sexualized language.

Traditionally, research focused more on violence that emerged among learners; however, in recent years there have been studies that touched on the issue of teacher induced violence through harassment, bullying, and mainly through inflicting physical pain by

administering corporal punishment to learners (Bulut and Gunduz, 2012). Physical violence against children in the form of corporal punishment is still prevalent in schools across the globe (Harber, 2004). The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002) reports that corporal punishment in schools in the form of beating, punching or kicking remains legal in at least 65 countries. This occurs despite the statement that the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has highlighted that corporal punishment is unsuitable for any reason. The role of corporal punishment in reinforcing order in schools in developing countries has been observed in some schools in India, Mali, Lebanon, Liberia, Mozambique, Pakistan, Mongolia, Ethiopia and Peru (Molteno, Ogadhoh, Cain and Crumpton, 2000).

It can be argued that the history of childhood, at least in Western societies, registers the ordinary abuse and terrorising of children by their caretakers (Parker-Jenkins, 1999). Worst of all is that an expectation that child-rearing and corporal punishment should go hand in hand has been carried over into school life. She adds that British law courts consistently upheld the right of schools to beat children and corporal punishment was only finally banned in state schools in 1986 as a result of legal decisions stemming from European courts in Strasbourg. However, the ban on corporal punishment was only extended to children in all schools as late as 1999. In Morocco, like in South Korea, most primary school teachers generously use a ruler, stick, or a piece of rubber garden hose to hit children Salmi (1999).

Research in South Africa has shed some light on the pervasive use of corporal punishment in schools. The use of corporal punishment in schools has been prohibited since 1996 in South Africa, although it is still commonly used, particularly in rural areas, and is still supported by many parents and learners (Morrell, 1999; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Bhana, 2012; Hunt, 2007). Number of reports had been published in the South African media, for example, corporal punishment is rife in Gauteng schools with more than 350 cases reported between April 2011 and February 2012 (John, 2012). Moreover,

John contends that a worrying factor is that nationwide statistics of incidences of physical violence are not available from the Department of Basic Education. Learners don't report corporal punishment because they fear victimization by teachers. In India, 69% of children said they had been physically abused in different settings, including schools, but most said they had not reported it to anyone. In many cases it is ignored or even condoned (PLAN, 2010, p. 5). The prevailing attitude is that physical violence is a norm in most schools.

More instances of physical and psychological violence have been traced in South African schools. In KwaZulu-Natal teachers were arrested for allegedly beating a child so severely that he needed surgery on one of his testicles, while a teacher in a Pretoria school stuffed papers into a learner's mouth before hitting him (John, 2012). In some cases corporal punishment is used to maintain order in big size classrooms particularly in public schools. To ensure docility in classes of such big sizes teachers argue that they have, in most instances, no choice but to resort to corporal punishment (Supra, 2012).

A most undesirable approach to the question of disciplinary problems is to apply corporal or other punitive forms of punishment. Evidence strongly suggests that corporal punishment is a major cause of negative behaviour. This includes depression and spiralling physical abuse. Proponents of corporal punishment are of the opinion that it builds character, contributes to rapid reduction or elimination of unwanted behavioural patterns, whilst at the same time it teaches respect for rules and authority (Oosthuizen, Wolhuter and du Toit, 2003, p. 464). However, research tells a different tale. Oosthuizen et al. (2003) contend that: "The psychological effects of corporal punishment may be just as harmful as the physical effects, and may include loss of self-esteem, an increase in anxiety and fear, damage to ego that stunts functioning, creation or enhancement of feelings of loss, helplessness and humiliation, enhanced feelings of aggression, destructive and self-destructive behaviours, a shortened attention span, attention deficit disorder, and impaired academic achievement.

Apart from the negative consequences listed above, research studies have further revealed that the administration of corporal punishment conveys the message that it is acceptable to express one's feelings of anger by hitting someone. Children are born imitators and they learn through modelling (Berk, 2009). When children learn that hitting is the way of solving problems, they don't learn creative ways in solving problems. If beaten, they learn that it is acceptable to hurt others smaller than themselves physically. This notion has most negative bearing on the formation of an ability to establish meaningful relationships (Supra, pp. 464-465)".

In a recent research study by Burton et al. (2009), the findings revealed that South African schools continue to employ physical punishment as measures of affecting discipline in schools. More than half (55.6%) of the interviewed participants had been physically hurt at school for their wrongdoings. The following data are cited as the prevalence of corporal punishment in some provinces in 2009: Eastern Cape - 80.4%, KwaZulu-Natal - 64.1%, Gauteng - 52.7%, Western Cape - 34.1%). These data should be placed in context: 80.4% of what sample group; i.e., what number of schools or learners? Oosthuizen et al. (2003) contend that the abolition of corporal punishment has left a definite vacuum in methods to deal with serious misconduct in schools, particularly as child-on-child violence is escalating in SA primary schools.

There are various common reasons why teachers employ violence through the use of corporal punishment throughout the world. Punitive measures like expulsion or suspension are not acceptable because these and some other procedures violate learners' right to education (Oosthuizen et al., 2003). A research study revealed that in Turkish schools learners are physically punished for various reasons, including the following: high incidences of learner behaviour of a sexual nature (i.e. harassing or making sexual jokes with each other); incidences of destroying school buildings or property; cases of talking in class or causing disruptions; for fighting with fellow learners; failing to do homework;

for not listening in class; for being dressed inappropriately; for inappropriate hair styles; for damaging teachers' goods; and for smoking. The high level of incidences related to sexual misdemeanour strengthened the researchers' observations that adolescents have a natural interest in sexual topics and sexuality. Thus, schools should endeavour to incorporate sex education classes and seminars so that children and adolescents can have authentic information and be informed about sexual topics (Bulut and Gunduz, 2012, p. 169).

There are various reasons why corporal punishment is not acceptable. Many writers like Salmi (1999), Harber (2004), Harber (2010) and Childline S.A.) are proponents of halting the use of corporal punishment in schools. Harber (2004) and Salmi (1999) contend that corporal punishment or physical violence against children in the form of corporal punishment is still widespread in schools. This stems from the need to reinforce order and control in an authoritarian context. However, it is also important that, in such a context, children are not seen as fully human. Justifications for the use of corporal punishment in terms of the immaturity of young people suggest that simply being young denies children their basic human right not to be subject to cruel and degrading punishment. The practice of the physical punishment of young people in schools has a multiplier effect because it both legitimises violence by teachers against learners and increases the chance of children becoming more violent, thereby adding to the level of violence in society as a whole. Corporal punishment is usually associated with hostility and rejection, aspects which will have an enormous negative effect on children's relationships of trust, not only with teachers, but also with themselves. Their self-image is weakened and they develop a negative self-esteem (Maree, 1999).

There are various reasons why physical or corporal punishment is not acceptable in schools, as advocated by (Childline S.A., pp. 3-5, 15 February 2011), they include:

*Firstly*, it teaches children that hurting others is okay. Harber (2004, p. 1) further argues that children frequently learn from adults how to behave and interact with others, and may internalise the guidelines regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. “When children are trained, they learn how to train others in turn. Children who are lectured to, learn how to lecture; if they are admonished, they learn how to admonish; if scolded, they learn how to scold; if ridiculed, they learn how to ridicule; if humiliated, they learn how to humiliate; if their psyche is killed, they will learn how to kill.”

*Secondly*, it breaks down the relationship between parent and child or teacher and child. Children need to be able to trust parents and teachers to care for them and not to hurt them. Physical punishment strains this relationship. Children may come to believe that they deserve to be hurt - creating a low self-esteem and a poor self-concept. Children may become anxious or afraid of adults. They may also present as being angry, uncooperative and resentful.

*Thirdly*, it may damage children physically. Children may suffer permanent harm such as deafness from a strike to the head or brain damage or death from being shaken. Bones may be broken from having an arm twisted and internal organs can be damaged as a result of blows.

*Fourthly*, it opens the door to physical abuse. Physical abuse of children promotes the notion that it is okay to hurt children. When parents or teachers are angry or distressed it is easy to overstep the limit that parents or teachers set themselves. The ‘smack’ may develop into a ‘blow’ or a ‘beating’ and the child may be seriously hurt. Therefore it is safer to set boundaries that promote a non-violent form of discipline and that promote no smacking or physical hurt.

The *fifth* point is that it is not effective in the long term. Hurting children does not work well in changing behaviour permanently because it does not change the child's underlying attitudes and values.

The *sixth* and last point is that it damages children's development. Children who are sad, confused, anxious or angry cannot concentrate on the work or play they need for developing their potential. Research has shown that children who are disciplined at home in alternative ways, without being hurt, do better at school than others whose parents use physical punishment. This is due, in part, to the fact that parents who use alternative and positive methods of discipline teach their children better communication and problem-solving skills. It is clear that discipline is an ongoing process and that results cannot be achieved on the basis of one incident of instilling physical pain.

### **3.3 External Forms of Violence Which Affect Schooling**

In South African schools, gangsterism is regaining momentum. Recent studies have revealed that continuous fights between teenage gangs in Western Cape schools have resulted in the death of three school children which led to pupils dropping out of school due to constant fear of attack. About nine pupils dropped out in one secondary school alone, while two pupils were fighting for their lives in hospital after being stabbed and beaten with weapons such as axes and pangas. Additionally, it was further revealed that up to six gangs can be found in a single school and affiliated pupils are as young as 12 or 13 years old (Damba, 2012). Violence occurs both inside and outside school premises, but this study focuses on violence within school premises. Furlong and Morrison (2000) assert that spaces of violence, like hallways and other unsupervised locations are more prone to the occurrences of violent behaviours. They add that this could be due to the notion that professional teachers, administrators and support personnel claim no responsibility for that locale as part of their assigned duties. There are numerous unsupervised areas on school

campuses such as hallways, cafeterias or bathrooms. Violent behaviours that occur in these areas and that warrant an office referral are usually not recorded because of the absence of an adult observing the behaviour (Morrison et al., 2006). Furlong and Morrison (2000) argue that "...children see teachers walking by, pretending not to notice, and they learn that the way we treat others, the way we interact on the street or in the playground, is nobody's business but our own. Teachers must talk about violence, they must recognise it, examine it, dissect it and let children see and understand its secrets and its sources. Without this examination, it remains a fallacy that society will understand and control youth violence (Supra, p. 9).

Moreover, outside school, girls can also fall prey for 'sugar daddies' (older men who exploit young girls) who usually provide favours and financial assistance to these girls (Wilson, 2006). In my view, 'sugar daddies' in the South African context sexually abuse young girls mainly for transactional sex and for other favours associated with material things like mobile phones, airtime, fashion clothing, and/or status rather than for assistance with school fees. This argument is based on the notion that South African government provides its children and old aged with social grants and 'no school fees' programmes for families who are unable to support their children.

Salmi (2006) contends that in any situation of violence, the different dimensions of the relationship between violence and education can be mutually reinforcing. For example, failure at school and growing unemployment lead young males into a vicious cycle of drug abuse and street violence.

### **3.4 Forms of Indirect Violence Within the School**

When people write or talk about violence, they refer to those physical acts that result in deliberate injury to another human. However, Salmi (2006); Bush and Saltarelli (2000)

contend that violence is not only physical acts, but can be direct, indirect repressive and alienating. Indirect violence is a category where a perpetrator intends (or perpetrators intend) to harm another/others without the involvement of a direct relationship between the victim(s) and the individual/s responsible for their plight. Indirect violence consists of two sub-categories: violence by omission, and mediated violence. Violence by omission refers to failure or refusal to assist a person. This approach does not only apply to the lack of protection against physical violence, but also to lack of protection against social violence (such as hunger, disease, poverty), accidents, occupational and health situations, and against violence resulting from natural catastrophes (Salmi, 2006, p. 3).

When schools respond to violence in their environment, it is always to learners as perpetrators, even though sometimes teachers are also perpetrators. If for example, a child forces another to do his or her bidding, it is referred to extortion; when an adult does the same thing to a child, it is understood as correction. When a student hits another learner it is assault; when a teacher hits a learner is for the child's 'own benefit'. When a student embarrasses, ridicules or scorns another student it is harassment, bullying or teasing. When a teacher does it, it is sound instructional method (Harber, 2004).

Indirect violence is the indirect violation of the right to survival (Salmi, 2000). Indirect violence has two sub-categories, which are violence by omission and mediated violence. According to Salmi, 2000 and Harber, 2004 violence by omission or lack of protection against poverty, hunger, disease and accidents or catastrophes is mediated through harmful modifications to the environment, whilst mediated violence happens in a passive way. Mediated violence is the result of deliberate human interventions in the natural or social environment whose harmful effects are felt in an indirect and sometimes delayed manner. Examples of mediated violence are all forms of ecocide involving acts of destruction or damage against the natural environment, natural catastrophes or harmful modifications to the environment.

UNISA (2012, p.9) contends that about three quarters of the 4 150 schools included in a national survey in Brazil reported violent acts in that year. The investigation revealed that: i) the most frequent type of violence among learners was physical aggression (66%); ii) adult aggression towards children and adolescents was mostly verbal – i.e., the use of bad language (28%) and pejorative comments (20%); and iii) truancy and underachievement were caused by violence perpetrated in the family and community such as negligence, sexual exploitation and domestic labour (UNICEF, 2009). In a study by Williams (2009), trends show the increase of some serious bad behaviours for example, pushing and shoving a teacher, teachers witnessing a pupil in possession of a weapon in school, or sexual assault on a teacher. The study found that 11.6% of teachers reported unwanted physical contact on a weekly basis in 2008, 2.9% of the surveyed schools reported a member of staff being hit with a weapon or other object, stabbed or slashed, and 18.7% reported teachers being hit, punched or kicked in the last school year. Fourteen children aged five or under are suspended from primary schools in England every day for violence against teachers or other pupils (Williams, 2009). Primary school children are increasingly aggressive towards the school authorities and/or school structures. Ten children aged 4 and 12 were suspended for ‘sexual misconduct’. A survey by the Association for Teachers and Lecturers found that more than three-quarters of primary school teachers believed pupils were becoming more aggressive at an earlier age (Williams, 2009). In 2008-9, police were called to arson attacks in schools almost 3 000 times (Lipsett, 2009), and over 7 000 times to deal with violence in schools. It is not only pupils who perpetrate acts of violence: the study found that more than a third of the teachers (39%) had been confronted by an aggressive parent or guardian, and members of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) told of receiving death threats from families.

Implicit gender violence is popular in both developed and developing countries; for example, research has found high levels of verbal abuse in schools in Mauritius and Zimbabwe, especially among female teachers who are often reluctant to administer corporal punishment (Dunne et al., 2006). In Zimbabwe, some teachers view girls as less able academically, as lazy and as lacking in concentration. In this country verbal abuse is

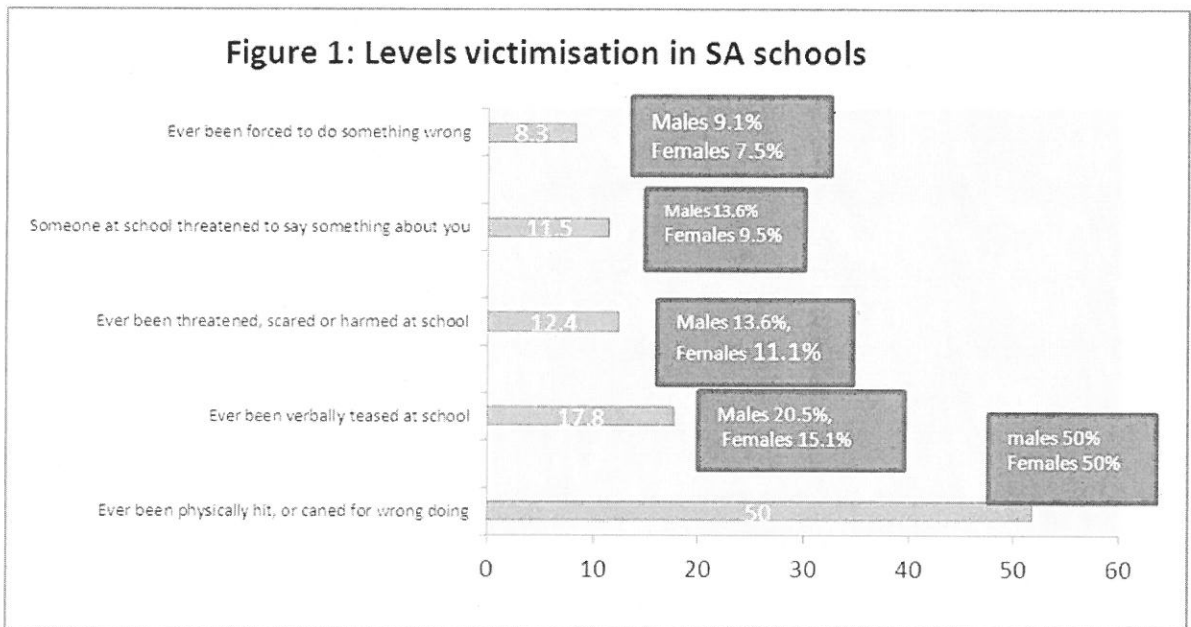
often used on a learner-to-learner basis; for example, boys use words such as ‘bitch’ or ‘prostitute’ to humiliate girls, and girls use the word ‘gay’ to humiliate boys (Dunne et al., 2006, p. 20). Research has also revealed how the norm of compulsory heterosexuality promoted in schools affects how both girls and boys play a role in enforcing the boundaries of acceptable gender identities and relations within the school by punishing transgression. Moreover, in many instances name-calling incidents go unreported because learners fear victimisation, punishment or ridicule; also, these incidents are ‘normalised’ and not recognised. In addition to insults and verbal abuse, theft of money, food or stationery has been reported in South African schools. The study conducted in South African schools revealed that not only the theft of money, food and stationery occurs in schools, but stealing of clothing during sport days (e.g., jerseys and shoes), vandalising of property (e.g., stationery) and writing of learners’ names with abusive messages on toilet walls are rife in South African schools as another form of implicit abuse (Haffejee, 2006).

Any child can be bullied, but some are more vulnerable to bullying than others. Many children are bullied because of one or a combination of the following reasons: their age – younger children are often picked on by older ones; their race and the colour of their skin – bias against minority and/or ethnic groups; how they look – fat, skinny, short or tall; their religion; ability – academically bright or struggling; early or late sexual development; the way they dress; how much money they have; and disabilities (UNESCO, 2010).

Furthermore, forms of misconduct in South African and Australian schools were reported in a qualitative study by Rossouw (2006) who contends that various forms of misconduct occurred in learner-on-teacher situations; in South Africa these were, inter alia, disruptive behaviour using cell phones, copying class mates’ homework, and/or homework not done. Disrespectful behaviour towards teachers also included refusal to keep quiet when teachers wanted to talk, tardiness, noisiness, name-calling and racist remarks. Among disobedient behaviours were disrespectful attitude towards peers, verbal assault on teachers, blatant insolence and humiliating remarks aimed at girls by boys. In Australia, misconduct

constituted classroom rules not followed, being unprepared, not learning, disruptive behaviour, truancy, not reporting for detention and leaving school premises without permission (Rossouw, 2006, p. 6).

Victimisation in South African schools has been evident recently. The study conducted by (Burton et al., (2009) in all nine provinces of South Africa reveals that learners are victimised in schools and outside the school premises in various ways. For example, they are: forced to do something wrong, threatened or harmed at school, and physically hit for wrong doings. Levels of victimisation in South African schools are depicted in the graph below:



*Figure 2: Victimisation in schools. Adapted from Center for Justice and Crime Prevention, 2009. This graph was revised by the author for this thesis.*

Indirect forms of violence in form of corporal punishment had been used for reasons entirely beyond the children's control, such as failure of parents to academic failure or to correct the behaviour (Pinheiro, 2006).

### *3.4.1 Bullying in Schools*

Bullies are found in most schools and communities. There has been a growing recognition of threat posed by bullying in schools to children's well-being and increasing body of literature examining its causes, prevalence and impacts on both victims and perpetrators (Pineiro, 2006). Various studies have defined bullying variably (Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, 2001; Farouk, 2005; CSV, 2010). Bullying is when someone is teased, called names, having their money taken, being beaten up, being left out (ostracised) and ignored, and other experiences of negative behaviours (Shekinah Care Foundation S.A.; Childline S.A.). Bullying is an offence, a violation of a child's right to physical and psychological safety. Greene (2006) defines school bullying as a concept which broadly involves the idea of repeated bullying of learners or harassment between peers (Greene, 2006). It implies the deliberate intention of a learner or group of learners to cause harm to one of their peers, an imbalance of forces and repetitive acts Greene (2008). Studies of violence have revealed that even in the most disciplined or positive schools, there may be isolated incidents of bullying. Both girls and boys can be bullied. Bullying has led to children committing suicide or dropping out of school because of the stress of being bullied Childline S.A.; Shekinah Care Foundation, S.A.).

The literature revealed how all bullying is sexual or gender-based and this has changed the manner in which bullying has been perceived, so that responses also target the pattern of bullying (Pineiro, 2006). Bulut and Gunduz (2012) added that that bullying finds no similarities with respect to gender. In bullying which targets the child's sex and sexuality, (Pineiro, 2006, p. 122) argues that teachers and other children commonly put pressure on children to make them conform to cultural values and social attitudes that define what it means to be 'masculine' or 'feminine'. A widespread method is to use words suggesting that a boy is acting like a girl or may be gay, and that a girl is acting like a boy or may be lesbian. Such words may be used jokingly, but nevertheless convey the message that it would be very bad or wrong if it were true. Such insults may be used maliciously, to

punish or bully children because they are 'too effeminate', 'too masculine', or known or suspected to be gay or lesbian, or else just different in other disapproved ways.

Media-related violence like showing private pictures over the internet and spreading rumours through cell phones – cyber-bullying, has been evident recently in schools. In one study in Canada, the WHO (2000) found that boys confessed to cyber-bullying more often than girls, and were also more frequently the victims of cyber-bullying. Something unique about cyber-bullying is that it allows perpetrators to remain anonymous, it allows for quick distribution and replication of messages, and it can turn masses of children into bystanders or witnesses of non-physical bullying of a highly malicious nature as perpetrators hide behind their anonymity (Pineiro, 2006, p. 123). The internet and mobile phones have provided new opportunities for bullying through e-mails, online chat lines, personal web pages, text messages, and transmission of images (WHO, 2000).

Violence on gays and lesbians is another emerging phenomenon in schools. Violence against gay and lesbian learners is a global challenge and occurs in countries like Brazil, the US, UK, France, Australia and New Zealand (Dunne et al., 2006). Studies in these countries have revealed a high prevalence of gender violence, including the murder of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people. Additionally, research surveys in Uganda on gender violence on gays and lesbians reported appalling criminal cases where gay learners were expelled from school on account of their sexual orientation. Homosexual learners are not only ostracised in schools, but the term 'homosexual' is used as a term of abuse for boys who refuse to have, or do not have, girlfriends. This is similar to the terms 'sissie' or 'moffie' used among mainly Afrikaans speaking South African youth.

Bulut and Gunduz (2012) revealed that gender distribution of the participants who regarded certain behaviours in schools as sexual harassment, like bullying and harassment, was not similar. They found that 67% mentioned that males committed shameful

behaviours in schools while 29% stated that females committed shameful behaviours in schools, and 54% stated that both males and females committed shameful behaviours in schools. Teasing as another form of bullying incorporates more behaviours such as humour or play, depending on the target's interpretation. An ideal definition of teasing accounts for how teasing can lead to both antisocial and pro-societal outcomes (Hatzichristou et al., 2012). According to children aged 12-17 in a recent survey carried out in schools in the UK, teasing and name calling are the behaviours most experienced. Furthermore, in study in the United States, the majority of learners reported that they sometimes or always struggled with classmates teasing them or arguing with them (Hatzichristou et al., 2012). Participants in the bullying process are those learners who provide social support for the bullies and may perpetuate such bullying behaviour (Demaray, Malecki and DeLong, 2006). It is therefore imperative that schools are alerted to the positive and the potentially negative impact of different kinds of social support of school violence and aggressive behaviour.

Research has demonstrated that victims themselves are a heterogeneous population with respect to stages of aggression and with aggressive and non-aggressive victims (DiGuardi and Theodore, 2006). Non-aggressive victims tend to be characterized as having submissive and passive behavioural styles and this category comprises the overwhelming majority of children that are bullied. Non-aggressive victims are also described as passive victims; these learners have a tendency to be anxious, sensitive, insecure and cautious. They are inclined to cry easily, are typically isolated or socially withdrawn, exhibit a low self-esteem and are usually without a single, reliable friendship among their classmates. The behaviour of passive victims often results in an emotional pay-off for the perpetrator (DiGuardi and Theodore, 2006, p. 341). In contrast, aggressive victims, who are also described as bully-victims or provocative victims, may be characterized as children who are impulsive with demonstrated low frustration levels. Bully victims are mostly disliked and ostracised by their peers, possibly due to their hostile, unpredictable and uncontrolled behaviour. Similar to the behaviour of passive victims, responses of aggressive victims often result in an emotional pay-off for the perpetrator. This pay-off appears in the form of

elevated emotional reactions and excessive hostile vengeance. Any child can be bullied, but some are more vulnerable to bullying than others. Many children are bullied because of one or a combination of the following reasons: their age – younger children are often picked on by older ones; their race – minority or ethnic groups; how they look – fat, skinny, short or tall; racial groupings; their religion; their ability – academically bright or struggling; early or late sexual development; the way they dress; how much money they have; disability; and so on (UNESCO, 2010).

Bullying gangs often become violent gangs that are involved in crime, so schools need to respond pro-actively to bullying to prevent it transforming into gangsterism. Research has shown that most children believe that when they report the bullying to a teacher, nothing is going to be done to stop the bullying. Teachers are compelled to eliminate bullying within school contexts. The following are some ideas to reduce bullying in schools: Set an example by treating all children with respect. A teacher should never pick on a physical characteristic or a difference when disciplining a child, for example, “*You giant boy, stop bullying young kids*”. Such utterances will negatively boost the bully’s ego in that he is termed as a giant and therefore superior in build to others. Teaching children to be assertive and boosting every child’s self-confidence will help them deal with bullies (Childline S.A., pp. 2-3).

### **3.4.2 *Learner Exclusion in Schools***

Suspensions and expulsions from school equate to school exclusion. School exclusion is an inclusive term to describe school discipline practices that remove learners from the school environment, such as suspension and expulsion (McIntosh et al., 2012). Suspension is defined as a temporary refusal of admission of a learner to a particular school while expulsion is the permanent refusal of admission of a learner to a particular school and/or hostel (Oosthuizen, 2007). In terms of section 9 (2) of the SA Schools Act (SA, 1996(c)), expulsion may only be done by the provincial head of department involved, while

suspension may only be done by the school governing body after the learner has been found guilty of serious misconduct at a fair hearing . If expulsion is a permanent refusal of admission, what impact does the decision of expelling learners from school have on the learners and parents? Is it good for an education system to expel a learner who is dangerous to the school? In terms of section 9 (2) of the SA Schools Act (1996(a)), such a recommendation has to be forwarded to the Head of the Provincial Department Basic of Education, who then has to decide on the expulsion (or not) of the learner after the learner has been found guilty of serious misconduct at a fair hearing (Oosthuizen, 2007). Learners have been suspended from schools for various offenses such as drug selling or possession, harassment, bullying and weaponry possession (Morrison et al., 2006). Oosthuizen et al. (2003) add that punitive measures like expulsion or suspension are not acceptable because these are procedures that violate learners' right to education or access to education.

McIntosh et al., (2012) contend that schools continue to exclude learners through suspensions and expulsions. On many occasions educational leaders exclude learners from their basic right to education through suspensions and expulsions. An amendment in the Basic Education Law, Amendment Act 2011, stipulates that subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, the governing body of a public school may, after a fair hearing, recommend to the local Ministry of Basic Education to suspend a learner from attending the school- (a) as a correctional measure for a period not longer than one week; or (b) pending a decision as to whether the learner is to be expelled from the school by the Head of Department. Section 9(2) of SASA (1996) stipulates that, subject to any applicable provincial law, a learner at a public school may be expelled only- by the Head of Department; and (c) if found guilty of serious misconduct after a fair hearing. Research studies illustrate that learners have been suspended from school for minor incidences of violence, as is witnessed in a study by McIntosh, Fisher, Kennedy, Craft, and Morrison (2012). McIntosh et al. (2012) assert that US statistics revealed that 7% of learners were suspended from school per year while 0.2% was expelled from school.

School expulsion often begins with an office discipline referrals (ODRs), but then continues with an additional form that is completed to document the offense warranting exclusion and intensify the consequence (e.g., number of days suspended and an indication of a zero tolerance offence). ODRs are forms used to document learner problem behaviour on school premises. Offenses leading to school exclusion are generally defined by the state or provincial education codes and most often include offenses such as possession or selling of drugs, possession of weaponry, physical harm to others, wilful disobedience, destruction of property, disruption of activities and threat of harm (Supra, p. 308) .

Schools are now prone to use school exclusion (in particular suspension) for less severe incidents, such as interpersonal difficulties with peers or adults at schools. Oosthuizen (2007) contends that the principal, staff member, disciplinary committee or the school's governing body (SGB) disciplining the learner must appropriately apply their minds to the duty at hand and ensure that decisions taken: are not decisions taken in bad faith (*male fide*); have been properly considered; are not based on irrelevant reasons; and are not a result of a failure to take into account all the relevant considerations.

Accordingly, discipline may take various forms ranging from a simple rebuke to expulsion from school (Bailey, 2006). Bailey further argues that schools may implement almost any reasonable method of discipline provided it is directed at controlling, training, or educating the learner. However, Bailey is quick to note that schools should endeavour to ensure their methods are not oppressive, arbitrary, or contrary to the law.

### **3.5 The Links Between School Culture and Violence**

Violence and crime in South African schools are critical problems and this country's schools are viewed as the most dangerous in the world (Barnes et al., 2012). Various studies revealed that poor school culture promotes school violence (Morrison, 2000; Barnes et al., 2012).

Numerous terms overlap and are used interchangeably by different researchers to describe this phenomenon of school culture. These terms include: school connectedness, school attachment, school bonding, school engagement, school climate, sense of belonging, and school involvement (Shochet and Smith, 2012, p. 476). The phenomenon of school connectedness refers to the interpersonal or affective aspects of the school environment, indicating the extent to which learners feel cared for within the school context (Shochet and Smith, 2012). Osher, Dwyer and Jimerson (2006) further contend that connectedness involves feelings of belonging at school, connection to learners, staff and parents in both classroom and at school, and a caring environment at school where learners who believe that they are cared for put more effort into their schooling, which in turn yields positive results. Furlong and Morrison (2000) view school violence as a multi-faceted construct that involves both criminal acts and aggression, which inhibit development and learning and also harm the school's climate. Failure to address the problem could adversely influence the learning and development of many learners.

Numerous studies have found an opposite association between school connectedness and engagement in violent behaviour (Shochet and Smith, 2012; Fong and Vogel, 2008; Wilson, 2004). Shochet and Smith (2012) reveal that in a national probability study of 14 738 learners in grades 7 to 12 in US schools, fewer learners with higher levels of school connectedness engaged in violent behaviour a year later, compared with learners with lower levels of school connectedness.

A 'safe school' is described as a place where the school climate allows learners, teachers, administrators, parents and visitors to communicate with one another in a positive and non-threatening manner (Barnes et al., 2012). These authors conducted a study entitled "The influence of school culture and school climate on violence in schools of the Eastern Cape Province" where 30 schools in the Eastern Cape Province that teach grades 10 to 12 were the sample of the study. The findings of this Eastern Cape study revealed that all the school culture and school climate scales showed a negative correlation with the violence scales.

The conclusion was reached that the Eastern Cape schools were relatively safe places. It follows that, the better the school culture and school climate at the school, the lower the levels of school violence, while the lack of school safety contributes to learners experiencing higher levels of violence in schools (Barnes et al., 2012).

A study by O'Malley, Katz, Renshaw and Furlong (2012, pp. 321-322) in New York schools, provides a summary of findings on school climate on three school domains. In the first domain, which is learner outcomes, the study suggests that learners who have positive perceptions of their school environment/school climate are more likely to enjoy school, perform well academically, have positive peer relationships, and act and feel safer than learners who have negative or neutral perceptions of their school climate. In the second domain – staff outcomes - O'Malley et al. argue that a positive perception of school climate is associated with teacher effectiveness and increased teacher retention. Evidence suggests that perceptions of positive school climate influence teacher practices that are likely to influence positive psychosocial outcomes for their learners. Lastly, in the school safety outcomes domain, poor perceptions of school climate are associated with risk taking and violent behaviours among learners as well as reduced feelings of safety. The findings by O'Malley et al. (2012) revealed that both learners and teachers were reported to be involved in various misconducts including taking of drugs by learners, bunking of classes by both teachers and learners, and carrying of weapons.

In another study which consisted of 23 schools in each of the nine provinces of South Africa, 14 776 learners were sampled, the quantitative report revealed the following statistical data pertaining to learners and school culture: 17% carried weapons in schools; 41% were bullied; 14% belonged to gangs; 15% had been forced to have sex; another 15% had been threatened or injured on school property; 19% had been injured in fights; and 32% felt unsafe at school (Wilson, 2006). Furlong and Morrison (2000) further attest that 8.2% in their urban sample of learners had carried weapons, both in schools and outside the school premises, and that they had stolen from other learners.

to create “harmony” within a nation of divergent peoples. Public schooling is viewed as an investment in a social contract the benefits of which are believed to accrue not only to the individual who experiences schooling but also, and perhaps more importantly, to the wider society. The challenge of education in many countries is to aim at maintaining peace within their own borders, while fostering tolerance of their divergent neighbours (Supra, 2000).

### **3.7 Initiatives to Mitigate School Violence**

Schools can serve as ideal settings to organise efforts against the increasing problems of children and youth who display antisocial behaviour patterns (Sprague and Horner, 2012). Research strongly suggests that if schools raise their level of achievement, behaviour decreases; and if schools work to decrease behaviour problems, academics improve (Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbot and Hill, 1999). Sprague and Horner (2012), Greene (2008) and CSVR (2010) contend that there is no single intervention strategy which could be viewed as a panacea of all the behavioural challenges in schools. This is because learner behaviour is complex and influenced by many variables within the school, within the family/community and within the psyche of the learner.

Countries have made some progress in addressing school violence. Solutions to mitigate school violence have increased during the last two decades, ranging from managing conflicts in the classroom to the deployment of national or federal programmes or even government plans, from establishing policy to the creation of experimental schools, from team work to school-police-justice partnerships, from citizenship to laws, and so on (Cecile, 2007).

Pinheiro (2006) asserts that good teacher recruitment and training (including training for non-violence) should be the basis of any country’s long-term and comprehensive strategy

to reduce violence in schools and to the community as a whole. He added that involving children and implementing programmes is imperative in building knowledge, attitudes and skills, ensuring programme relevance and ownership. In Zambia the Child's Rights clubs empowered Zambia's school children the Zambia Civic Right Association (ZCEA) which aims to promote and protect children's rights through civic education (Supra, 2006).

Research in USA suggests that the best initiatives is mainly those in which teachers and learners work together on developing and implementing strategies to enhance school safety for everyone (International Save the Children Alliance, 2005). Peer mediation and peer counselling are the most effective examples used in USA. Many countries, including South Africa (through the use of School Governing Bodies) have a tradition of involving parents and communities in school life (Pinheiro, 2006). In North America, there is a long tradition of Parent-Teachers' Association (PTAs) – which enables parents to monitor schools and intervene as they see feet. While in Mexico children are involved in the project called “Combating Violence: Education for Peace – For Me, You and the Entire World. The project consists of training workshops that build the capacity of school administrators, teachers, learners and parents to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner. In Nepal, girls take action to end sexual harassment.

Given the potential for abuse within the school context, many educational authorities in both the developed and developing world have put in place policies to control excessive punishment of children, to restrict the legitimated disciplinary sanctions available and to stop aggravated attacks on schools and learners with the ultimate goal of mitigating violence in schools (Dunne et al., 2006). In a study conducted by Bickmore (1997) in Australia, it was revealed that schools can play a vital role in helping diverse young people see themselves as citizens by internalising skills, norms and roles for managing personal and social conflict. Bickmore (1997) further argues that it is unfortunate that teachers do not agree on the importance of such citizenship education for peace, never mind on how to do it. This researcher concurs with Bickmore because I have observed the unwillingness

and lack of readiness of teachers to instil a sense of peace in schools. Conversely, the South African Ministry of Basic Education has a view similar to that of Bickmore about its teachers at school level. In my view, the South African Ministry of Education does much to overtly infuse a 'hidden' curriculum within the curriculum which will teach learners at an early age about the importance of civic, social and political education. Civic, social and political education, according to the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA), aims to prepare learners for active participatory citizenship. This should be achieved through comprehensive exploration of civic, social and political dimensions of their lives at a time when pupils are developing from dependent children into independent young adults. It should produce knowledgeable pupils that can explore, analyse and evaluate, who are skilled and practised in moral and critical appraisal, and capable of making decisions and judgments through reflective citizenship based on human rights and social responsibilities. Such pupils should be better prepared for living in a world where traditional structures and values are being challenged and where pupils are being confronted with conflicting interests, impermanent structures and constant questioning (National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA), I'm in support of the initiatives by the Ministry of Education for infusion of hidden curriculum with the schools' curriculum. However, the problem exists in the training, attitudes and academic will of teachers. Despite all these efforts by school authorities, government bodies and other anti-violence organisations, however, the acts of school violence and violence itself have alarmingly proliferated.

One of the important functions of examining school violence in various countries is to engage in cross-country comparisons. Such comparative data could be utilised to facilitate a perspective on how extreme the school safety situation is in a given country and in which countries the situation is less severe than others (Benbenishty and Astor, 2008). According to research studies, cross-country comparisons facilitate policy creation surrounding school violence in specific countries. In Israel, the findings of comparative international studies have been used to dramatize the situation (Benbenishty and Astor, 2008). As part of the initiative to dramatise the phenomenon of school violence, a series of reports on youth violence was published on the front page of the largest daily newspaper. The reports were

presented in charts of data depicting Israeli learners as victims of high levels of bullying compared with the rest of the world. It was noted that this greater awareness helped mobilize the government, teacher organisations and government committees to create policy and training and intervention strategies designed to reduce Israel's prevalence rates of school violence. Another study by Benbenishty and Astor (2008) revealed that comparisons of cross-cultural/country studies have a strong impact on the public within those countries.

Additionally, Bickmore (1997) argues that powerful absences of action and silences related to particular school activities leave certain matters unquestioned and leave certain citizens uninvolved and unheard. Again, I agree with Bickmore about absences from and silences about school activities. One reason is that most South African schools refrain from engaging their learners in extramural activities as teachers are bogged down with extra paper work. They are suffocating and can no longer 'think outside the box' to find strategies to offer learners opportunities to engage in learning activities other than formal situations. Learners are left to figure out what to do to keep themselves busy and out of the misery of worrying about coping with school work all the time. Globally, schools and departments of education have embarked on various cultural and policy programs to mitigate violence in schools. Education has a potential in combating poverty, empowering women, protecting children from hazardous and exploitative labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and influencing population growth. Education is a path towards international peace and security (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

In Chapter 3 I presented the literature reviewed in local and international studies pertaining to this study. Research has revealed that violence is divided into various categories. These include: indirect violence, mediated violence, repressive violence and alienating violence

or the deprivation of higher rights. Violence experienced by learners within schools is distinctly different for girls and boys. All four kinds of violence can be found in formal schooling contexts. For example, girls are the victims of rape, harassment and sexual assault, whereas boys are mostly the victims of assault and bullying and male learners who are suspected of being homosexual are also beaten and abused by their male counterparts. Not only girls are the victims of sexual harassment, but boys are also subjected to sexual harassment. In Pakistan it was reported that some boys are enrolled in girls' schools because families believe that female teachers are "less likely to be sexually abusive or violent".

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 4 I present the research methodologies employed to gather and analyse data. The focus of the study was to gain an understanding on how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status shape violence production within schools with regard to learner-on-learner violence. To achieve this goal, I opted to use a qualitative methodology in the data generation process. Qualitative approaches understand actions and institutions as social constructions rather than the products of external factors which mould people in ways that can be envisaged (Redebe, 2010). This research approach strives to comprehend a phenomenon from the viewpoint of the research participants and endeavours to understand the meanings people give to their experiences. I also opted for a qualitative approach as I sought to understand my research participants from their own frames of reference in the context of the dynamics of school violence.

#### **4.2 Research Approach: Case Study**

I opted for a case study design in this research as it enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation of and meaning for those involved, namely teachers, learners, school governors and support staff. This approach is in line with the approach posited by Henning et al. (2010) as they contend that a case study design enables one to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning for those involved in the research. A case study is regarded as an exploration or an in-depth analysis of a 'bounded system' (i.e., a system bounded by time and/or place, or a single or a multiple case, over a period of time). This study followed an in-depth approach using multiple cases as it involved two schools (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche', and Delpont, 2010).

Conducting a case study is one type of interpretive research design which involves the intensive study of an individual or a group as an entity using interviews, observations and document reviews (Cohen, Manion and Morisson, 2007). For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews, observations, documentation reviews and reflective journals were used.

The researcher used a sample of two schools with their selected target population as case studies in order to obtain detailed information to address the research questions and objectives. Denscombe (1998) contends that the case study occurs in a natural setting where the researcher is able to use a variety of resources and a variety of methods; it is an in-depth study. In line with that, this study was conducted in two schools as natural contexts where participants were interviewed and observed.

#### **4.3 Sampling Plan and its Description**

The methodological approach used in this study is informed by the theoretical frameworks of Discipline and Punish theory (Foucault, 1975) which proposes that organisations like factories, schools and hospitals resemble prisons (Giddens, 1997). It is thus hypothesised that schools have become one of the new organisations of social control along with prisons, hospitals and factories as they use continual surveillance to in order to avoid social fragmentation and to create order and docility (Harber, 2002). It is envisaged that an exploration of this theory and its application in the schools under study will provide insights into the shared views of school communities about violence in schools which will, in turn, result in better ways of understanding the causes of school violence and its mitigation strategies.

#### ***4.3.1 Target Population of the Study***

Population is a term that sets the boundaries of the study units. It refers to individuals in a universe who possesses specific characteristics relevant to the study in question (de Vos et al., 2010). In this study two secondary schools were selected as a study population sample.

The criteria for the selection of these particular schools were based on anecdotal evidence of violence incidences. The anecdotal evidence included various media reports and conversations with critical friends. In this study critical friends were teachers, principals, ward managers and school governors.

#### ***4.3.2 Relevance of Participating Schools***

The schools were chosen on the basis that they were ‘violent schools’ – i.e., schools where acts of violence occurred on a regular basis. Most of the perused media reports made mention of such schools. Based on these criteria, all identified schools were shortlisted and the two most convenient schools in terms of access and proximity were selected.

### **4.4 Sampling**

Sampling means taking any portion of a population as representative of that population (de vos et al., 2010). For the case study approach, the population sample of this study included selected learners, teachers, school governors and support staff within the total population of the two selected schools. The sample comprised of the following per school:

- a) **Learners:** Ten 14-year-old learners per school were used in this study. The first phase comprised of two focus groups of learners which included five perpetrators and five victims of violence. The second phase comprised of one-on-one individual interviews with four learners (i.e. two victims and two perpetrators per school) who had been affected by violence and who had perpetrated violence. Names of learners

answering the criteria of victim and perpetrator were given by teachers to me and the names of the learners selected for the study were randomly picked from a hat.

- b) **Teachers:** A purposive sample of two teachers (i.e., the school principal and the Grade 9 Life Orientation (LO) teacher) resulted in the sample for this category per school.
- c) Informal interviews with two **teachers** were held. This was in a form of informal conversations. The names of the teachers were randomly selected from a staff list.
- d) **School governing body (SGB):** A purposive sample of two representatives of the school governing bodies (the chair of school governors and the chair of the school's discipline, safety and security committee - SDSSC).
- e) **Support staff:** A purposive sample resulted in the selection of two support staff members (i.e., a security guard and a general assistant) in each school. The reason for their inclusion in the study was that a security guard is exposed to what is happening within the schools premises and also on the perimeter of the school. The cleaner was interviewed because a person in this position has free access to areas like the learners' bathrooms where teachers and other staff members do not necessarily go. Also, the literature review prompted this decision as it was revealed that toilets are areas within schools where acts of violence are prevalent.

#### 4.5 Data Collection Plan

The purpose of this study was to explore how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status shape violence production in schools. Through the use of multiple methods - that is, semi-structured interviews, observations, documentation reviews and reflective journals - this study aimed at addressing the following critical questions:

- a) What are the perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, school governors and support staff of school violence?
- b) How do wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status shape violence production within schools?

- c) How do policies, measures and initiatives taken by school governors promote a violence-free school environment?

**Table 4.1: Data Collection Plan**

Where were the data captured?	Semi-structured interviews with the participants were conducted in two selected schools in Umlazi township, Durban. Participating teachers were interviewed in the staff room, an office, a vacant classroom, their home or, alternatively, they were taken out to a coffee shop where the interview was conducted in a less formal environment. Focus group interviews were conducted in available classrooms in the schools. Observations of selected learners also took place in classrooms and on the school premises. Learners were allowed time to write in the reflective journals to record their experiences of school violence. The review of the copies of the documentation that had been requested and received was done at home.
Why were data collected?	Data were collected to fulfil the three basic objectives of this study: Firstly, to elicit the perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, school governors and support staff about school violence; secondly, to explore how wider social structures such as the gender, age and socio-economic status shape violence production within schools; thirdly, to identify measures and initiatives that are taken by schools to promote a violence-free or secure environment in the school to protect learners against harm.
What research strategy was followed?	To address question one, which states: What are the perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, school governors and support staff of school violence?, one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, the Life Orientation teacher, two other teachers, a School Governing Body (SGB) chair, the Discipline and

	<p>Safety and Security committee (SDSSC) chair, two learners, and a support staff member per school.</p> <p>Discussions with a focus group consisting of learner perpetrators and learner victims per school further addressed question number one</p> <p>To address question two, which states: How do wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status shape violence production within schools?, one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, an LO teacher, an SGB chair, an SDSSC chair, and two learners per school.</p> <p>One-on-one semi-structured interviews with a principal, an LO teacher and the SDSSC chair were conducted to address question three.</p> <p>Additionally, observations and reflective journal schedules engaging two teachers and two learners were used to address questions one and two.</p>
<p>Who were sources of data?</p>	<p>The sample was selected (purposive sampling) from the populations of two violence torn schools in Umlazi, Durban.</p> <p>The sample of the entire selected school community was used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the following participants: two teachers, two learners, the chair of the SDSSC, the chair of the school governing body, and two support staff members of each school?</p> <p>Two focus groups of five learner victims and five learner perpetrators were interviewed per school.</p> <p>Two life orientation teachers and two learners were provided with A5 journal books to reflect on their experiences, perceptions and emotions about school violence. Observations were made of those learners identified by the school as problematic and those who had been victims of violence in both formal and informal settings over a three-month</p>

	<p>period.</p> <p>The documents that were requested from each participating school were: the code of conduct, the misconduct record book, disciplinary hearing minutes by the Disciplinary Committee of the Governing Body for suspension and expulsion cases, class discipline or misconduct record books, the ground duty record book of incidents, and the correspondence file with copies of letters to parents whose children had been involved in incidents of violence.</p>
How many of the data sources were accessed?	One principal, six teachers, ten learners, the chairperson of the school Governing Body, the chairperson of a SDSSC, and two support staff members were accessed as data sources from each participating school.
How often were the data captured?	Two meetings of 40 to 50 minutes were conducted with the principal of each school. Two focus group interviews of 40 to 60 minutes each were conducted with the learners. Lastly, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the LO teachers, two representatives of the SGB, randomly selected teachers and two support staff members.
Why semi-structured interviews, observations, documentation reviews and reflective journals?	The purpose of using interviews was to gain a detailed picture of participants' beliefs or perceptions about a particular topic (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2010). Interviews may be used in two ways: either they may be a dominant strategy for data collection, or they may be used in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or other techniques (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). In this study, semi-structured interviews were used in conjunction with observations, documentation analysis and reflective journals in order to obtain complement data from the focus groups and the individual interviews.
How were the data collected?	Data were collected by means of multi-methods which were: semi-structured interviews, observations of learners, and the perusal of

	<p>school documents and reflective journals. During the interviews a voice recorder was used with the participants' permission to supplement transcripts taken during the interviews.</p>
<p>Was there justification for this plan for data collection?</p>	<p>Justification for inclusion of the participating participants was as follows:</p> <p>Participants:</p> <p><i>14-year-old learners: (Grade 8)</i> – Children in this young age group are vulnerable to violence as they are new in the high school.</p> <p><i>Life Orientation teachers</i> – They are learner counsellors and often deal with experiences of violence among learners. Also, they teach the LO curriculum which embraces the principles of good citizenship as proposed by the Department of Basic Education.</p> <p><i>The Principal</i> – This person is in a key position of school management learner welfare and keeps records of discipline/violence.</p> <p><i>SGB representatives (chair of the SDSSC, and chair of the SGB)</i> – Persons in these positions deal with the issue of safety and security in schools and they form part of the school management structure that conducts disciplinary hearings of deviant learners.</p> <p><i>Support staff: Cleaners</i> – These persons are exposed to areas of the school other than classrooms, e.g., toilets, where it is believed that acts of violence occur most often.</p> <p><i>Support staff: Security guards</i> – These persons are exposed to both the inner and outside environment of the school and often have a view of the perimeter fence of the premises.</p> <p>Instruments:</p> <p><i>Interviews with focus groups:</i> Focus group interviews served as a catalyst to procure information.</p> <p><i>The voice recorder:</i> The use of a voice recorder during interviews was supplemented by notes taken during this process. It further served to</p>

	<p>ensure participants that their words could not be twisted or misunderstood. Conversely, some interviewees might have been wary of what they said as there would be a record of their comments.</p> <p><i>Reflective journals:</i> These written records allowed learners and teachers to freely record their experiences, perceptions and emotions about school violence.</p> <p><i>Documentation reviews:</i> The availability of relevant documents provided an official record of incidences of deviant behaviour and the steps taken to circumvent violent acts.</p>
--	---

**4.6 Research Paradigms**

A research paradigm guides the process of inquiry and forms the basis for the practice of science by directing the researcher towards appropriate research methods and methodologies, depending on the nature of the phenomenon being investigated (Kuhn, 1970). According to Creswell (2007), a paradigm or worldview is a basic set of beliefs that guides action. There are four different approaches or paradigms according to Creswell, 2007; Denscombe, 2010; de Vos et al., (2010). The researcher is of the opinion that all four paradigms should be explored in brief. These paradigms as described by Creswell (2007) and Denscombe (2010) are briefly discussed below:

**Positivism:** This approach centres on ideas generated by the use of scientific research as an absolute truth to gain knowledge; it regards observation and measurement as the only way to gain knowledge.

**Interpretivism/constructivism:** This approach is a social creation constructed in the minds of people and reinforced through their interactions with each other. Henning, et al., (2010)

assert that interpretive theory of knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding.

**Critical realism:** This approach asserts its ideas by transforming the positivism approach and centres ideas by use of scientific methods only. Critical realism has abandoned an exclusive preference for scientific methods as the only way to discover how the social world works and accepts that there are inevitable limits for social researchers to discover the "true reality" of the social world they live in.

**Pragmatism:** This approach judges approaches to research in terms of "the practical outcomes of their use". Pragmatism is sceptical about the philosophical debates between positivism, interpretivism and critical realism and regards these debates as unproductive. Instead, pragmatism takes the research problem as its starting point and it gauges the value of any particular approach or method in terms of how well the outcomes work in practice.

Depending on one's ontological and epistemological stances, research could be quantitative or qualitative or it can fall in between (Ndengu, 2009). In a quantitative study the focus is on control of all the components in the actions and representations of the participants (variables) are controlled and the study is guided with an acute focus on how variables are related (Henning, et al. 2010). In a qualitative study the participants are usually not controlled because it is exactly this freedom and natural development of action and representation that researchers wish to capture (de Vos et al., 2010; Henning, et al. 2010). Positivists tend to use a quantitative approach while constructivists use a qualitative approach. This study is located within the interpretive or constructivist paradigm. Interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with meaning and it seeks to understand social members' descriptions and understanding of the situations they find themselves in (Denscombe, 2010).

In this study, the interpretive research approach explored how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status (SES) shape violence production in schools. Within this paradigm, a qualitative methodology was used which included one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, observation schedules, reflective journals and documentation analysis.

**Ontology:** Interpretive researchers hold that reality is socially constructed (Mertens, 2009). The fact that reality is socially constructed implies that there are various ways of seeing the social world; in fact, perceptions may never stay the same (Mertens, 1998). Denscombe (2010) and Mertens (2009) contend that there is no objective reality that can be known, but there are multiple realities. Robson (2002) argues that because of multiple realities, it is therefore not possible to fully establish research questions beforehand. Thus in this study it was accepted that the research questions might change during the interviewing process while the objectives of the study remained unchanged. The same concept has been explained differently by different people. For example, the concepts of minority, feminism and disability are socially constructed and will therefore offer different meanings to different people (Mertens, 1998). A typical example in this study is the use of corporal punishment by teachers which can be justified as a means to instil discipline and order among learners, whereas on the other hand it is also viewed as another means of physical assaults to the young and defenceless children. No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner. Any person who contravenes this is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault (SASA, 1996). Also, beating in love affairs can be justified by some as acceptable as it may imply 'true love', whereas many view a beating as abusive and cruel.

**Epistemology:** The constructivist approach does not concern itself with research for broadly applicable laws and rules, but rather seeks to produce descriptive analyses that give emphasis to deep, interpretive understanding of social phenomena (Henning et al.,

2010; Cohen and Manion, 1994). This ties in well with this study, as I sought to explore how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status (SES) shape violence production in schools. Interpretive researchers, as opposed to positivists who believe that the researcher and the researched person are independent of each other, believe that the inquirer and the inquired person influence each other (Robson, 2002). On the basis that the researcher and the researched influence each other, the constructivists will opt for a more personal, interactive mode of collecting data (Mertens, 1998).

Methods: Methods widely used by constructivist researchers in collecting data are observations, semi-structured interviews and document reviews (Henning et al., 2010; Mertens, 1998; Cohen and Manion, 1994). Thus in this study the methods of collecting data were semi-structured interviews, observations, documentation reviews and reflective journals.

#### **4.7 The Study Context**

Two secondary schools were the study context of the study. The schools were selected on the basis that they were violent schools. Based on the criteria, all identified schools were shortlisted and the two most convenient schools in terms of access and proximity were selected. It is important to note that where asterisk (\*) sign has been used in this study reflects the pseudo names of people or schools.

*Lioness Secondary School\** is a co-educational urban school offering academic learning areas which is attended by African learners. The school is in the township area of Umlazi, Durban, with 403 learners enrolled in 2011 and 22 staff members (11 male teachers and 11 female teachers). The school was established in 1990 and comprises the following facilities other than classrooms and administrative offices: 1 computer lab, 1 library, 1 home economics room, 1 biology laboratory and 1 multi-purpose room. The school is

comparatively resourced in terms of building structures and the school buildings are well maintained, in particular those that are in use. Lioness Secondary has a number of vacant classrooms due to ever decreasing number of learners. The school is situated in a lower- to middle income (middle class<sup>1</sup>), residential area in Umlazi Township but it is not far from a semi-rural area adjoining the township boundaries. These middle class residents prefer to take their children to the so-called multi-racial schools rather than utilizing the schools in their communities. In South Africa the black middle class was drawn heavily upon both neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian traditions. A Neo-Marxist approach was primarily orientated towards determining the political orientation of black middle class towards defeat for apartheid; and the neo-Weberian approach was orientated towards black middle class as simultaneously an instrument and outcome of the modernization and growth of the economy (Southall, 1980; Rivero, Toit, and Kotze, 2003).

Learners in the school are ethnically homogeneous as they speak isiZulu and most parents are originally from the neighbouring semi-homelands. The surrounding community appears relatively wealthy but it is known that inhabitants from some households not far from the school are drug traffickers. Thirty five percent of the learners are certified for fee exemption as parents and/or guardians are unable to pay the prescribed school fee.

*Scooby Secondary School\** is a co-educational urban school offering academic learning areas and is attended by African learners only. The school is also located within the Umlazi township with a total of 1 016 learners per annum with 36 staff members (22 females and 14 males). The school was established in 1963 and comprises, apart from classrooms and administrative facilities, the following buildings: 1 computer lab, 1 library, 1 home economics kitchen, and 1 science laboratory. The school buildings are noticeably old but well maintained with burglar guards on some windows. Learners in the school are ethnically homogeneous and speak isiZulu. The local community consists of a reasonable

---

<sup>1</sup> This is social group between the upper and the working classes (Southall, 1980).

number of working-class families, but unemployment in the area is rife. The surrounding community makes use of a large number of shebeens (informal 'pubs') situated in the area and a high number of gangster groupings occur. Thirty percent of the learners are certified for fee exemption as parents and/or guardians are unable to pay a school fee.

#### **4.8 Research Methods and Instruments**

The study employed a multi-methods approach in collecting and analyzing the data. Methods used in this study were semi-structured interviews, observations, documentation reviews and reflective journals. Cohen and Manion (1994) argue that the use of the multi-method approach or triangular approach in social research comes with a number of advantages. One could be that it helps to circumvent the problem of *method-boundedness*, as best articulated. Method-boundedness, according to Cohen and Manion (1994), refers to the situation where researchers will selectively apply one method all the time, either because that is the only one they are familiar with, or they believe their method is superior to others.

A summary of the participants is presented below:

**Table 4.2: Summary of participants**

<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Scooby Secondary</b>	<b>Lioness Secondary</b>	<b>Total Case Study Participants</b>
Semi-structured interviews (one-on-one interviews) per school.	1 Principal, 2 LO teachers, 1 SGB chair, 1 SDSSC chair, 2 support staff members (cleaner and security guard), and 4 learners (2 victims of violence and 2 perpetrators of violence) per school.	11	11	22
Focus group interviews	5 learner victims and 5 learner perpetrators per school.	2 focus groups (5+5)	2 focus groups (5+5)	4 Focus groups
Observation schedules Conducted by researcher	1 learner victim and 1 learner perpetrator of violence were observed per school. Also general observation of the school buildings	2	2	4
Reflective Journals	2 Life Orientation teachers and 2 learners - victims only) per school.	4	4	8
Informal interviews Conducted by researcher	With 2 other teachers per school.	2	2	4
Documentation reviews conducted by researcher	(The followings documents were requested from each school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• code of conduct</li> <li>• misconduct record book</li> </ul>	6 documents	6 documents	12

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disciplinary hearing minutes by the Disciplinary Committee of the Governing Body for suspension and expulsion cases</li> <li>• class discipline or misconduct record books</li> <li>• grounds duty record books of incidents</li> <li>• correspondence file of letters to parents whose children had been involved in incidents of violence</li> </ul>			
Total number of individual one-on-one interviews				32 individual interviews
Total number of focus groups				4 focus groups

The following tools utilised for data collection are briefly analysed in the next section: semi-structured interviews, observations, documentation reviews and reflective journals.

#### 4.8.1 *Semi-Structured Interviews*

The purpose of using interviews is to gain a detailed picture of participants' beliefs or perceptions about a particular topic (de Vos et al., 2010). Arskey and Knight (1999) and de Vos et al. (2010) suggest that qualitative interviews are a means to unearthing and

exploring the meanings that underpin people's lives, routines, feelings, behaviours, and so on. They contend that the application of semi-structured interviews carries more weight than using questionnaires only, in that the presence of the interviewer encourages participation and involvement of the interviewee. Interviews may be used in two ways: they may either be a dominant strategy for data collection or they may be used in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis or other techniques (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). In this study, semi-structured interviews were used in conjunction with observations, reflective journals and documentation analysis to collaborate data from the focus groups and individual interviews. Interview questions should be open-ended and elucidative rather than providing pre-conceived categories.

Semi-structured interviews come with a set of advantages, for example: i) information that is not likely to emerge in the one-on-one interview is more likely to come out in focus groups, because group dynamics can be a catalyst in bringing information to the fore (De Vos et al., 2010, p. 286), and ii) during the interviewing process, the interviewer can clarify questions where necessary. Moreover, the presence of the interviewer encourages participation and involvement. An interview is a flexible way of finding things out (Robson, 2002).

A common pitfall, which is the time consuming nature of the interview, has been experienced in the execution of this study (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont, 2010). All interviews require careful preparation such as making arrangements for visits; securing necessary permissions; confirming appointments and, at times, rescheduling appointments to cover absences and sudden crises; writing up and transcribing notes; and transcribing tape recordings (Robson, 2002; de Vos et al., 2010). In this study I conducted semi-structured interviews on a one-on-one basis as well as focus group interviews as I was particularly interested in the complexity and processes of participants' insights about the issues of school violence (de Vos et al., 2010). The semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with participants as set out above.

The purpose of engaging in one-on-one interviews was neither to obtain answers to questions nor to test the hypotheses or to evaluate responses in the usual way, but rather to capture the underlying factors that would generate understanding of the experiences of the target population and the meaning they made of their experiences of violence (de Vos et al., 2010).

#### **4.8.2 Observations**

One method of collecting data is by observing people, most typically in a natural setting (Adler and Clark, 2008). In line with Adler and Clark's (2008) suggestions, observations of learners were conducted in their respective schools during school hours. Observations of those learners identified by the school as problematic were conducted in both formal and informal settings over a three-month period. In this study two learners (i.e. learner victims and learner perpetrator of violence) were observed in each school, in total four learners were observed.

Cognisance was taken of the fact that there are a number of advantages and pitfalls in using observations when conducting research. Some advantages include: the observations are a direct technique of collecting data in that the researcher is not required to ask people questions, but he/she only listens to what participants say and watch what they do (Robson, 2002). One pitfall is that observations are time-consuming (Mertens, 1998; Denscombe, 2010). During my observations I used different strategies. For example, I followed the learners in the same class around for a whole day or week to observe their behaviour with different teachers or to observe a class at different time points. I also 'hung around' with learners outside the classrooms, where possible, to observe if discussions about school violence would emerge. Such talks would elicit different perspectives on the events. Additionally, the schools buildings, teachers and the school environment were observed. Within the school buildings the following were observed: vandalism in classes, evidence of burglary, graffiti on the walls, signage and the neatness

of the buildings and gardens. In the category “school environment” my observation was focused on daily occurrences to determine the presence or absence of: unruly classes, punctuality of learners and teachers, use of corporal punishment, carrying of weapons, violence during breaks, games played, entrance to and exit from the school premises (that is, security gate with alarm system, visiting parents, teacher support for visiting parents), gates locked - during and after school hours - fencing, surveillance cameras, police patrols, guard patrol while equipped with cell-phone or radio, and weapons searching.

#### ***4.8.3 Documentation Reviews***

The documents that were requested from each participating school were: code of conduct, misconduct record book, disciplinary hearing minutes by the Disciplinary Committee of the Governing Body for suspension and expulsion cases, class discipline or misconduct record books, ground duty record books of incidents, correspondence files of letters to parents whose children had been involved in incidents of violence. These documents are of private nature and for this reason they were treated with the utmost care and with full ethical implications in mind. These documents were used to see the connection between them and the research questions.

The data from all the available sources that were utilised during the research process were incorporated and gathered to conclude the data collection stage. In this study documents received were compared with the data received from the interview schedules to validate the authenticity of data received from spoken words and documented facts. This was in line with Denscombe (2010), who contends that data from all sources that were used during research process should be integrated and collated to conclude the data collection stage.

Document reviews have advantages and disadvantages. Some of the advantages are that document review encourages the skill and creativity on the part of the researcher (Robson, 2002). A great pitfall of document review, however, is that documents are silent; they do

not speak to give the researcher an exact interpretation of what s/he is seeking (de Vos et al., 2010).

#### **4.8.4. Reflective Journals**

Learners who formed the focus group in each school were provided with an A5 journal book in which they were requested to reflect on their experiences, feelings and emotions of violence. Learners were requested and advised to keep their journals books safely with them and to use them every afternoon as part of their school homework in order reflect on the experiences of each day that pertains to violence. Learners were cautiously reminded twice a week to use their journal books and to keep them safely to avoid interference.

Two Life Orientation teachers who taught Grade 9 classes in each school were also issued with an A5 journal book with the same request.

### **4.9 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (de Vos et al., 2010; Henning et al., 2010). It is often a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, yet creative and fascinating process which does not proceed in a linear fashion but in a spiral format; more often than not this process is not 'tidy' at all (de Vos et al., 2010).

In this study the qualitative data consisted of notes and transcripts taken during the interviews as well as observation schedules and reflective journals. This wealth of data was transcribed and analysed according to phenomenological steps (de Vos et al., 2010, pp. 334-339) as follows:

- a) Planning for recording of data: I carefully planned to record the data in a systematic manner that would be appropriate to both the school setting and the participants.

This planning process ensured that data analysis would be facilitated even before data collection commenced. The plan ensured that data collection would be done without intruding excessively on the ongoing flow of the daily activities of the schools.

- b) Data collection and preliminary analyses: This was a twofold approach. The first aspect involved data analysis at the research site during data collection. The second aspect involved data analysis away from site following a period of data collection. Traditional studies separate data collection from data analysis; however, a qualitative study involves an inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis. This is so because it is assumed that the human instrument is capable of ongoing fine-tuning in order to generate the most fertile range of data. Data collection and analysis thus go hand in hand in order to build a coherent interpretation of data.
- c) Managing (organising) data: Managing data is the first step in data analysis away from site. The data were organised by means of file folders, computer files and note cards. These computer files and file folders were converted into appropriate text units; for example, a word, a sentence, or an entire story for analysis by hand or a computer. Interview transcripts, observation notes and reflection notes were transcribed as part of data management and preparation. Backup copies were made of all the data produced and put away for safekeeping.
- d) Reading and writing memos: After the organisation and conversion of the data, I continued with analysis to get a feeling for the whole database. This was done by reading and re-reading the transcripts in their entirety to become familiar with the data.
- e) Coding the data: Coding is the formal representation of analytical thinking. This was done by generating categories and themes. After generating themes, I applied some coding scheme to those categories and themes by diligently marking passages in the data using the codes. Codes may take several forms: abbreviations of key words, coloured dots, or numbers. Appropriate coding opted for in this study was the abbreviation of keywords; this was because most computer software programs for data analysis rely on abbreviations of key words.

- f) Testing emergent understandings: Part of this phase is evaluating the data for their usefulness and centrality. This was done by determining how useful the data were in illuminating the questions being explored and how central they were to the story that was unfolding about the social phenomenon being studied.
- g) Writing the report: This was the final phase of the spiral where I presented the data by packaging what was found in the text in tabular or figure form.

#### **4.10 Ethical Issues**

The responsibility for the ethical conduct of research rests with the researcher; however, it has become increasingly common for researchers to gain formal approval from a research ethics committee before embarking on the research (Denscombe, 2010). As a student enrolled with the University of KwaZulu-Natal I was no exception to this ethical approval.

According to Henning et al. (2010), all participants in a research project need to give their informed consent to participate. This implies that the participants must be fully informed about the research in which they are going to participate. Informed consent is defined as the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Participants need to know that their privacy and sensitivity will be protected and what is going to happen with their information after recording (Mertens, 2009; Henning et al., 2010).

A number of ethical issues were taken into account in this sensitive research area. These were the following:

- a) Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy were respected. The exception could be in the event that information emerged that could allude to harm being done to an

individual, which would have to be reported to the appropriate agency. This proviso was communicated and agreed to before any interviews commenced.

- b) In situations where participants could be traumatised by relating to traumatic experiences, free psychological counselling was offered through the use of the Department of Education's District-based psychological services personnel. Moreover, agreement had been sought from the school counselling/psychological service prior to the study who confirmed that if such an event occurred, the respondent could be referred to them for counselling.
- c) Consent was sought from all the participants. They were provided with information sheets on the research aims, the interview process and the use of the data. Consent forms were also completed by the school administration and the parents of the participating learners. These forms specified the right of any respondent to withdraw from the research at any point, and that the data from such participants would not be used.
- d) Permission was sought from the schools' authority to conduct the investigation. Permission was subsequently granted in writing.
- e) A system of secure data storage was established for interview transcripts, observation notes, documentation notes and reflective journal notes.
- f) Rewards and incentives for participants were established, where possible.
- g) Feedback to participants was provided, both to verify the data to be used for analysis and to comment on their interpretation. Draft reports were provided to each school before wider dissemination to make sure that they were comfortable that they could not be identified and/or that the information was correct (Denscombe, 2010; Mertens, 2009).

#### **4.11 Issues of Quality in Qualitative Research**

Researchers need to feel as confident as is reasonably possible that data collected accurately reflect some underlying "truth" (Denscombe, 2010). There are various criteria for judging quality in qualitative research (Mertens, 1998; Denscombe, 2010; Guba and

Lincoln, 1989). In this study the criteria relating to authenticity, trustworthiness and credibility in judging the quality of data were adhered to.

#### ***4.11.1 Authenticity***

Authenticity refers to the presentation of a balanced view of all perspectives, values and beliefs. In the same vein, authenticity in research answers questions like: “Has the researcher been fair in presenting the views?” (Mertens,1998). Therefore, in this study fairness in the presentation of views was ensured through the use of various methods of data collection. These were semi-structured interviews, documentation reviews, observations and reflective journals.

#### ***4.11.2 Trustworthiness and Credibility***

Babbie and Mouton (2004) argue that a quantitative study cannot be considered valid unless it is reliable and a qualitative study cannot be deemed credible unless it is dependable. The crucial means of checking the aspects of credibility and accuracy of research findings in this study was done by comparing findings with those findings of the same topic produced using different research methods. This is in line with Denscombe (2010) as he argues that the aspects of credibility and accuracy of research findings need to be compared with the findings of a similar topic produced using different research methods produced by other researchers or based on alternative theories. This process of checking credibility is called triangulation (Arskey and Knight, 1999). Triangulation provides social researchers with a means of assessing the quality of data by arriving at the same thing or reaching conclusions from a different angle (Denscombe, 2010, p.147; Arskey and Knight, 1999).

## **4.13 Entering the Field and Development of Rapport**

### ***4.13.1 Gaining Access to Schools***

The journey to data generation and its associated ethical issues begins with the researcher's first contacts with the researched (Ndengu, 2009). While in possession of the permission to conduct the study by the Department of Basic Education, it was imperative for me to gain further permission from the school authorities to enter the field of study (de Vos et al., 2010). Gaining admission into a research field can be challenging, in particular when the researcher will be conducting research on sensitive issues like school violence, and much depended on my interpersonal and decision-making skills to decide how to embark on the process of gaining access to the sample within violent schools (de Vos et al., 2010).

As indicated earlier in this chapter, the criterion for the selection of the two participating schools was based on anecdotal evidence of violence incidences. The anecdotal evidence included various media reports and conversations with critical friends. In this study critical friends were teachers, principals, ward managers, and school governors. One critical friend was the high school principal in my area, whom I contacted with regard to my endeavours to conduct research in secondary schools with a history of violence. At the beginning of rapport, I contacted this principal because I thought that there was a possibility that he might know some of the principals of schools which formed part of my proposed sample so that he could introduce me to them. He gladly assisted me by calling one of the principals. The principal that I was referred to was unable to assist me because, according to him, his school had few or no incidents of violence. He then referred me to another school which he felt would be more appropriate for my study. I was given directions to this school where I was received in a friendly manner.

Before conducting the interviews, I visited the two selected schools to establish further rapport with the participants by explaining the aim and objectives of the research. In one

school, Scooby Secondary, after I had been introduced by the acting principal to all the staff members, I was given a platform during the assembly to introduce myself to all the learners.

It is worth acknowledging that I was very fortunate to be in possession of the permission from the Department of Basic Education in my first year of registration for this study. I didn't experience all the pain of waiting for permission to conduct my research. This was made possible by my supervisor, Professor V.S. Mncube. I truly commend him for his dedication to this study, in particular for applying for a group ethical clearance for his students both from the department of education and from the university where I am registered.

#### **4.14 Limitations of the Study**

As the study focused on secondary schools only, the scope was limited; hence higher education institutions were excluded from the study. The study was limited to two secondary schools due to financial and time constraints. The study was conducted in schools with a history of violence, which also posed a safety risk during data collecting.

#### **4.15 Conclusion**

Chapter four elucidated the research paradigm that guided this research inquiry as well as its design. The research approach, which entailed a case study involving two secondary schools, was discussed. Entering the field of research and the development of rapport with the research participants were discussed. I also detailed the research techniques and the related tools that were used in conducting the study. This was followed by a discussion of the sampling plan and the descriptions of the two schools and the participants. Research techniques and their related tools were used which included a breakdown of the

participants. I also highlighted the process of data analysis which is a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. A number of ethical issues were taken into account in this sensitive research area such as confidentiality, anonymity and the respect of privacy. I concluded this chapter by discussing a number of varying issues pertaining to this chapter, which were issues of quality in qualitative research, authenticity, trustworthiness, validity and reliability of the study and the limitations. In the following chapter I provide the presentation, analyses and discussion of the data.

**CHAPTER 5**  
**DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION: LEARNERS’,**  
**TEACHERS’ AND SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS’ EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL**  
**VIOLENCE**

**5.1 Introduction**

Where the previous chapter was dedicated to the research design and methodology employed in this study, this chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of some of the data that were generated from the two schools under study. The major focus of this chapter is to provide a record of what was established in terms of the following:

The perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, school governors and support staff about school violence.

**5.2 External Factors and School Safety Measures**

For the purpose of this study school climate entailed aspects related to learner and teacher behaviours, parent involvement, school-wide morale, attitudes and expectations. Hence Question 1 of the interview questions which is found in the interviews schedules appendix section of this study posed the following question to the principals, the chairpersons of the SGBs, the chairpersons of the schools’ Discipline, Safety and Security committees (SDSSC), the Life Orientation teachers and other teacher participants: “How would you describe the ethos/values/principles of the school with regard to school climate and discipline?”

Appendix, append

Generally, the participants from both schools expressed negative feelings about the lack of safety and security measures within the school premises which, they felt, lead to a poor school climate. The majority of participants from Scooby secondary reported feeling

insecure within and around the school premises, while only a few of the participants from Lioness Secondary felt unsafe within and around the school premises. Both learners and teachers from Scooby secondary cited the widespread use of corporal punishment on learners.

One participant, who was the acting principal at the time of the study, asserted:

*The school is situated in a high crime area and its community does not own the school, as they vandalise and steal from school. The school is partly surrounded by informal settlement and most of our learners come from these informal settlements which mostly consist of unstable families. In addition, the school is built nearby a dangerous passage; where crime take place on broad daylight, pocketing even the elders are being robbed at any time of the day. The school is worse affected by these crimes and even burglary in our is the order of the day. As we speak right ceiling board is being repaired in my office after the recent incident of burglary in my office and other staff room. In terms of safety we are not safe at all because even if the school is fenced our own learners are involved in burglary and vandalising the school. So both inside and outside, there is an element which is not good, we as staff members we don't feel safe at all (Acting Principal: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcript).*

One of the teachers stated:

*If I'm talking about values of the school sometimes its goes a long. It is uncontrollable due to Learner Representative Council (LRC), they introduced LRC in schools. LRC know their rights more than their names, really more than their responsibilities, they have lost the values and everything is going out of hand. If you are a teacher and you are trying to tell them what they supposed to do they don't do it because they know rights more than anything. Maybe you find that one learner is misbehaving in class for several times, and then you send her/him out of the class. That learner will go straight to the LRC president to report you as the*

*teacher and you find that the LRC president will come to attack you as teacher telling that you are wrong “you are not supposed to treat her like that”. It means as a teacher you lose that value as a teacher in front of the whole class, a learner even not a gifted one, a learner who is an LRC president, because they are not chosen according to their academic performance but according to their rudeness, yes... (Teacher B1: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The above participants from Scooby secondary felt generally unsafe within the school premises due to a number of varying factors, including the location of the school within a high crime area. This factor impacts negatively on the school climate for the following reasons: Firstly, the community where the school is located disowns the school and, at worst, certain elements steal from the school, in the process crippling the education of their own children/young community members. Secondly, the school is located near a dangerous ‘passage’ or thoroughfare which obviously allows criminal elements from outside the area safe passage to commit acts of robbery and all sorts of crime in and around the school, even in broad daylight.

Scooby secondary school has a high level of insecurity due to various factors. One factor is that the school is situated within a low-income, poverty stricken community where high levels of illegal drug and alcohol abuse are rife. Moreover, the school is managed by an acting principal who, by her own admission, enjoys little support from her school management team (SMT) as well as the School Governing Body (SGB). Lioness secondary school’s participants, on the other hand, felt much safer due to the following factors: the school is situated within a middle class, middle-income community with low levels of illegal drug and alcohol abuse. The school has experienced incidences of violence but is slowly but surely coming out of this spiral. Moreover, the principal’s position of leadership and authority is well established.

The various stakeholders from both schools indicated that they were faced with multiple challenges in maintaining discipline and safety among learners in their schools. These challenges ranged from smoking and selling of dagga and other substance abuse to poverty and family issues, as most learners come from unstable families. In this regard, I was informed that many households were headed by children, or by alcoholic and/or unemployed parents. Due to poverty in the communities, burglary at both schools presented a severe challenge. Also, the physical and psychological impact of school violence was enormous and multiple in nature.

One Life Orientation (LO) teacher reported the following regarding the school climate and discipline among learners:

*People are pretending. I included. There is no team spirit, no team playing thing, no togetherness within the staff members. In terms of safety, I'm really concerned for the safety for my learners because these are kids who are coming from bad neighbourhoods. It's something that I perceived because I could see from a child; I mean you could expect anything from a child considering the environment where a child is coming from. Consequently our learners lack values, like I said they are not fearful of anything. They bunk classes, fight each other, they carry weapons, especially knives, even if they don't carry knives they can make use of other instruments. They also do drugs, especially marijuana (LO Teacher A2: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The SGB chairman responded as follows with regard to school climate and discipline among learners:

*The environment is very bad, because our schools were built long long time ago, and the community that we are situated within is a very low and poverty stricken. Err... therefore the environment is not good because teachers and our children don't feel safe within the school premises. Teachers also don't feel safe with our children, because our children come from these problematic societies. Again our*

*school buildings are very old, government is supposed to see to it that our schools are re-furbished and new up to standard structures should be built and also government should support our schools with high security personnel and system so that teachers will feel safe at school (SGB Chair: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The School's Discipline Safety and Security committee (SDSSC) chairperson of Scooby secondary commented as follows:

*The climate of the school, as a matter of fact I can say we are trying by all means to make the climate to be conducive for learning and teaching, some of the teachers don't err... respect they err... they don't honour their class periods, they absent themselves from school, and that means as you are absenting yourself from school, learners will become unruly during your teaching periods, and at times fight each other (SDSSC Chair: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

It was clear that the location of the schools within violent communities impacted negatively on the function of the school which, in turn, resulted in feelings of fear due a disorderly school environment. This was evident as I observed an illegal opening in the school concrete fencing at Scooby secondary which served as a route for criminals from the community to enter the school premises at will. Moreover, the study established that teachers feared learners because they emanated from these violent communities; also, there was strong suspicion that learners from these communities were themselves involved in criminal activities. As feelings of fear of their learners were expressed by teachers, it is logical to suggest that the relationship between the teachers and learners was generally unhealthy and certainly not conducive to learning and teaching. It could be deduced that teachers' attention would be divided between teaching and self-protection.

The study further revealed that old and un-refurbished school buildings, together with a lack of proper security personnel, posed significant threats to teachers and a positive climate within which teaching and learning could take place. These findings are corroborated in Osher, Dwyer and Jimerson (2006, p. 52) who argue that effective schools foster and support high academic and behavioural standards, making achievement within these schools both a collective and individual phenomenon. In KwaZulu-Natal, part of South Africa, practically a quarter of the schools buildings were reported unfit for educational purposes and most of these were considered too dangerous to be occupied by learners because of the unjustifiable state of the buildings (Harber, 2004).

Feeling emotionally safe is critical to learning and teaching; this climate of safety can contribute to learners seeking help for themselves and others and, in doing so, reducing the risk of violence (Osher et al., 2006). This study found that it was not learners who should seek assistance but teachers, since it was revealed that they were more fearful than their learners. Teachers further reported a high prevalence of 'bunking classes' – i.e. deliberate or wilful absenteeism from classes. The question could be posed whether this behaviour was linked to learners' fear of their violent peers or whether it emanated from their lack of commitment to their work - or both. In this regard, a learner from the focus group category made the following comment:

*...Yes, yes, violent behaviour is common in our school. Some learners of this school like to carry weapons and touch other learners' private parts, like breasts. At this school most of the girls I think they enjoyed to be touched by boys because if they don't like to be touched, they will be not talking about it nicely and they should go and report at the office immediately if it happens. Me and my friends we were once humiliated by one learner who used to insult and hit us. When we report this boy, he will be called in the office and once we are all there, he will deny everything and even cry. Teachers will feel sorry for him and let him go. Once we are out from the office he will laugh at us and tell his friend that he won the case. Boys do carry knives, but in most cases they don't use it to stab people, but they use*

*it to intimidate other learners* (Learner Focus group – Victim A1: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).

In both schools learners also felt that severe violent behaviours were prevalent in their schools as they revealed that some learners carried weapons and sexually harassed girls by touching their breasts. However, it further emerged that while some learners from Scooby secondary felt harassed by male learners' attitude of sexual harassment, some girls were reported to be in favour of being touched by boys. The participants from Scooby secondary argued that if those girls had not enjoyed being touched they would have reported the incident to the office instead of embracing it. Yet it also emerged that female learners from Scooby secondary felt that, should the victims report the perpetration of violence to the office, the culprits would easily get away with it because they were good at pretending and would even cry when denying their violent acts. This implies that persons in authority lack the skills and insight to properly investigate accusations of violence, thus contributing to the upward spiral of violent offences. This links with the notion of schooling as reproduction and perpetration which posits that by doing nothing or ignoring a negative or dangerous aspect of the surrounding society – bullying, infection by HIV/AIDs, racism, gendered sexual violence and violence itself – the role of schools can be said to be reproductive. Schools that ignore sexism in the wider society or among learners are helping to reproduce it (Harber, 2004, p. 9).

The security guards of both schools were also aware of drug trafficking and fighting within the school. One commented as follows:

*Previously some of learners were involved in drugs and they will ended up fighting and do all sorts of violence. Even now it is still happening, there are learners who have just joined the school and they are doing drugs. Actually they are taking us back where we were before, because we had cleaned the school but now here they are again. Two weeks back I caught some learners abusing drugs. Even now, once they are high on drugs they disrespect teachers inside the classroom, even females*

*they do drugs. Last year I was in court due to the issues of drugs at this school, the case will be finalized soon (Security guard: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another security guard asserted:

*Learners normally fight within school premises. Crime is very high in this school which involves vandalism and stealing. In most cases these burglary and vandalism took place whenever there is new equipment bought and delivered in the school. So the way I perceive stealing I think it is instigated by our own learners and they team up with people from the community. This so because the school is always under attack each night the new equipment has been delivered. I was once hurt by a learner who stabbed me in the head and I suspect that he was involved in drugs. On that day he arrived at 9h00 to school and went out at 12h00, on his way out he passed by me and just stabbed me in the head. When I asked why he is acting the way he did, he just said “I hate you”. This particular learner was expelled from school for his violent behaviour and that is how incident was resolved (Security guard: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The security guards from both schools revealed that the source of crime in their schools was abuse of substances, in particular dagga. Spates of burglary, vandalism and stealing were reported at Scooby secondary. It was further implicated that learners from Scooby secondary were also involved in all these cases of burglary and vandalism. The study established that security guards are highly vulnerable to incidences of violence in schools. This was evident where one security guard from Lioness secondary reported that he had once been attacked by learners and further, that there was a pending court case linked to school violence. The security guard at Scooby Secondary reported that he had been stabbed by a learner inside the school premises. Stabbing someone is a criminal offence. If this is how violence escalates, the school may eventually refrain from reporting cases to the SAPS and simply expel the culprit without due process, as will be discussed presently.

It is highly abnormal for security guards to feel unsafe as they are expected to uphold the safety of the school. In support of the security guard who had been stabbed, the culprit was expelled from the school by the school management. The question is posed whether the school has the authority to expel learners when they committed a serious misconduct such as stabbing a member of staff. Expulsion is the permanent refusal of admission of a learner to a particular school and/or hostel (Oosthuizen, 2007). If expulsion is a permanent refusal of admission, what impact does the decision to expel a learner have on him/her and the parents? Was it appropriate for an education institution to expel a learner who posed a threat to the school? In terms of section 9 of the SA Schools Act (1996(a)), such a recommendation has to be forwarded to the Head of the Provincial Department of Basic Education, who then has to decide on the expulsion (or not) of the learner after the learner has been found guilty of serious misconduct at a fair hearing (Oosthuizen, 2007).

Another teacher noted:

*Ideally it is our wish that the school is safe. However, there are episodes and elements which defy our safety measures. We try to be safe, we have the security, the school is fenced but despite all these measures, there are people who come from outside to the school, snatching cell-phones from the kids, err... though we don't have full evidence, but there is some drug-trafficking as well coming from outside to the school. We had spate of burglaries in the school, in the main office, computer lab and in the staff room. I presume the series of burglary were linked to inside informers (learners), this so because the two last burglaries were so precise, when new equipment was delivered and brought to the staff room, the staff room had a break-in the very same night. Again the ex-learners are allegedly linked to this burglary. So even if we try hard to make the environment conducive to learning by disciplining learners –through the use of corporal punishment and talking to them, but it makes no difference. Learners who do drugs make the school environment to be unfriendly, as they become addicted to drugs they develop tendencies of*

*kleptomania<sup>2</sup>, items they can lay hands on in order to purchase drugs, they steal bags, and so on. I guess violence in the school affected us as our results are not impressing, for past three years we have received just above 50% matric pass rate (Teacher A1: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Serious learner misconduct was also reported as part of the leading factors for school violence in both schools. Types of learner misconduct which were reported in this study included: burglary in staff rooms, the principal's office and the computer lab. These and other acts of learner misconduct were reported to render the school environment and hence the school climate unfriendly and unsafe to learners and teachers alike.

Research studies have revealed that learner misconduct often occurs in serious forms of bad behaviour, known as 'serious misconduct' (Oosthuizen, 2007). The occurrences of such behaviour take place in various forms such as physical assault, violence, rape, theft, and so on. These kinds of behaviour are a threat to an orderly school environment and affect teaching and learning. Jimerson, Morrison, Pletcher and Furlong (2006) concur with Oosthuizen (2007) as they state that behaviours among youth diagnosed with conduct disorder may vary and may include deceitfulness, theft, breaking and entering, shoplifting, forgery and lying to obtain favours. Additionally, examining the current and the pass previous pass rates of these two schools, a conclusion can be drawn that the schools were highly affected by violence which emanated within and outside the school premises. The findings of this study were substantiated by DioGuardi and Theodore (2006, p. 340) who relate the effects of victimization to poor academic achievement and also academic maladjustment, such as avoidance and dislike of school.

---

<sup>2</sup> This is a recurrent urge to steal (Oxford English dictionary, 2011)

Another LO Educator from Lioness Secondary indicated that violence used to be rife in his school and also impacted negatively of learners education, he said:

*I think my answer is twofold here because we have experienced two processes, a process being a bad school, although now is not such a good school but we have that hope that we can see in the things that are happening that we are moving towards positive direction. When I arrived here in 2002 being in this school I felt displayed or in wrong place. If I can put in a nutshell, when I arrived at this school what I observed was that the main course of bad situation was one, the school has no leader – there was an acting principal, and the manner in which the principal left the school, he was chased away. During the era of the acting principal there were problems multiple problems facing the school. The second problem was poor matric results. The school used to obtain 40% and below, but now we have improved to 80 plus percent (LO Educator B1: Lioness Secondary).*

The principal from Lioness Secondary concurred with his LO teacher when he indicated that:

*My school used to be regarded as violent school because of the past violence, and abuse of illegal drugs. In the past our greatest enemy was abuse of illegal drugs. Drugs were being sold within the school premises and around the school, so the school was a target for drug mules. Learners were very much unruly once they are high. Two years down the line a learner by the name of Vikwa\* was stabbed to death in class. So you could see that it was terrible. While we engulfed by violence nobody gave us a chance, but today we are out and the school results [matric] are sitting and 82.5%, from 40% and below and the previous years. However, we have turned the corner now in terms of introducing the policies that particularly ensures that we move from the era of violence to be a normal school. In terms of that our learners are very secure and they feel very comfortable to be at school. And I also feel very safe at the school (Principal: Lioness secondary)*

The above discourses from the interviews were supported by the documents collected from the schools. For example, on 17 October 2011 there was a tribunal meeting where a learner was disciplined through corporal punishment for persistently bunking classes. He left the school premises during teaching and learning time. He was also found smoking cigarettes and dagga. The statement found in the tribunal book reads as follows:

*I, Zena\*, confess that I smoked cigarettes and dagga. I agree that I will be expelled from school if I am found smoking again. I promise that I will obey the school rules and that I won't do wrong again. The statement was taken after the learner was disciplined by use a pipe stick (Tribunal book: Scooby secondary – 17 October 2011).*

Another case which took place on 23 April 2010 at Lioness secondary proceeded as follows:

*...four learners were accused of bunking classes and smoking dagga/cigarettes/ taking drugs and drinking liquor. They were also accused of lying about another teacher. All four learners pleaded guilty and were given suspension sentences for six months (Tribunal book: Lioness secondary – 23 April 2010).*

The review of the documents further revealed that learner misconduct and acts of violence committed within the school premises were mostly of a serious nature. These included smoking of dagga, the use of other substances and lying to teachers, stabbing one another, just to mention the few. In one instance a learner was warned at Scooby secondary for smoking dagga, while at Lioness secondary four Grade 12 learners who had been caught smoking cigarettes and had been involved in substance abuse was suspended from school for a period of six months. It may be argued that such a harsh sentence by the school - suspension for a period longer than a week - is unacceptable as it impacts negatively on the future of learners. These four learners were suspended at the end of April, which implies that they were due back to school after the trial examinations and only just before the

commencement of the National Senior Certificate examinations. Learners were not only suspended from school for their misconduct, however, the majority of learners who had committed misconduct of a nature were subjected to corporal punishment before any further actions were imposed to them. Literature revealed that Like in Morocco most primary teachers also use a ruler, stick, or a piece of rubber garden hose which are generously used to hit children (Salmi , 1999).) In Palestine, corporal punishment is also widely used in schools, which is accompanied by verbal violence – scornful expressions, humiliating words and derogatory comments. And, the most frequent physical abuse witnessed by Israelites learners in Bedouin school was slapping, kicking, twisting of ears, grabbing or pushing (Harber 2004). The use of corporal punishment in schools has been prohibited since 1996 in South Africa, although it is still commonly used, particularly in rural areas, and still supported by many parents and learners (Morrell, 1999; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Bhana, 2012; Hunt, 2007). Sparsely reports had been published in South African media, for example, corporal punishment is rife in Gauteng schools more than 350 cases were reported in Gauteng in April 2011 to February 2012 (John, 2012). Parker-Jenkins (1999) argues that the history of childhood, at least in Western societies, registers the ordinary abuse and terrorising of children by their caretakers and at worst that an expectation that child-rearing and corporal punishment should go hand in hand has been carried over into school life.

The South African schooling system requires that learners accumulate marks/credits based on continuous assessment (CASS) during the course of the year. The CASS marks form part of the final examination marks, which implies that without CASS marks it is impossible for a learner to progress to the following grade. In the case of Grade 12 candidates, Grade 12 results are withheld if CASS marks were not submitted. Did the school management consider the repercussions of suspending learners for six months? Was the Provincial DBE informed about the decision to suspend these learners for six months? Suspension is defined as a temporary refusal of admission of a learner to a particular school (Oosthuizen, 2007). In terms of section 9 (2) of the SA Schools Act (1996(c) expulsion may be endorsed only by the provincial head of the department involved, while

suspension may only be effected by the school Governing Body after the learner has been found guilty of serious misconduct at a fair hearing (Oosthuizen, 2007). Clearly, the school alone had no authority to suspend those learners who had committed the serious misconducts and it is argued that management acted outside the law when the learners were suspended for a prolonged period of six months.

Additionally, one learner victim wrote in the reflective journal:

*In my school there are a lot of wrong things that are taking place. For example, at the end of 2010 some boys and girls were caught smoking dagga within the school premises. One girl was expelled from school because once she is under influence of drugs she disrespect teachers. Again this year, more grade 12 learners including the school president were caught smoking dagga. They were heavily punished – using a plastic horse pipe stick. The president was demoted from being a president of the Learner Representative Council (Learner Victim C1: Lioness Secondary verbatim transcription).*

Studies revealed that poor childhood rearing of young people and youth in SA involve multiple levels of challenges including poverty, unstable living arrangements, absent of parents, indifferent or violent fathers and alcohol or other substance abusive parents or relatives (Last, 2001; CSV, 2007). Consequently South African children are exposed to various risks factors which then enhance the opportunities that they will become involved in criminality and violence at a later stage (CSV, 2010).

While one of the principals indicated that school climate and disciplinary problems were issues of the past in the particular school, some of the teachers and a security guard were of a different opinion. The following is an excerpt from an interview with a teacher:

*I think there we still have a problem, like late coming still persists, but they [learners] get punishment in terms of cleaning the school yard – cutting the grass,*

*picking up the papers, etc. But its [late coming] not a chronic thing, it is happening because we are human being – it's not that bad but it is there. Learners I think they are disciplined, except those cases where a learners has a history of disrespect from home and who bring such disrespect attitude with him from home to school, but now such cases are minimal compared to the era of violence. We cannot deny that some learners are involved in the abuse, drugs are there, sexual harassment is there, err... all those things are there (LO Teacher B2: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Also in contrast with the principal's claim of a lack of disciplinary problems are the following comments by a learner:

*Things that I dislike about my school are that there are people who do drugs within the school premises, because we can find ourselves in danger. They see themselves as better and above us because they also carry weapons and use those weapons to intimidate us. Their behaviour against teachers is also bad because when an teacher asks a question they respond badly or in a nasty way too; they are normal disrespectful against teachers. They also refuse to submit schoolwork that is due to most of the teacher (Learner Perpetrator B1: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

At Lioness secondary school the existence of violence and symptoms of violence were mostly denied by the school management, including the principal. However, the study revealed that violence in this school still existed in the form of a range of learner misconducts. Learner misconducts were primarily: learners coming late to school, some learners being involved in the abuse of illegal drugs and alcohol, carrying of weapons mainly to intimidate other learners, teasing, bullying and sexual harassment.

The above findings were in line with those reported in a study conducted by the South African Medical Research Centre (MRC) (2003) for the Department of Health. The study consisted of 23 schools in each province using a sample of 14 776 learners. The quantitative report revealed the following statistical data regarding learner violence: 17% carried weapons in school; 41% were bullied; 14% belonged to gangs; 15% had been forced to have sex; another 15% had been threatened or injured on school property; 19% had been injured in fights; and 32% felt unsafe at school (Wilson, 2006, p. 4). Wilson further revealed that 50% of the learners had experienced violence either as victims or as perpetrators. Girls in South Africa reported being unable to concentrate, not being interested in school, transferring to a different school, and some dropping out of school all together due to the problem of sexual harassment (Wilson, 2006).

The documents reviewed further refuted the principal's notion that the school was free from violence. A statement found in the Tribunal book read as follows:

*Zola Mcoy\* was found smoking dagga in the classes that were declared as out of bounds. Zola Mcoy pleaded guilty (Tribunal book: Lioness Secondary: 14 October 2010).*

According to the verdict of the above case, Zola Mcoy's\* offense warranted an expulsion from school; however, due to a poor family background he was suspended from school for five days (Tribunal book: Lioness Secondary – 14 October 2010).

Furthermore, on 3 August 2011, a grade 9 learner was accused of illegally damaging the concrete fencing to create an escape route from the school premises. The following was recorded in the tribunal book:

*Lele \* said they broke the concrete fencing to get out of the school in order to enjoy themselves with dance. He said he went out with other three learners. Both learners were caned for their wrong doings. Two learners out of four learners agreed to repair the fencing on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2011 (Tribunal book: Scooby Secondary: 2011/08/03 – verbatim transcription).*

During the observation phase of this study I personally witnessed a myriad of disciplinary proceedings which literally took place on a daily basis at Scooby secondary. I observed learners being punished through caning on their buttocks for smoking dagga, girls being punished for smoking *kuber*<sup>3</sup>, and learners being punished for swearing, bunking classes and fighting with one another, just to mention a few. I was informed that this *kuber* drug is mainly used by female learners with no further explanation why it is used by female learners. I also observed learner misconduct as learners were coming late to school and many were loitering around the school outside the classrooms during learning and teaching times. Also learners were caned for late coming where a teacher would wait at the gate for late comers. Some would simply disappear once realised that they were punished for late coming. However, I also observed teachers coming late to school, absenting themselves from school while they should be in teaching, and also not honouring classes whilst at school as they were simply sitting in the staff rooms. International research has identified school violence as a problem that affects both developed and developing countries. Corporal punishments range from hitting with hands or sticks to making children stand in various positions for long periods and tying them to chairs. These severe punishments cause many children to abandon school – because they are afraid of their teachers, because of their injuries and because of the impact the violence has on their learning (PLAN, 2009).

### **5.2.1 Discussion**

The majority of participants of both schools indicated that they felt unsafe within the school premises. Teacher participants from Scooby secondary were not only concerned about their own safety, but they were also concerned about the safety of their learners. However, the levels of comfort varied between the two schools. More violent behaviours

---

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this study the light drug 'kuber' is described as which is packed strategically misleading and the writings on the package is deceiving to an ordinary person who knows nothing about it. It is packed in a purple and silver sachet, and written kuber mouthfreshner, with a photo of a middle age Chinese man.

were reported at Scooby secondary whereas Lioness secondary experienced fewer incidents of violence. The teachers of Scooby secondary wished for improved school safety despite all the safety measures that had been put into place, but such wishes seem to be just a utopia. Teachers feared learners who were an apparent threat to other learners and to the staff as a whole.

Scooby secondary became a receptacle of violent social imbalances from within the immediate environment as people from the community used the school as a playground for violence. At this school community thugs snatched cell-phones from learners and teachers inside the school premises; learners brought weapons to school; learners smoked dagga and used illegal drugs on the school premises; drug-trafficking occurred; and drug addicts developed tendencies of kleptomania resulting in spates of theft. Furthermore, a spate of burglaries targeting the main office, computer lab and staff rooms at Scooby secondary allegedly involved ex-learners.

Discourses of violence further revealed that Lioness secondary was in violence but slowly coming out of it as both the Life Orientation teachers and the principal felt safe. However, clear symptoms of violence among learners were still evident during the time that I spent observing the school. The study revealed that number of learners was involved in innumerable of misconduct including smoking and selling of dagga within the school premises. This kind of behaviour was not only troubling the school management and staff but learners were also affected too in particular with school work.

I further noted that learners (victims of violence) who had been requested to reflect about their school violence experiences struggled to write and express their thoughts. Those who managed to bring back the journals expressed their feelings and experiences of school violence in a very few words. Moreover, the ideas stated in the reflective journals were similar to the information that was provided during the one-on-one interviews.

### 5.3 Leadership and Management in Schools

In question 2 participants were asked: How does the school function on a daily basis in terms of leadership, management and the application of the Code of Conduct? This question is found in the interviews schedules appendix section of this study.

The principal from Scooby secondary school indicated that leading and managing the school was not pleasant. She asserted:

*Leading both the staff and learners in this school is a tough exercise for me. Both teachers and learners want to be pushed and coerced in order to attend to their respective duties. If I'm sitting and working inside the office, the teachers will take an advantage that I'm not aware about their whereabouts within the school; teachers will just sit in the staff room instead of going to classes. Therefore, I have to ensure that everybody is where she/he is supposed to be by physically walking in and around the school and the same time I have to manage all the school systems, including administration, in and outside meetings, and so on. I'm really tired of going in and round the school as a watchdog (Principal: Scooby Secondary - verbatim transcription).*

The principal from Lioness secondary demonstrated an opposing stand from the principal of Scooby secondary when he said:

*Any organisation like a school, for it to function effectively there must be systemic systems, and the main system that the school is using is the time table. The HODs, deputy and myself we ensure that people are attending to their classes and we have a period registers that are used in terms of teachers signing entered the class. And if a teacher didn't attend a particular period, there is space in a period register to state why s/he didn't attend (Principal: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Questions pertaining to leadership and management were asked only of the principals as managers and main leaders of the schools. The principal of Scooby secondary experienced some hardships in managing and leading the school due to: lack of commitment from the School Management Team (SMT); lack of commitment from teachers as a whole; and lack of support from the SGB and parents. Conversely, the principal from Lioness secondary stated that he had good support from the SMT and teachers as well as from the SGB, but he also worried about poor support from the parental structure.

### **5.3.1 Discussion**

Managing and leading the schools seemed to be a daunting task for both principals. The principal of Scooby secondary – who was acting at that time - was faced with varying challenges in leading and managing the school. A great deal of non-support from the SMT was evident where she had to literally ‘patrol’ the school on a daily basis to remind teachers to honour classes while the heads of department within the school were not fulfilling their function of disciplining teachers. At times she was faced with disciplining learners who were misbehaving in different ways like smoking dagga, bunking classes, not submitting school work, and so on. The duty of disciplining learners lies with teachers and heads of department; only serious cases should be referred to her office, but seemingly at this school all cases were regarded as serious as they were mostly referred to the principal and deputy principal. Again, the principal had no reasonable time to deal with administrative work; her office was always crowded by teachers with reports and grievances. The issue here is that most of the administrative duties handled by the principal were supposed to be performed by the heads of departments. The principal was unable or felt powerless to instruct the heads to departments to do most of their duties as she lacked support from them as an acting principal and who hoped to be the next principal. Moreover, while faced with all these challenges, she was also challenged with the fact the

she was acting and there was a dispute hanging over her for the post in which she was acting.

The principal of Lioness secondary was generally not as challenged in leading and managing the school, but there was a lot that was hidden. He was primarily burdened by teachers who were literally dishonouring their core duty of teaching. His major challenge was that a bunch of teachers regarding themselves as the 'founders' of the school as they had been employed at the school before he was. So no matter how hard he tried to discipline teachers, they simply disregard him; as continued to come to school but rarely attended classes. This group of teachers had the controlling power over others as they saw themselves as the 'seniors' (i.e., employed first). This was a majority group who, in addition, enjoyed the protection of their unions. UNISA (2012) posits that physical and psychological impact of school violence is enormous and multiple in nature. The degree of harshness and repression within authoritarian schools varies from context to context and from organisation (school) to organisation. For the majority of schools control over what is taught and learned, how it is taught and learned, where it is taught and learned, when it is taught and learned and what the general learning environment is like is not in the hands of the learners. In schools, decision-making is predominantly in the hands of government officials, principals, teachers, and to a small degree, the school governor component, and not the learners. In this study the authoritarian situation of comparative powerlessness and disregard of learner human rights exists as learners can be maltreated violently or be influenced by potentially violent practice because of dominant norms and behaviours of the wider society and the schools. The literature regarding the rights and duties of principals to discipline teachers is briefly explored. There are numerous regulations and sanctions in place to address teacher deviant behaviour. Moreover, all principals have recourse to Departmental officials' support and Departmental regulations. According to section 4.2 of the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (2003) policy document regarding the duties and responsibilities of educators, the main aim of the job of the schools' principals is: To ensure that the school is managed satisfactorily and in compliance with applicable legislation, regulations and personnel administration measures as prescribed. In addition, to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner and in

accordance with approved policies. The core duties and responsibilities of the principals include inter alia: to give proper instructions and guidelines for timetabling admission and placement of learners, to make regular inspections of the school to ensure that the school premises and equipment are being used properly and that good discipline is being maintained.

#### 5.4 Victims' Experiences of School Violence

Question 3 required responses to the following: Tell me about a time you experienced violence [in the school]. Question 3 is part of the interviews questions which is found in the interviews schedules appendix section of this study.

The above question was dedicated to learner victims to elicit their responses of violence which had been experienced within the school context only. All four participants who had been identified as victims of violence within the school reported varying experiences of violence which had been perpetrated by other learners or by school officials or by both learners and teachers.

One participant reported:

*...a week ago my classmate boy said to me he wanted to cause trouble for me by lying to another boy [who is known to be a bully] and said that he will tell that boy that I insulted him [the bully]. When I asked why he acting the way he did, he did not answer but went straight to that bully-boy. Then the bully didn't hesitate to respond by slapping me in my face. While I was listening to that, the boy who caused trouble for me held me tight in my neck, and then the bully further slapped me twice in my face. I cried and went to the office to report them. Both boys were punished for their actions (Learner Victim A2: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription)*

Another respondent who had been victimized by both learners and school officials stated:

*It was March this year (2011), there were female learners who were drinking liquor in my class. The following day I and my friend arrived late at school. When we got to the assembly the principal was calling for learners who were drinking the previous day. The principal then questioned us whether do we know people who were drinking the previous day. We said no, we don't know anyone. Then the principal said we must join those who were drinking the previous day. What happened is that learners were told to write down anyone they think was involved in drinking and our names were included in the list. While alarmed with the news, we were then issued with letters to call our parents for this case. It was difficult to give a letter to my parents, the following day I went to school without informing them about the letter. When I got to school gate the principal was there and he send me back to come with a parent. When I got home I told my mother that there is a meeting at school without divulging the details (Learner victim C2: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent who experienced school violence on various occasions stated:

*Firstly, there was a case which is still pending; I was implicated with a group of learners who are involved in an intimate relationship with boys. When I was trying to state my position during the disciplinary process of this case I was forbidden to air my honest views. Secondly, there was a time where a friend of mine was involved in a mischievous case, where I was also implicated for something I didn't know. My friend exchange boyfriends and she is repeating grade 8 for that matter. So what happened was that I was called to the office to state all the wrong things that were done by my naughty friend. I was called as a witness simply because I was a class representative. When I got there I was asked to say anything wrong that my friend did and then I said everything that I knew about her. The next thing was that the accused somersaulted and stated that everything wrong that she was doing I was also involved. I was so furious at my friend's betrayal; I failed to talk and just*

*broke down on tears* (Learner Victim A1: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).

The discourses of experiences of violence from the individual interviews were supported by the observation schedule recorded for this study. For example, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2011, just after school hours, while I was about to leave Scooby secondary after interviews, one female learner was hysterically crying and running towards the principal's office. The learner reported that a male learner had smacked her in her face while the other had 'shocked' her in the neck – implying a stranglehold. The principal went in search of the abusive learners but they were nowhere to be found.

School violence does not necessarily start in the school; most behaviours are learned responses to circumstances and situations that are exhibited in our everyday life (Last, 2001; Burton, 2008). Home life conditions are influences on children, if for example a child grew in a family where one of the parents is abused, whether verbally or physically a child will take this as a norm. Studies (CSV, 2010; HRSC, 2010; Burton, 2008; Last, 2001) have proven that a child living in an abusive home will himself become an abuser, and that children who see violence view it as a solution to the problem.

#### **5.4.1 Discussion**

The majority of participants interviewed for the purpose of this question were unable to give any succinct information with regards to their experiences of school violence. All the learners who were interviewed managed to state only one or two trivial incidents of violence which were directly linked to school contexts or which took place within the schools premises where a learner or a teacher was involved. Learners reported incidents where they were victims of violence where one learner from Scooby secondary was both slapped and strangled by school bullies inside the school premises. Another learner was

victimized by both learners and the school officials whereas other learners included this learner on a list of learners who were drinking inside a classroom. The case was regarded as serious; as a result he was sent home to come back with a parent. Both these incidents were resolved amicably by the school officials involving a parent in one case.

Reflective journals were issued to learner victims and Life Orientation teachers to record their experiences of violence. However, it was noted with despair that the majority of learner victims were unable to record their experiences of school violence on paper despite a series of courtesy reminders by telephone and/or physical visits to their schools and homes. Of the six reflective journals issued to learner victims, only two were returned to the researcher. To my surprise, all the information recorded in these journals was simply a transfer of information already received during one-on-one interviews. Further requests were made to learners to record different experiences of violence other than the ones already provided during the interviews, but learners seemed to be adamant that they would not be able to provide more information as they alluded that they didn't have more to write about. Moreover, the LO teachers from both schools mentioned that they didn't have time to record their experiences of violence.

Research has revealed that systematic school related violence is evident in the school context where some teachers will, at times, physically and emotionally abuse learners due to their institutional power and the responsibility entrusted to them (Greene, 2005). Additionally, school bullying is a concept which broadly involves the idea of repeated bullying of learners or harassment between peers (Greene, 2006). It further implies the deliberate intention of the learner or group of learners to cause harm to one of their peers which alludes to an imbalance of forces and repetitive acts (Greene, 2008).

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The majority of participants of both schools indicated that they felt unsafe within the school premises. Teacher participants were not only concerned about their own safety, but

they were also concerned about the safety of their learners. However, the levels of comfort varied between the two schools. More violent behaviours were reported at Scooby secondary whereas Lioness secondary experienced fewer incidents of violence. The teachers of Scooby secondary wished for improved school safety despite all the safety measures that had been put into place, but such wishes seem to be just a utopia. Teachers feared learners who were an apparent threat to other learners and to the staff as a whole. This was so because the school is situated in a violent community and the learners of this school come from this violent environment. Many writers contend that schools are microcosms of the society and that schools reflect the attitudes and behaviours (such as violence) that occur in the wider society. Of course not all schools reflect the happenings within their societies; some schools are resilient and can excel to live a violent-free existence within violent communities. Barnes et al. (2012) add that a safe school is described as a place where the school climate allows learners, teachers, administrators, parents and visitors to communicate with one another in a positive and non-threatening manner. Schools have become receptacles for the social violent imbalances of the immediate environment as people from the community use the school as a playground for violence which community thugs enter to snatch cell-phones from learners and teachers. Learners bring weapons to school and they smoke and use illegal drugs on the school premises.

As stated before, schools have become receptacles for social violent imbalances of the immediate environment as people from the community use school as a playground for violence; community thugs enter school premises to snatch cell-phones from learners and teachers.

Learners experienced violence differently from one school to another. In one instance a learner was both slapped and strangled by school bullies inside the school premises. Another learner was victimized by both learners and the school officials, whereas other learners included him in the list of learners who had been drinking inside a classroom. The

case was regarded as serious; as a result he was sent home to come back with a parent. Both these incidents were resolved amicably by the school officials involving a parent in one case.

The study further demonstrated that learners were treated badly and even coerced randomly to leave school. For example, a pregnant learner was sent home due to her pregnancy and so-called bad attitude. This type of behaviour by teachers can be described as discrimination in terms of gender bias and the temporary disability of a pregnant learner. Pregnancy at school is not something to be proud of, but teachers need to educate learners on the issues of pregnancy and should not discriminate against them when it happens. Disturbing statistics of learner pregnancies have been reported in both South African and foreign schools. For example, close to 50 000 learner pregnancies were reported by principals of public schools in 2007 in South Africa (The Annual School Survey report, 2010).

The majority of the participants reported that school violence had an adverse impact on learners which in turn affected their performances. The majority of participants echoed a lack of commitment among teachers in performing their core duty of teaching. Teachers at Scooby secondary and Lioness secondary were reported to be dishonouring classes due to different reasons including fear of being in class as learners were too violent. At times teachers would abandon the entire class if unable to handle disruptive learner/s, or teachers were simply too lazy to attend class. The literature has revealed that some teachers use their hegemony to suppress, bully and verbally victimise learners. However, the study revealed that such actions were condoned in this school because these teachers were not prohibited from verbally inflicting harm on learners and bunking of classes which implies that, in the process, they were guilty of perpetrating violence on learners. Haffejee (2006) notes that some educational effects of violence include avoidance of school, lack of engagement in class, difficulty with concentration, increased isolation, lower academic attainment and possible drop- out. The following chapter further addresses critical findings related to question 1.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SCHOOLS' CULTURE IN PERPETRATION OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 6 focuses on presenting and discussing the data pertaining to the schools under study. In Chapter 5 three questions were presented and analysed. These were: a) How would you describe the ethos/values/principles of the school with regard to the school climate and discipline? b) How does the school function on a daily basis in terms of leadership, management, and application of the Code of Conduct? c) Tell me about a time you experienced violence. The major focus of this chapter is to further provide a record of what was established in terms of the following:

The perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, school governors and support staff about school violence.

#### **6.2 Poor School Organisation and Management**

In question 4 all the participants were asked: “What can you tell me about the culture of this school with regard to school meetings, conflicts and disciplinary problems, and effects of violence? Question 4 is found in the interviews schedules appendix section of this study. The levels of poor school organisation and management emerged in both schools. Poor school and management were manifested through lack of school organisation meetings, conflicts and disciplinary problems and impact of violence on teachers.

a) *Lack of School Meetings*

Failure to hold meetings when necessary in solving the problems in schools further exacerbate the problem which may lead to violence or violence by omission in schools.

The SDSSC chairperson agreed that safety and security meetings were held whenever necessary, but that other school meetings were not taking place. He stated:

*Yes we do hold meetings, more especially with SDSSC. But there is a problem with other school meetings – nothing is taking place. SDSSC meetings are helping, for one good reason, when we come together we contribute with various inputs and those inputs solve problems. At one stage we ended up calling safety and security liaison officer from the provincial DBE office, and then they come to assist us with some of the marches that were held here as a school, when we were engulfed with the problems of err... criminals who were coming to the school. Criminals came armed with firearms, knives; stabbing learners, robbing them of their possessions and they were also a threat to the school security guard at the gate. We marched to our circuit office as part of crime awareness, but our circuit did nothing to assist us. And then we decided to form another march using our vehicles and a letter signed by all teachers to go to local DBE. Fortunately that is what assisted us, because the department gave us two armed security personnel to look after us (SDSSC Chair: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent (an LO teacher) concurred with the previous respondent:

*There are not much meetings, no parents meetings, except morning briefings, and there are no workshops, comparing from the school I came from. I am comparing and I can't help it, I never been to a township school for a long time until now. Poor parents' meetings are due to lack of contact between parents, teachers and learners (LO Teacher A2: Scooby Secondary - verbatim transcription).*

The principal mentioned that they followed a particular routine in organizing school meetings; however, he claimed that parents' meetings were problematic as the majority of the learners came from child-headed families or lived with grandmothers and/or relatives. He said:

*We hold one parents' meeting per quarter, for staff once a month, for SMT once a month before the meeting of the staff. Same goes for LRC once a quarter, and SDSSC once a quarter, unless there is a particular issue that need to be discussed – a special meeting. Parents' meetings are poorly attended; our learners come from child-headed families, distant families, grannies, those people don't really care about education and we struggle in terms of bringing them to school (Principal: Lioness Secondary - verbatim transcription).*

Staff meetings were held in both schools; these meetings were mainly in the form of briefing sessions. However, it appeared that resolutions taken at staff meetings were not implemented. Most of the participants reported that Safety and Security meetings were not happening in either school. Parents' meetings at Scooby secondary had not been convened in the previous three years, while parents' meetings at Lioness secondary had been convened but showed a poor percentage of parent involvement. At Scooby secondary the lack of all types of meetings was due to various reasons such as the absence of a permanent administrator (principal), poor leadership and a poor relationship between teachers and the principal, to name only a few. During my investigations I concluded that it was not easy for the acting principal to enforce extensive general school management activities without any support system. Conversely meetings, with the exception of parents' meetings, were reported to be held at Lioness secondary as stipulated by school regulations. It is a given that a lack of parental involvement in children's education contributes negatively to learners' academic achievement. This study demonstrated that the majority of learners lacked social support from their homes as most of them lived with relatives such as their grandparents; moreover, some learners were heads of their homes. Additionally, the lack of social and emotional support for the learners at the schools under study reduced their sense

of connectedness with the school. The phenomenon of connectedness involves feelings of belonging to the school, connection with other learners and staff members in classrooms, and a caring environment at the school (Osher, Dwyer and Jimerson, 2006). The findings of a study by Osher, Dwyer and Jimerson (2006) revealed that learners who believe that they are cared for put more effort into their schooling, which in turn yields positive results.

**b) *Conflicts and Disciplinary Problems***

When evaluating the daily functioning of the schools with regards to the application of their respective codes of conduct, various stakeholders were involved in answering this question. The participants from both schools reported that the codes of conduct were implemented in various ways, depending on the nature of the misconduct. However, some participants from both schools reported that the application of their respective codes of conduct was not in line with the procedures as stipulated by the Department of Basic Education. This was due to various reasons including poor parental involvement in learners' education and the lack of a permanent administrator (a principal) in one of the schools. Participants, including the acting principal of Scooby secondary, agreed that leading a school as an acting principal was a difficult and daunting task due to various factors, of which the poor support from staff members was mentioned as being the most challenging.

Issues of disciplinary problems or conflicts at Scooby secondary were reported as daily challenges. For example, learners were involved in fighting and taking drugs. At Lioness secondary, however, it was reported that disciplinary problems still existed but that they were fewer than three years before.

An LO teacher of Scooby secondary reported that disciplinary issues had become uncontrollable at her school as learners were not willing to submit to disciplinary measures:

*The school has serious disciplinary problems, because if a child is misbehaving and if parents are called they always have excuses, saying that they are working, their bosses don't allow them to attend issues of their own children. In my view the situation is like this because most of the learners are coming from the fractured families, families are totally dysfunctional. For example, one day I called a learner with an aim to discipline him. I found that the boy is angry, the child is not used to discipline and he is wondering why a stranger is disciplining him, or I'm trying to make fun of him. Lastly, conflicts issues or disciplinary problems are our daily bread in this school (LO Teacher A1: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The principal of Scooby secondary indicated that disciplinary issues were a problem among learners and teachers alike:

*Conflicts are a way of life; learners are problematic at times and teachers too are divided into camps. Some teachers respect their work of teaching and learning but some deliberately bunk classes. They don't attend to classes in particular after lunch breaks (Principal: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The level of conflict at Scooby secondary was escalating and unmanageable; this was evident where teachers reported that learner disciplinary issues were a way of life and they lived with it on a day-to-day basis. At Lioness secondary, the study established that learners were often suspended from school for inordinate periods of time. Another measure was to make them clean the toilets or the garden as an alternative to corporal punishment. Furlong and Morrison (2000, p. 9) contend that school violence is an important component of the daily lives of children in schools; it affects where they walk, how they dress, where they go and who their friends are. As long as teachers treat violence

at arm's length and as something that is someone else's problem, they will continue to neglect the opportunity to intervene in a crucial aspect of children's lives (supra, p. 9). Research studies have revealed that learner misconduct often manifests as serious forms of bad behaviour known as 'serious misconduct'. These kinds of behaviour are a threat to an orderly school environment and affect the normal processes of teaching and learning (Oosthuizen, 2007).

With regards to theft and threats to personal property, one teacher participant asserted:

*Mhh..., there are good [deceitful] criminals here; if you are a teacher and forgot your cell-phone in class, within 5 minutes it will be gone. When you asked learners who took my cell-phone learners will be scared to tell, because of bully thieves. Learners also steal from each other, taking money from younger boys by force, intimidating them stating that if they dare report they will deal with them after school. There is also a lot of harassment at this school, boys do harass girls, and girls also overpower other girls, saying that you behave like a lady, use of bad language. There is no overt conflict within teachers but there is a lot of poor work relations. Socially, we are one family, but with work, we don't see eye to eye. If you speak about work, you will be targeted, victimized, you'll receive bad remarks, stating that you think you are better, you think you are the principal, you find us here and you will leave us here. Out of 23 teachers, 18 are the 'founders' of the school; they have been here since the opening of this school. Crooking [cheating with] of marks for grades 8 & 9 is common, but you can't touch them when comes to filing, their work is neat but full of wrong marks. At times their records will include those learners who had left and at worst they also mix learners' marks, where a performing learner will be allocated with wrong lower marks (Teacher B1: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

A learner participant added:

*During cold or rainy days teachers don't come to classroom containers or prefabs. Some teachers told us that if it is cold they won't teach us but they will receive they pay on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. The weather has been cold sometimes this year therefore few teachers had made it to our classrooms. During this cold winter, our class teacher came once to see us and he asked whether teachers are teaching us, then we told him that teachers don't want teach us in the containers if it is cold (Learner A2: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Participants in this study articulated that high levels of ill-discipline existed among both learners and teachers. Teachers were deliberately bunking classes and refusing to take orders from the school management. While being guilty of bunking classes, this group of teachers ensured that their administrative work (that is, their files containing their work schedules and even learners' illegitimate marks) were always in order and presentable at a standard that was far better than that of other teachers. Crooking [presenting incorrect marks or 'phantom' marks] and mixing up of learners' marks were reported. Clearly, such practices adversely affect education and kill the morale of learners. The above findings were in line with those of a school violence study by UNISA (2012) who asserts that well-run schools are focused on their central tasks of teaching, learning and management with a sense of purpose, responsibility and commitment. Such schools also possess a strong organisational capacity, including leadership and management skills and professionalism is valued. Additionally, these schools carry out their tasks with competence and confidence; they have a sense of an organisational culture, a mind-set that supports hard work and expert learner achievements, and an approach to educational excellence that acknowledges success.

Learners steal from each other and from teachers; boys harass girls; girls harass other girls. This study revealed that there was no overt conflict or violence between staff members;

During my observations I witnessed that a number of learners, especially boys, would roam around the school premises at any time of the day, making noises. Some learners would hide behind the school next to the cottage, smoking. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2010 about eight male learners were expelled for smoking dagga at school. Not a single day passed at Scooby secondary without me witnessing learners being disciplined in the staff room. They were usually disciplined verbally first, which was often followed by corporal punishment with a cane. Learners were rarely sent home for their misconduct (Observation Schedule).

At Scooby secondary I observed that teachers usually arrived at the school on time, but few teachers committed themselves to teaching after break time. I used to see the principal patrolling around the school, taking the learners back to classes and literally coercing teachers to go to classes. Some teachers were in the habit of simply absenting themselves from school. The acting principal would come back from her 'patrol' saying "I'm tired of forcing teachers to go to classes and chasing learners to classes while teachers are not there". The principal usually complained to me about those teachers who absented themselves from school. Not a single meeting was witnessed during my visits to this school.

Another respondent (a teacher at Lioness secondary) stated that a code of conduct for both learners and teachers existed on paper but that the implementation of the regulations failed outright:

*Code of conduct had already been applied but failed. We even form a disciplinary committee for teachers who are always late, who don't want to go to class, who absent themselves from work, and those who hide in their cars, or those who come and park their cars and go out with friends. We will think he is around, but he has gone with friends. The DC committee is there but does not function, because management avoids being in direct conflict with teachers. The principal is trying*

*everything on paper, but teachers despise everything (Teacher B1: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The SDSSC chair of Lioness secondary supported teacher B1 when he mentioned that the application of the code of conduct was not followed properly:

*This is one area which causes conflict between me and the principal, he...he...he...I always encourages them that if a learner has done something wrong they (teachers) must be able to differentiate between giving a punishment or discipline. When we discipline a learner or teacher, there are processes that need be followed. For example, there was a learner who was sent home for coming late. I asked the principal, did you write any letter to inform the parent. Allow me to make another example, there was a pregnant learner, actually she was due to deliver. She was made to stay at home because of that. I then asked why this learner alone because many children had fallen pregnant but they were never sent home. Ma'm said, "She is got an attitude in class". I told the teacher that we don't work with attitudes, but you should have advised her not to come to school when she is not feeling well and the dangers associated with giving birth. What I'm trying to say here is that teachers should assist the learners and not to victimise them. Teachers don't want to follow the code of conduct for learners properly (SDSSC Chair: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Additionally, a learner respondent reported that he was unfairly treated after he had been accused of misconduct:

*I and my friend were caned at the staff room and that was the end of it. I was not satisfied the way in which the case was resolved because I didn't do anything, but I was punished for nothing (Learner perpetrator B1: Scooby secondary verbatim transcription).*

While the majority of teachers and principals simply stated that disciplinary measures were followed as enshrined in the codes of conduct for learners and teachers and that a committee had been established for this purpose, the SGB chair and other participants were of a different opinion. For example, the SGB chair suggested:

*...err... for learners it is not that difficult as I have stated earlier about our security and the TLO, learners know that there is a code of conduct that is followed. But as for teachers, you will recall that we [the SGB] are not professionals, teachers are professionals in disciplining them there are no clear rules, and it is challenging or there is a grey area thereof. I realised this problem during the time when we were disciplining a teacher. I prayed such situation of disciplining teachers should not happen again as we [SGB] has no specific rules to follow (SGB chair: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

It is tragic to note how limited the executive will of a person in such an important position is. There are very clear national and provincial guidelines for SGBs in terms of disciplinary hearings. Who is to blame for this devastating oversight?

The above discourses of violence from individual interviews were supported by the documents collected from both schools. As much as the principal and other teachers from Lioness secondary were in denial of the existence of violence in their school, the disciplinary cases recorded at the end of 2010 and in the year of study (2011) revealed that school violence existed at this school and that school violence was most certainly not “...a thing of the past”, as they claimed. For example, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2010 a disciplinary hearing was conducted where a group of female learners were disciplined for absconding from classes, absenting themselves from school, and allegedly smoking dagga and cigarettes as well as using drugs and drinking liquor. The statement found in the Tribunal book read:

*Case no. 1: Anita\* pleaded guilty of all charges except for doing drugs.*

The verdict for case no. 1 read as follows: *The learner was given a suspension sentence, suspended for six months* (Tribunal book: Lioness secondary, 23 April 2010).

*Case no. 2: Dimpho\* pleaded guilty of all charges except for bunking classes and doing drugs.*

The verdict for case 2 read as follows: *The learner was given a suspension sentence, suspended for six months* (Tribunal book: Lioness secondary, 23 April 2010).

*Case no. 3: Lumka\* pleaded guilty of all charges.*

Verdict for case 3: *The learner is given a suspension sentence, suspended for six months* (Tribunal book: Lioness secondary, 23 April 2010). Verbatim transcriptions

In 2011 - during the data collection phase of the study - a number of cases were recorded in the Tribunal book of Lioness secondary. For example, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 a male learner was disciplined for being drunk during a school trip. The learner pleaded guilty and an amicable verdict determined that he should attend a rehabilitation programme. Two other learners were disciplined for drinking on the school premises and for being admitted to the school without proper documentation and valid progress reports. The statements found in the Tribunal book read as follows:

*Nkele\* was admitted to grade 9 without a valid progress report. Furthermore, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 was found drunk within the school premises. Nkele\* pleaded guilty. Verdict was that the learner was going to be deregistered* (Tribunal book: Lioness secondary, 17 March 2011 – verbatim transcription).

A spate of suspensions occurred in both schools at various levels. This study concluded that the suspensions were harsh and that this measure impacted negatively on the learners' potential for succeeding with their studies when they were compelled to be absent from school for a period of six months. The sentences were unforgiving and demonstrated a lack of compassion. Moreover, learners were suspended for a period of six months which is

against the education laws. Section 9 (1) of the SASA no. 84 of 1996 states: “Subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, the governing body of a public school may, after a fair hearing, suspend a learner from attending the school”. Additionally, subsection 9(1) (a) states: “As a correctional measure for a period not longer than one week”, or subsection 9(1) (b): “... pending a decision as to whether the learner is to be expelled from the school by the Head of Department”. The literature has revealed cases similar to the ones in this study. For example, Oosthuizen (2007a) reports that a 14-year-old learner was accused of having stolen a computer hard drive from the Technical Drawing classroom. When this matter came before the disciplinary committee of the SGB, the expulsion of the learner was unanimously recommended and effected (Oosthuizen, 2007). In terms of section 9(2) of the SA Schools Act, a recommendation to expel a learner from school has to be forwarded to the relevant Head of the Provincial Department to review the case. It appeared that this was not done in this instance.

### *c) Effects of School Violence on Teachers*

Question 6 posed the following: “How does violence affect teachers in school?” Question 6 is part of the interviews schedules which is found in the appendix section of this study. This question was answered by LO teachers, SDSSC chairpersons and other teacher stakeholders in order to elicit their experiences of the effects of school violence on teachers. The majority of the participants felt unsafe at school which was mainly attributed to learners’ acts of violence.

An LO teacher asserted:

*When learners are fighting, teachers lose a lot of time; learners lose concentration and become excited for nothing. Teachers spend more time controlling the class instead teaching after each fight. The other issue which is affecting the school and the teachers indirectly is the issue burglary which takes place almost daily in this school. If the school had purchase any equipment, the very same night will be stolen. One day they broke to my office and stole all the DVDs which I paid more*

*than a R1000 from my own pocket (LO Teacher A1: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent said:

*...learners' performance dropped out, teachers were also beaten by the learners, during the era of violence. The root cause for such beating was drugs and of course other issues (LO Teacher B1: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent who was an SDSSC chair mentioned:

*...for example, if a learner is not behaving well – unruly, I take an initiative to discipline that learner through corporal punishment. Although one has to be very, very careful when I punish them using corporal punishment because it's illegal to use, but we have to use it because it's the only way which is assisting us to maintain order. Before I punish the learner by using a stick, I have to ask the learner, does he prefer to take four strokes or call a parent? Then I will write down his choice and punish him if he agreed on that or wait for a parent (SDSSC Chair: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent stated:

*It does affect them, if they know that you a strict teacher – you don't take any nonsense but caned them, they decide to bunk your period, when you are coming in they go out. When you ask where is so and so, the class said he is around at school, and you'll know that they know that you would not take their nonsense, it depends who you are. We are mainly disturbed in terms of losing time trying to maintain order. We have some feelings of fear, but because of other learners who are supporting us – we don't fear much (Teacher B1: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The effects of violence among teachers as reported by the study participants were supported by informal conversations with other teachers and these conversations were recorded in the observation book. During informal conversations with an LO teacher and the principal of Scooby secondary, it emerged that, among other effects of school violence, a notable one was mounting depression among the staff members. It was further reported that some teachers were so adversely affected by school violence that they had to take leave of absence for medical treatment. For example, a teacher was diagnosed with depression after she had witnessed a hijacking incident which occurred at Scooby secondary. Another example of the traumatic effects of violence was severe depression resulting in a miscarriage. The acting deputy principal had to take leave of absence due to a miscarriage. The principal reported that the deputy principal suffered from depression. Research studies have revealed that both teachers and learners in schools are exposed to school violence in one way or another. A study by Rossouw (2008) revealed that teachers were subjected to physical and psychological violence at schools in South Africa; moreover, a large percentage of teachers intended to quit and others demanded armed guards at schools.

### **6.2.1 Discussion**

The majority of participants exhibited varying effects of violence ranging from issues that impacted on the implementation of the curriculum to the ones that personally or physically affected teachers. Teachers felt that they usually lost a lot of instructional time due to learners who fought and caused disorder in class. At Lioness secondary, teachers were once attacked and beaten by learners which resulted in a temporary closure of the school. At Scooby secondary the majority of participants feared violent learners, especially those who abused drugs. They were also affected by a spate of burglaries involving community thieves who stole school property. In one incident 18 doors were ripped from all the classrooms. High levels of stress among teachers at Scooby secondary were also reported as a result of school violence. Female teachers of this school were on treatment due to

depression; in the worst case a baby was lost through miscarriage due to stress. At Lioness secondary, participants also feared for their lives as learners who abused drugs became violent at times after taking drugs. It also emerged that teachers did not only fear learners because they were drug addicts or they carried weapons, but learners were also feared because of their masculinity and their unfriendly demeanour. One particular learner inspired so much fear that teachers would not call him by his real name, but he was referred to as 'Mr. X'. Furthermore, some teachers mentioned that many learners simply disrespected their opportunities for learning by disappearing from classes if a strict teacher would be in charge of that class.

The findings on the effects of school violence were aligned with other research studies which revealed that if a teacher was suffering, the children in his or her care would suffer. For example, Cosgrove (2000) asserts that teachers hampered by stress and unable to give of their best will continue to short-change their pupils through no fault of their own. Cosgrove asserts that one way for an individual to cope with stress is to take it out on other people. S/He alludes to the 'kick the cat' syndrome which is when a frustrated and angry a person lashes out at the nearest available target. Hence, place a person under stress in a classroom with young people and the consequences will certainly be unpleasant and could be awful. S/He states that, fortunately, physical attacks on children are uncommon, but the daily classroom experiences for a child whose teacher is under stress will certainly be less than positive. Shouting, verbal put-downs, a short temper, poor quality assessments, unimaginative lessons and work not marked are some of the symptoms of depression among teachers (supra, pp. 117-118).

### **6.3 Low Levels of Teacher Professionalism**

In question 4 all the participants were asked: "What can you tell me about the culture of this school with regard to late coming? Late coming to school is related to violence when

for example, a teacher joins the class late while the teacher is late or away learners may at times fight one another on trivial issues as they were not occupied with academic work.

The participants of the two schools expressed varying opinions with regard to late coming, school meetings and conflicts/disciplinary problems. At Scooby secondary, late coming was still regarded as one of the major problems requiring disciplinary intervention, while at Lioness secondary late coming was viewed by some participants as moderate while other participants felt that late coming occurred to a large extent.

The respondent who was a teacher and a Deputy Principal mentioned that, although late coming was not alarming in the mornings among either learners or teachers, some teachers needed to be coerced to go to class after break times. She stated:

*We observed a trend of two different types of late coming. In the morning, during teaching and learning time late coming is not alarming it is controllable, but then during exams they tend to come late in numbers. We will get some vague reasons, some saying I came late because I missed the transport, some saying nobody woke me up. Again the issue of unstable families plays a big role, so learners tend to do as they please. The staff do observe punctuality in the morning, but they are not prompt in attending their periods as one would expect, at times they need to be probed to go to class. Again it is not all of them, but certain individuals (Teacher A1: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The SGB chairperson reported that late coming occurred in her school. She stated that she was aware of it although she did not visit the school on a daily basis:

*Although I'm not at school on daily basis, I have an idea about the issue of late coming. Most of our learners are coming from this community; I can compare children while walking to schools, that learners of a certain schools and ours. You will find that learners of certain schools are busy running from 06h30 while ours are just walking slowly way long after six and they will arrive late at school. I think there is no control at the school, because our school has been suffering from the*

*fact there has been no principal for a long time – only the acting principal, and you cannot enforce authority to a person who is acting. This is because while she is acting she does know her fate and that is where the school is lacking the most – issues of discipline. Moreover the principal is waiting for the outcomes from the dispute of the interviews by one of our teachers for the same principal's post where she is acting* (SGB Chair: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).

At Scooby secondary the principal had been acting for more than five years. It emerged that, as an acting principal, she was faced with numerous challenges, the most important being that she was unable to enforce authority and school rules through a lack of the official power that is usually vested in a principal. It is my contention that her inability to enforce discipline was due to various internal and external factors such as: a general lack of support from staff and SMT, a heightening of learner misconduct (in particular late coming), a lack of Departmental support, and the involvement of trade unions who supported their 'cronies' in the teaching environment. The lack of proper educational support of the principal (acting or not) led to a disorderly school environment where learners of this school had no sense of urgency when going to school in the morning; even when they were late, they would simply walk in a leisurely manner. This study contends that, irrespective of a principal serving in an acting position, rules must be applied without compromise and principals (permanent or acting) should be supported as the custodians of authority in the schools. Jimerson et al., (2006) argue that one indicator of an ineffective school is a disorderly school environment with vague disciplinary measures. The principal did not resort to Departmental sanctions under the Schools Act in disciplining the learners because it emerged that the school was awaiting for the outcomes of the interview disputes by one of the heads of departments' teacher.

Another respondent (an LO teacher) supported the view that teachers had a traditional tendency of coming late to school:

*Staff [members] also has a habit of coming late to school, it's something that is recurring, it was happening before – during the era of the late principal, now even with the acting principal, staff is still coming late. This craziness (referring to violence), laziness and late coming is still there. During briefing meeting in the morning, you will find that only half of the staff is in attendance. So those types of things I don't want to get into them, I'm going to stop there for now (LO Teacher A2: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The SDSSC chairperson, who was also a teacher liaison officer (TLO) at Lioness Secondary, noted that late coming still existed; however, he was worried about the practice where learners were summarily chased away for coming late instead of the correct procedures being followed:

*Yes, actually late coming is a problem that's one of the challenges that we are facing at this school. But normally the principal used to send home those learners who come late, and say "don't come to school", things like that. So, one day I faced him and talk to him in a polite manner about this. I told him that the law does not allows you to chase learners away just like that. At some stage we need to investigate why certain learners always come late to school, because it might be the issue of dysfunctional families. Let me give an example, at one stage there was a learner who came to school just to write a test and go back home because her mother was terminally ill. When this learner finished with a test, she approached the class teacher and requested to go home to look after her mother. "By coming here I was risking because I don't know what will happen while I'm away", said the learner. Instead the female teacher, to my surprise, verbally abused the learner, and emotionally abusing her, saying "You are lying, you want to go and see your boyfriend, why did you come to school if your mother was ill?" (SDSSC chair: Lioness Secondary verbatim transcription).*

The above discourse of violence revealed that the teachers, in particular female teachers, had a tendency to abuse learners emotionally and psychologically. This was evident where the learner was reprimanded and verbally victimised for requesting to go home to look after her sickly mother.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the school management, in particular the principal, had the tendency to dismiss learners summarily from school when they came late for morning study classes. Is it educationally sound if a principal punishes learners by chasing them away from school each time they come late, particularly in the morning before the official starting of the school day? Does the principal act within the ambit of SASA in subjecting learners to such a measure under the guise of discipline? Section 9 (1) of SASA no. 84 of 1996 stipulates that, subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, the governing body of a public school may, after a fair hearing, suspend a learner from attending the school: (a) as a correctional measure for a period not longer than one week or (b) pending a decision as to whether the learner is to be expelled from the school by the Head of Department. The question may be posed whether such extreme measures may be reverted to because a principal has run out of options of disciplining learners due to the fact that corporal punishment was banned.

Additionally, a teacher poured out her frustration about the issues of late coming where the security guard was in charge of some disciplinary issues at the school, including late coming. When trying to refer learners who were failing to honour morning study, teachers would simply distance themselves:

*...the guard will stand with learners at the gate trying to inform the teachers that they must discipline learners for late coming. All the teachers will just say, "Oh no, it is not our duty". Then the security will be in charge of disciplining the learners, for late coming, for the uniform, he does not allow learners to enter the school without a tie or proper uniform. The guard will tell the learners to clean the school yard in attempt to discipline them for late coming. During school periods he walks*

*around, patrolling, checking those learners who are not in class and making noise. If he saw learners making noise in class without an teacher, he will ask learners to fetch the teacher from the staff room. Learners are not afraid of the teachers, but the security guard. Learners will say we don't want mister so and so (the guard) to see us doing wrong things because he will send us home. The security guard takes the responsibilities and job description of the teachers and the principal to deal with the issues of learner ill-discipline. The issue of late coming was raised, but the SMT does not honour its duties to discipline teachers for late coming or anything for that matter. Only few (5) teachers who commit themselves to teaching and learning (Teacher B1: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

### **6.3.1 Discussion**

At Lioness secondary, teachers and the principal often distanced themselves from their responsibility to discipline learners who were disrespecting the school rules. This manifested where the security guard took ownership of disciplining learners for late coming, noise, teachers who dishonouring their core duties of teaching, learners who bunked classes, untidy uniforms, and many other matters of learner misconduct. From time to time the security guard patrolled classes in the absence of teachers to control and punish learners who were noisy and unoccupied. When the security guard sought the support of teachers in disciplining learners, teachers' responses would be negative and they would mention that it was not their duty to discipline learners. It may be argued that the abolition of corporal punishment left a definite vacuum in methods dealing with serious learner misconduct (Oosthuizen, 2007). However, in terms of section 10 of the South African Schools Act (SA, 1996(a)), corporal punishment is prohibited in South African schools. No parent may lawfully authorize or grant a teacher permission to administer corporal punishment to his or her child; consequently, a teacher who administers corporal punishment may be found guilty of assault (Oosthuizen, 2007). Is it good for education when teachers turn a blind eye to learner misconduct due to a lack of effective and innovative methods of dealing with learner misbehaviour? Do teachers fear that punitive

measures will be taken against them for disciplining learners? In this regard, the security guard was quick to point out that he was managing the school in terms of general learner discipline. Are security guards equipped or permitted or even capacitated to take over the responsibilities of teachers and the principal in terms of maintaining general discipline for learners other than ensuring that unwanted elements do not enter the school premises? Moreover, the security guard received threats and unwelcome visits from learners and ex-learners for his actions of disciplining them, which enforced the culture of violence in the particular school. This study maintains that learner misconduct should be dealt with by teachers through the application of official school rules and well-developed codes of conduct as enacted by the SASA no. 84 of 1996.

#### **6.4 Lack of Support**

Question 5 required participants to respond to the following: “How does violence affect the learners?” Alternatively: “How safe do you think learners feel at this school?” This question is found in the interviews schedules appendix section of this study. To fight against the many injustices and atrocities committed by members of the community, the school opted for a non-violent strategy by marching to the local Department of Basic Education offices. The match was temporarily effective as the school was provided with armed security guards by the local District official. Within three months it surfaced that the provided security guards were supposed to be funded by the school and not by the local District office. The school found itself in debt and had to discontinue the private guard services. The discontinued service of the armed guards landed the school back into violence.

In both schools violence affected each segment of the school community in various ways, ranging from fear of violence to assault.

One principal noted:

*In violent schools, people who are affected are the people who are serious about their work. We ended up losing learners who are serious about their work as they cannot afford to be in the midst of learners who carry dangerous weapons during the era of violence. We also lose time as we have to attend to cases; for example, when they are fighting in class. Teachers were also affected as they were even assaulted; they were affected both physically and mentally (Principal: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The other principal stated:

*Learners are affected by violence in many ways. If learners had a quarrel in class and ended up fighting, the whole class will be so excited and they will shout and make unnecessary noise. One day they were boys from the community who threw stones on the classroom's roofs while learners were busy writing examinations. Male learners were so angry about this action and they requested that the best thing is to go after these boys who are throwing stones onto roof of the school. The naughty boys ran for their lives and they were not caught, unfortunately. Then after such incidents most learners were disturbed with examination (Principal: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent (LO teacher) noted that in most cases learners enjoyed violence:

*It depends on the severity of the incident, but if it is violence which involves the use of weapons, like the one where the boy had a shooting spree, definitely learners could not cope with the situation. But some learners always enjoy violence; learners treat violence like fun or a game to them. Kids everywhere enjoy playing violently, even to the well-disciplined schools. I had that from my son, telling me that in one of the so-called C school, where the child is schooling, learners do fight in the toilets; they close the doors in the toilets and fight while other learners are watching and laughing. But if it is a black (African) on black learner fight, everyone run away saying wow it's a darkie fight we might get hurt. That is why*

*when I'm comparing my school from what I'm hearing from my children school I don't see much difference. Fighting is defined as a boy "thing" (LO Teacher A1: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The SDSSC respondent felt that school violence affected learner performance:

*In fact it affects their performances because if you are not free where you are you can't perform at your best. The reason for drastic drop of results in 2007 was because most of the teachers were telling me that they are afraid to teach, even going to the classrooms they didn't know what will happen while they are there. In most instances I had to remain with someone as a guard, and if I can show that I'm also a human being – also scared, it will be worse, that means they were relying on me so I had to be strong for them. Violence also affected those who were too scared because they ended up not coming to school; absenteeism was high because of fear (SDSSC: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The majority of the participants from both schools felt that learners were adversely affected by school violence in many ways. For example, learners and teachers experienced fear of violence within the school; learners would lose instructional time; some learners dropped out or transferred to other schools; and criminals would intimidate learners by throwing stones onto the roof and into classrooms. It was further noted that although violence was negatively affecting most learners, some enjoyed watching other learners as they engaged in a fist fights. Violence further affected those learners who were very scared because they ended up not coming school; absenteeism was high because of fear, which means that those learners were also psychologically affected. Fear of attending school results in dropping out of school or changing schools where possible. The findings of this study were substantiated by DioGuardi and Theodore (2006, p. 340) who relate the effects of victimization to academic maladjustment, such as avoidance and dislike of school. Long-term effects of peer victimization have been linked to low self-esteem and bouts or short periods of depression; attention difficulties; self-perceived unpopularity and

neediness. Additional psychological sequelae<sup>4</sup> involve a greater likelihood of experiencing loneliness and avoiding school. The SGB Chair maintained:

*Learners are greatly affected if teachers are not honouring classes, because the reason to be in school is to receive education through teachers (SGB Chair: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another teacher respondent concurred with the SGB chair of Lioness secondary:

*Generally, learners are affected because the teacher will react by abandoning the class because of one or two learners who are misbehaving (Teacher A1: Scooby secondary school – verbatim transcription).*

Another teacher respondent stated:

*You will find that some of the learners are focused; they want to achieve something, they are very worried about violence. They will come at times to report that somebody is misbehaving just because he took his dagga, what....what.... reporting that we are worried everything is not normal. Mainly boys are involved in smoking dagga, but there are 4 or 5 five girls who also take dagga (Teacher B1: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The security guard asserted:

*Learners are affected because they receive no proper education as some teachers absent themselves from school; health-wise learners are also affected as they smell secondary dagga smell out of their will (Security guard: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

---

<sup>4</sup> Unhealthy mental conditions following and injuries or disease (Oxford English dictionary, 2011)

The general assistant maintained that learners were affected by violence. He asserted that, in particular, those who were Christians were affected the most:

*Other learners who are not involved in drugs or any other acts of violence, and especially those who are Christians, are affected the most. One will find those who are Christians confused with all these acts of violence and times one will find them not knowing what to do or react if learners are fighting. They will just show the signs of devastation and confusion (General assistant: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

A learner perpetrator stated:

*Most of the learners feel safe in this school, with the exception of those who had experienced violence. For example, people from the community once entered school and snatched two cellular phones from two male learners in front of the security guard and these two learners don't feel safe at school (Learner perpetrator A1: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent who was a learner victim maintained:

*Some don't feel safe they even wish the school to be off before time (Learner victim C1: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The discourses of experiences of violence from the individual interviews were supported by observations recorded in the observation schedules that were used for the purpose of this study. For example, I observed that at Scooby secondary, classes were usually unruly; learners made loud noises especially during the first and second periods in the morning. Learners were uncontrollable when making these noises because some of the teachers often didn't attend the first periods of teaching. Moreover, I did not observe any intentions by the teachers or management to search for and seize dangerous weapons and illegal drugs as a measure to mitigate violence in either of the schools. No searching for or seizing of

illegal drugs was ever commissioned in the schools, irrespective of wide evidences that learners were smoking dagga and selling and abusing substances on the school premises.

The above examples of school violence were supported by local and international literature on school violence. A study conducted by Burton et al.,(2009) reported high levels of feelings of fear in South African schools as it revealed that 11.6% of female learners and 8% of male learners felt unsafe in schools. The report by the (Wilson, 2006) argues that girls continue to face many barriers to learning at school as safety within the school is an often-cited, but perhaps less well understood, determinant of children's, especially girls', participation in basic education. An unsafe learning environment is among the reasons that girls discontinue their studies or that parents refuse to enrol and keep their daughters in school.

Additionally, Harber (2001) contends that schools are war-zones; his study report reveals that schools stand empty while gangs hit out at learners and teachers from across playing fields. Inside, teachers teach and learners learn as their eyes rest suspiciously on the door, half-expecting to be held up by a bunch of gun-wielding thugs.

#### **6.4.1 Discussion**

The majority of the participants reported that school violence had an adverse impact on learners, thus negatively affecting their performances. The majority of participants echoed a lack of commitment among teachers in performing their core duty of teaching. Teachers at Scooby secondary and Lioness secondary were reported to be dishonouring classes for various reasons. In both schools teachers feared being in class at times as learners were too violent and teachers would at times abandon an entire class if s/he was unable to handle disruptive learner/s. In other cases teachers were simply too lazy to attend to their teaching duties in the classroom. These findings were corroborated by UNISA (2012) which

contends that teachers absent themselves from school without reason, that some arrive late or leave early, and others are perhaps at school but not in class.

Teachers use their hegemony to suppress, bully and verbally victimise learners. The findings of this study were further corroborated by Guzzo et al. (2006) who assert that, in Brazilian schools, teachers' position of authority and control is used to blame learners for initiating violence in schools. Because of their authority, teachers and school staff rarely are identified as the source of violence and are protected by their power.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

At Scooby secondary the principal had been acting for more than five years. It emerged that the acting principal was faced with numerous challenges at school where she was unable to enforce authority and school rules through a lack of official power and support despite being a principal. This lack of power was due to various factors such as a general lack of support from staff and SMT members and a heightening of learner misconduct, in particular late coming. This lack of support led to a disorderly school environment where learners had no sense of urgency when going to school in the morning - even if they were late they would amble along at a leisurely pace. Jimerson et al. (2006) argue that one indicator of an ineffective school is a disorderly school environment with vague disciplinary school rules. Additionally, UNISA (2012) asserts that well-run schools are focused on their central tasks of teaching, learning and management with a sense of purpose, responsibility and commitment.

Staff meetings, which were mainly in the form of briefing sessions, were held in both schools. However, it appeared that resolutions taken at staff meetings were not implemented. Furthermore, the study revealed that the school management, in particular the principal at Lioness secondary, had the tendency to summarily dismiss learners from

school when they came late for morning study. Is it a sound educational principle if the principal punishes learners by chasing them away from school each time they come late, in particular for early morning study before the official school starting time? Additionally, it was revealed that teachers were breaching the law by continuously abusing learners through their use of abusive language and corporal punishment instead of following the code of conduct provided by the Department of Basic Education. Research by SAHRC (2006) suggests that the perpetrators of violence are pupils and teachers, with both groups carrying the brunt of continuous bullying, gender-based violence, accidental violence, harassment, physical violence and psychological violence. According to SASA no. 84 of 1996, sub-section 18.1(i) and 18.1(iii), teachers are forbidden to use obscene or abusive language; corporal punishment; and any form of humiliation and intimidation, whether physical or psychological in nature.

The study further revealed that teachers of one school cheated with marks and mixed marks scored by learners. This practice created violence, as dissatisfied learners would act aggressively. Another factor that contributed to a climate of violence was old and unrefurbished school buildings together with a lack of proper security personnel. The threat these factors posed to teachers was found to be significant. The findings in this regard were corroborated by Osher, Dwyer and Jimerson (2006, p. 52) who argue that collective components of achievement involve the characteristics of the school community, including its structure, human resources, and learner members.

Lastly, the majority of teacher participants exhibited varying symptoms as a consequence of the violent climate in which they had to work. These ranged from issues which impacted on the implementation of the curriculum to the ones which affected the physical and mental health of the teachers. Not only was valuable teaching and learning time lost through learner truancy, but the negative effects on learners caused by the leave of absence of teachers due to their physical and mental illness, as a consequence if inordinate levels of stress are immeasurable.

In the following chapter I present the findings and discussions on the last two critical questions.

**CHAPTER 7**  
**DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION: IMPACT OF SOCIAL  
STRUCTURES, MEASURES AND INITIATIVES TO MITIGATE SCHOOL  
VIOLENCE**

**7.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on presenting and discussing the data that were generated from participants representing the schools under study.

In chapter 6 the responses to three questions were presented and analysed. These questions were: a) What can you tell me about the culture of this school with regards to late coming, meetings and disciplinary problems? b) How does violence affect the learners? c) How does violence affect the teachers? Chapter 7 will further present, analyse and discuss qualitative data obtained through interviews (semi-structured and focused groups), observation schedules, documentation reviews and reflective journals. The major focus of this chapter is to present the findings related to the following:

- a) How did wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status shape violence production within the schools under study?
- b) What policies, measures and initiatives were taken by the schools under study to promote a violence-free school environment?

**7.2 Violence Typologies and the Effect of Socio-Economic Status on School Violence**

Question 7 asked: ‘What kind of violence occurs in the school?’ This question is found in the interviews schedules appendix section of this study. Incidents involving various types of violence were reported in both schools. At Scooby secondary the majority of participants reported the existence of violence in their school ranging from minor to serious incidences of violence. These included teasing, harassment, bullying, stealing,

carrying of dangerous weapons, fist fights and stabbing. At Lioness secondary the majority of the participants agreed that various types of serious violence had occurred in the past but that, at the time of the study, violence occurred to a lesser degree. Carrying of weapons, fist fights and stealing were some of the types of violence reported at Lioness secondary.

The SDSSC chairperson of Lioness Secondary stated that, at times, stealing went hand in glove with drug abuse – learners stole in order to feed their addiction. He said:

*The most common violence is gender based violence, boys beating girls, but again that is coming down, because I always tell them in the assembly about human rights – infusing human rights to learners. But we still have issues of bullying, teasing and so on. They also steal among themselves, things like, cell phones. I told that principal that I saw something in one school, where they take cellphones from learners and keep them for a day and give back after school. I suggested that what if we use the same method. If for example, a learner uses cell-phone during lesson time we should confiscate it and give it at the end of the year. Or a learner should pay a fine of R50 00. Unfortunately my suggestion fell on deaf ears, I was not supported. For example, today there was a case of a stolen cell-phone from another. Yes, it is the case also here, most of them they don't take these drugs here at school, they take before and after school, which makes it difficult to discipline them (SDSSC chair: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The participants from Scooby secondary revealed that most of their learners came from families of low economic status, child-headed families and/or fractured or dysfunctional families. In many instances learners took care of their sick parents/guardians and some were involved in the abuse of illegal drugs. These factors, coupled with the low economic environment within which the schools are located, shaped the production of violence. This was manifested where burglary was at the order of the day. The school administrator showed some signs of hopelessness when she stated: "... as we are repairing today, in the afternoon the burglars will come again to steal and vandalise". Research studies have

revealed that the school environment is directly or indirectly affected by whatever takes place in the macro system or in the wider community in which the school is located (Wilson, 2006; Burton, 2007; CSV, 2010). The findings of this study were supported by those of CSV (2010) where it was observed that the widespread poverty within the community does not in itself cause violence, but that it does set the conditions under which delinquency, crime, violence and substance abuse flourish. For example, poor families may be unable to afford school fees and uniforms which might lead to stress for a child; this may increase the chance that s/he might drop out of school. Children living in poor areas may also have less access to pro-social activities like sports, which in turn may leave them in a void where they are unable to keep busy.

A teacher respondent shared the sentiment that various types of violence occurred in his school, including incidents like cyber bullying that went unreported. He stated:

*There is more of physical violent, they fight a lot, they snatch cash/cellphones, there steal bags, even the things that they are wearing at sometimes. Sexual harassment is happening and learners do report issues of harassment. Not much of Cyber bullying has been reported, but we overheard cases, sending of insults by short message systems (SMS's) but the sender will be not identified (Teacher A1: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2011, while I was still at Scooby secondary and busy with the interview with the principal, the grade 12 teacher rushed into the office looking for the principal. The teacher told the principal that Grade 12 learners were refusing to submit their long overdue work. He stated that learners bunked the classes and hid inside the toilets during submission times. The principal had to abandon the interview to attend to the issue. Learners were called to the office for disciplinary purposes and more lists of misconduct by learners were witnessed. For example, the same learners were involved in constantly making unnecessary noise in class, humiliating teachers, and generally disturbing teaching and learning processes at any given point. Eventually the interview

process continued but under very strenuous conditions due to the ever persisting noise of hammers as the roof of the principal's office was under construction after a recent burglary incident (Observation schedule).

Although the principal of Lioness secondary reported that violence was a thing of the past in his school, other participants from his school were of a different opinion. For example, a teacher stated:

*Stealing is the main thing. As teachers we don't leave our bags anywhere in the staffroom because learners can snatch them in case there is no one. Our learners do drugs and supply drugs to learners, steal from each and other teachers, but although they do carry knives, but they don't use it to stab other learners or teachers. But except that it is used as a tool to intimidate other learners (Teacher B1: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Children stole from others and from the teachers for various reasons. Some stole to feed their bad habits of substance abuse, some stole unwillingly but were compelled by hunger, and some stole merely as a means of misbehaving. In this study the majority of learners came from destitute families, some lived with their grandparents and some were heads their families. Some learners lived with relatives but some lived with their parents who were unemployed and some of those parents were compelled by circumstances or opted to be alcoholics.

School violence does not start in the school per se. Meyer (2006) and Burton (2010) contend that most behaviours are learnt responses to circumstances and situations that are exhibited in our everyday life.

One of the principals stated:

*The frequent violence in this school is fists fights, especially among male learners. There was one incident where there was a grade 11 boy, while the teacher was busy teaching a big knife fell off from this boy. The teacher was shocked by the incident, and when the learner was questioned why the knife, the learner participant by saying that "I have enemies outside who want to kill, I'm protecting myself". Despite fist fights, learners also use offensive language against other learners. Another thing is that when male learners are proposing love to their female counterparts, if a female learner refuses, the male learner will harass the female learner by touching the girl's breasts, bums, etc. When female learners complaint about this improper touching, the male learners will just say, "You were touched by mistake". Another problem is the issue of drugs among our learners. For example, there is a sample of drug which was confiscated from a grade 9 learner – a boy who clashed with one of the teachers in class because this boy wanted to stab another learner in the classroom, who accused the other learner by stating, "You reported me that I was absent during IsiZulu period," said the boy. When the teacher said "Let us go to the office then", on the way to my office dagga dropped from the boy who wanted to stab another learner. Some learners don't want to submit their work; they are being disrespectful of their own learning. Some learners are just lost because of their age category and I don't think they are supposed to be in high school, because they are old. It is possible to find a 17 year old in grade 8 instead of grade 12. And most of them bunk classes, if the teacher is busy teaching, they will be outside doing all sorts of things (Principal: Scooby Secondary verbatim transcription).*

This study established that there were various types of ill-disciplined learners whose behaviours ranged from substance abuse to fist fights, carrying of dangerous weapons, threats and intimidation of stabbing, disrespecting of own learning through failure to submit school work, harassment and bunking of classes. Furthermore, this study revealed

that learners' age impacted negatively on other learners, particularly where older learners in lower grades were reported to behave in a chaotic manner and had no sense of direction about their learning. Also, learners were reported to be in possession of illegal weapons for self-protection. A series of learner misbehaviours at Scooby secondary made it clear that the school was in violence and most of the violence was caused by male learners over girls. Violence was not only school-based but learners had enemies in the community. The findings of this study were supported by Furlong and Morrison (2000) who contend that learners bring weapons, including guns, to school for protection and other reasons. More than 55% of the learners in their study reported that they had brought a gun to school because they were angry with someone and because they were "... thinking about shooting him/her" (supra, p. 19).

Another respondent (an LO teacher) eloquently illustrated how minor persistent teasing led to violent revenge:

*Bullying, mostly bullying. It is difficult to present which type of bullying is present in this school, but most bullying begins with teasing. One incident I can relate to, there was a child who was born epileptic and he was under chronic treatment. This type of treatment is likely to cause obesity to the user. Now this boy slowly became obese and when one look at him from the side you'll think you are looking at a woman because of the extra curves he had developed. One day his classmate teased this epileptic boy and called him 'umasibanibani'<sup>5</sup>. This teasing continued for quite some time. The perpetrator continued to tease this boy as usual while the whole class laughed at him, this time the boy was so angry and they engaged in a physical fight. Because the class was in favour of the clown - the perpetrator - each time the epileptic boy receive a punch from the perpetrator the whole class will laugh at him and clap hands in favour of the perpetrator. The boy could not contain the anger any longer. He then decided to leave school and went straight home. Within minutes, we had gunshot coming from the class where the boy went to. He*

---

<sup>5</sup> Means a certain old sluggish woman

*was on a shooting spree, and he went straight to the class where he left his classmates and his perpetrator and started shooting. By that time I was supervising the grade 8, I went out of the class as he was heading towards us. I got inside the class he gave up three shots on the wall and some of the learners wet themselves while they were like a heap of a mountain where every learner wanted to be at the bottom, and while one at the top was shouting on top of his voice for help. Fortunately no one was injured, except the trauma relapses (LO teacher A1: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

In the study I termed this type of violence ‘defensive’ violence because the learner who fired several gunshots at his perpetrator did so because he could not contain his anger any longer as he had been teased and laughed at by other learners. If the victim boy knew how to operate a gun this could have led to the death of learners and/or teachers as the culprit was running all over trying to hide, using other learners and teachers as a shield. This study established that low-level forms of violence like teasing and harassment can lead to high-level forms of violence which could be fatal. This study further established that learners who had rare medical conditions like epilepsy were highly victimized emotionally and psychologically at public schools by both their teachers and peers. In one instance teachers exacerbated the victimization of an epileptic learner in various ways, for example by failing to find a proper school for him (which is an inclusive school) and by failing to stop others from bullying and teasing him. Again, learner perpetrators of course victimized this boy by teasing him remorselessly while this form of violence was exacerbated by other learners who supported the perpetrator(s) and by laughing at the victim learner.

There are various types of victims found within the school context. Research has demonstrated that victims themselves are a heterogeneous population. Stages of aggression and victim response result in either aggressive or nonaggressive victims (Diaguardi and Theodore, 2006). Nonaggressive victims tend to be characterized as having submissive and

passive behavioural styles; this category comprises the overwhelming majority of children that are bullied.

Teasing involves aggression; for some scholars, teasing is a type of bullying, whereas others argue that teasing incorporates more prosocial behaviours such as humour or play, depending on the target's interpretation. An ideal definition of teasing accounts for how teasing can lead to both antisocial and prosocial outcomes. In this study it was found that teasing led to antisocial outcomes where the victim was a target for malicious humour. He was teased almost daily because of his obesity due to a medical condition and the consequences of the treatment he received for it (Hatzichristou et al., 2012, pp. 148-149).

The SGB chair of Lioness secondary expressed his concern about another issue in the school:

*Mhh... I have to say that I'm sceptical in answering this question, because I have to be honest, err... I have experienced that some of the teachers don't honour their classes even if they are there. Also learners do bunk classes at times, some of them of course. Issues of smoking of drugs are still there though at minimum level now, when I was passing grade 9 class one day I smell dagga but I didn't witness anyone smoking. But there was the first and last now (SGB Chair: Lioness Secondary).*

While the LO teacher of Scooby secondary verbalised concern about teasing and bullying, the SDSSC chairperson of Lioness secondary complained bitterly about gender-based violence between learners. He also expressed personal experience of the possible prevalence of substance abuse at his school.

Another participant (the general assistant / cleaner) concurred with the SGB chair with regards to learner-teacher violence:

*The major problems in this school are drugs, alcohol and learners are unruly in general, and they don't want to be inside the classrooms due to drugs. Learners*

*come to school in the morning with drugs and by the time they go to classrooms they are already high. When teachers speak to them, they ridicule them, take no notice of them, and/or just continue with their own activities which are outside the curricular program at that time. At all times this school find itself spending more time disciplining learners instead of teaching them. Once learners are drunk or high in drugs they fight each other, show no respect to teachers and to other learners. They fight inside the classrooms especially when there is no teachers in a particular class and other teachers have to abandon other classes to attend to the fighting learners (General assistant/the cleaner: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another security guard mentioned that violence in his school was generally perceived as a thing of the past, but he had realised recently that abuse of drugs and other violence associated with the use of drugs were re-surfacing:

*There are learners who have just joined the school and they are doing drugs. Actually they are taking us back where we were before, because we had cleaned the school but now here they are here. If I can recall, two weeks back I caught some learners abusing drugs. But I hope this will be eliminated because those areas which they used to smoke inside have been locked – I mean classes that are on the ground floor. The problem is the school is too big for one person [to patrol]. Even now, once they are high on drugs they disrespect teachers inside the classroom, even females they do drugs. Last year I was in court due to the issues of drugs at this school, the case will be finalized soon (Security guard: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The high level of substance abuse, in particular the use of dagga, was alarming. It was noted that some learners would deliberately go via specific places in order to smoke before coming to school. Consequently they would arrive late and be ‘on a high’ as they would be inebriated with illegal drugs. As their moods would be altered through the use of

substances, they would experience feelings of invincibility would take no notice of their teachers when they were reprimanded. Moreover, the negative impact on their ability to access and absorb knowledge would be profound. It therefore follows that easy access to drugs by learners further increased the likelihood of misbehaviour and, in the process, disregard for education among learners.

The focus group asserted:

*One day we were in the assembly longer than usual. While we were there criminals from the community who were informed by other learners from this school came through the fence and stole our belongings from the container classrooms. When we reported the matter to the office, the teachers told us we deserve it, and we like, why because we were in the assembly and nobody informed us that the assembly will be long that day, because we should have brought our bags with us (Focus group B2: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Failure to protect learners is part of violence. This type of violence manifested where learners lost their belongings which had of necessity been left in classes which were isolated from the main buildings. Teachers kept Grade 8 learners in assembly for a longer period than usual, knowing that the longer they stayed the better the chances would be for criminals to sneak into the isolated classes and steal learners' belongings. It was common knowledge that criminals were always ready to sneak through the illegal openings and steal learners' belongings in the isolated prefabricated classes. Teachers failed their learners in this instance as no measures had been employed to safeguard their possessions. Schools can therefore perpetrate violence by omission.

### *7.2.1 Discussion*

The study revealed that minor yet persistent teasing can lead to defensive violence. This type of defensive violence was evidenced by a learner who fired several gunshots at his perpetrator in retaliation for being mercilessly and persistently teased and laughed at by other learners. If the victim had known how to operate a gun, this could have led to tragic fatalities. It should also be questioned how this boy had such easy access to a gun. In the light of this', the study established that low-level forms of violence like teasing and harassment can lead to high-level forms of violence which could be fatal. The situation for this boy was exacerbated by teachers who further victimized this epileptic sufferer by failing to find a proper school for him and by failing to stop the bullying. En example of how low-levels of unstemmed violence can explode into fatal tragedy was found among recent media reports which have shown that incidents of extreme violence against learners in elementary schools pose a huge risk. A 23-year-old ex-pupil of a public school in Brazil gunned down 12 learners between the ages of 12 and 15 (SABC, 2011). Harber (2004, p. 1) is critical of adults' inability to respond to violence against their learners. He argues that when we respond to violence in schools, if we respond at all, it is to the children who are violent. When a child forces another to do his or her bidding, we call it extortion; when an adult does the same thing to a child, it is called correction. When a student hits another student it is assault; when a teacher hits a student it is for the child's 'own good'. When a student embarrasses, ridicules or scorns another student it is harassment, bullying or teasing. When a teacher does it, it is sound pedagogical practice.

As stated before, failure to protect learners is part of violence. This type of violence was evident where learners lost their belongings while they were kept longer in assembly than usual. Learner participants asserted that teachers usually informed them to bring their bags to the assembly if it would be longer than usual. The fact that criminals might sneak in and steal learners' possessions should have been foreseen. Schools can therefore perpetrate violence by omission. Harber (2004, p.9) posits that the forms of violence by omission could be seen as essentially reproductive. By doing nothing or ignoring a negative or

dangerous aspect of the surrounding society the role of schools can be said to be reproductive. Schools are reproducing violence when they disregard violence that spills from the society to the schools, and schools perpetrate violence when they commit acts of violence on learners.

### 7.3 Spaces of Violence that Facilitate Violence in Schools

Question 8 posed the following: “Where does violence occur in the school?” This question is found in the interviews schedules appendix section of this study. One teacher indicated that violence occurred everywhere in her school, even during assembly:

*Violence is everywhere in this school. Wherever there is an interaction between the kids and if they differ in their opinions, they fight. It can be in class, toilets, even in the assembly they do fight sometimes, but is not the order of the day (LO teacher: A1: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent who served on the school’s Discipline, Safety and Security committee (SDSSC) as chairperson asserted:

*...I can say that even outside the school premises after school hours. They won’t do it here because they know that ah...ah..., as a matter of fact to end the gangsters here I ended them for one good reason I’ve been a reservist. I’ve been a member of the community policing forum (CPF), and I worked with the police, I know all the police work, so that is how I dealt with them [gangsters]. To prevent them, if there is fire you must put fire, because they carry guns you must also fire them, that’s what I did with the assistance of the police, they know their place is in the surroundings now (SDSSC Chair: Scooby secondary - verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent asserted that violent took place in vacant classrooms and, in his view, the main source of violence started with the abuse of drugs. He stated:

*...at vacant places – vacant classrooms. Ok, in the morning and afternoon and also recharge during breaks time with dagga (Teacher B1: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The majority of the participants from both schools asserted that school violence took place everywhere on the school premises, including in toilets, on the playgrounds, in vacant buildings and even inside classrooms where learning and teaching were supposed to take place. Classrooms at times became hotspots for violence as acts of violence replaced teaching and learning. It was further reported that the TLOs played a vital role in minimizing the role of gangsters who operated from the surrounding community and who had tendencies of turning the school into a playground for violence. These findings were supported by various studies. For example, Burton (2007) contends that while most of the areas within the school premises are unsafe mainly for girls, gangs would infiltrate schools and actively utilise the school grounds to increase their power and influence. As mentioned earlier, the study by Harber (2001) further highlights how fearful both teachers and learners are as their attention is constantly drawn to doors and windows in the expectation of violent interruptions by gangsters.

The SDSSC chairperson shared sentiments that were similar to those of teacher B1:

*With drugs they come to school already high on drugs – as they take them before and after school. The issues of stealing takes place in classrooms (SDSSC Chair: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

A principal was of the opinion that violence took place on the school premises but that such acts mostly occurred during specific time periods:

*In most cases violence occurs during break times. Learners will come running to our offices saying that, “Somebody slapped me in my face,” or “Somebody stole my bag,” or “Somebody stole my money.” Most of the stealing is perpetrated by*

*male learners against female learners* (Principal: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).

A cleaner categorically stated that violence occurred not only on the school premises, but also outside the school perimeter after school hours:

*Violence occurs everywhere within the premises of the school and sometimes outside the school after school hours. Violence occurs in classrooms, inside the toilets, and the back of the classrooms, behind the cottages and even in the playground where they supposed to be playing enjoying themselves* (General assistant/ the cleaner: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).

The security guard confirmed that violence took place within the school premises:

*...inside the school premises* (Security guard: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).

A learner respondent stated:

*They do drugs outside the classrooms, in the sports ground, and behind the cottage. But those who are involved in conflicts, they fight anywhere within the school premises, in classrooms, under verandas, behind classes, sports ground, everywhere they fight* (Learner Victim A2: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).

Lastly, another learner who fell under the victim category was mainly worried about learners who did drugs at school. All these learners were viewed as the main source of violence at the school:

*Learners misbehave once they have taken drugs. At times they smoke in the classroom and verandas. Even those who don't do drugs they also misbehave, by*

*making unnecessary noise* (Learner victim C1: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).

Participants at Scooby secondary were in agreement about the spaces for and the nature of violence in their schools. Violence took place everywhere within the school premises, including the following areas: classrooms, bathrooms, behind the cottages, behind the classrooms, on the playground and even under the verandas. Learners were concerned about perpetrators of violence who misbehaved once they were under the influence of drugs when they normally showed aggressive behaviour. It was also noted that most acts of violence occurred during break times. The incidences of violence reported here were mostly learner-on-learner acts which were perpetrated by male learners against female learners. The most referred incidences of violence to the office during break times included stealing of bags or money and, at worst, learners hitting one another. Stealing of bags and snatching of cash from learners by other learners may be regarded as bullying. Rigby (2006) argues that bullying occurs as a result of encounters between children who differ in their personal power; that is, the more powerful the child is the more motivated s/he is to seek out and oppress the less powerful. DioGuardi and Theodore (2006) add that victimization is often equated with a power differential, whereby the victim clearly displays vulnerability in the eyes of the bully. Similarly, in a school context there are always considerable imbalances in power between children; such imbalances are related to physical and/or psychological disparities.

Learner self-referrals of incidences of violence to the office during break times indicated that the school did not ensure that staff members monitored learner behaviours on the school premises during break times. All schools are expected to have a grounds duty record book of incidents and a roster which allocates teacher playground duties. In well-run schools teachers take turns to monitor and support learners during break times, thus creating a social support component for all learners. Research suggests that misbehaviour is most likely to occur during transition, unstructured or breaks times (Morrison, et al.,

2006). For schools to be safe during the unstructured times, Morrison, et al. (2006) assert that some schools organize staff/teachers to supervise these times whereas others still leave these areas unsupervised. In this study both schools under study were unable to provide any grounds duty record books and teachers were not allocated for this task.

The principal of Lioness secondary felt that there was no violence at his school. He stated that, previously, violence had normally occurred both in the classrooms and on the playgrounds, but that this was no longer the case. However, some of the participants were not in full agreement with the principal. They stated that violence was still happening at the school but that the extent of rudeness among learners had reduced compared to previous years. In this regard a learner respondent stated:

*They used to smoke in the basement classrooms – which have been recently locked. Stealing take place in classrooms and snatching of cash took place within the premises* (Learner perpetrator D2: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).

A teacher who was in agreement with the learner asserted:

*...difficult to say where, but it was near the classrooms where the dagga smell came out* (Teacher B2: Scooby Secondary – verbatim transcription).

The above arguments of school violence from individual interviews were supported by the documents collected from both schools. The majority of the participants from Scooby secondary were in agreement that violence occurred both inside and outside the school premises. However, the participants from Lioness secondary had varying opinions; some participants were of the view that violence did take place within the school premises, while others contended that it only occurred outside the school premises. A small percentage of participants felt that there was no violence at all. As much as the principal and some teachers dismissed the reality that violence did occur within the school premises, the disciplinary cases recorded at the beginning of 2011 disclosed that school violence did in

fact take place within the school premises. For instance, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 a disciplinary meeting was held where some learners were disciplined for various misconducts within the school premises. The statement found in the Tribunal book of Lioness secondary reads as follows:

*A Grade 9 learner was drunk at school and he was the one who brought liquor into the school premises. The verdict for this case was that a learner was issued a last warning (Tribunal book: Lioness secondary, 15 March 2011 – verbatim transcription).*

Another case, still at Lioness secondary, was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 and the following was recorded:

*A Grade 11 learner displayed a great deal of disrespect towards the security guard. The learner pleaded guilty to all the offenses. The verdict for this case was that a learner will be punished (Tribunal book: Lioness secondary school, 07 March 2011 – verbatim transcription).*

Additionally, another entry read as follows:

*A male learner was found smoking dagga in the classes that were declared as out of bounds. The verdict was that the offence warrants an expulsion sanction; however, looking at the family background, the learner needs professional help from social workers. Hence he will be suspended for five days during which he must seek for such help and come back with proof of being engaged in such a programme (Tribunal book: Lioness secondary, 14 March 2010 – verbatim transcription).*

The three transcriptions above from the Lioness secondary data record book of offenses revealed that one learner had been caught in possession of liquor and that he was intoxicated when caught on the school premises. The learner was not suspended from

school, but was issued a last warning. A last warning implies that this learner had been involved in similar offenses at least once or twice before. The findings of this study were different from those of the study by Morrison, Redding, Fisher and Peterson (2006) who contend that the most common reasons for suspension are generally not related to violent and destructive offenses such as weapon carrying and drug selling or possession, but rather to offenses such as defiance of authority and class disruption. In this study the learner who had been intoxicated and in possession of liquor was given a further warning.

Another learner was disciplined due to defiance of authority and in this case the learner was disrespectful toward the security guard. A third learner was found smoking dagga within the school premises. The verdict of the latter was that the learner's misconduct warranted expulsion but that, due to his family background, he would be suspended for five days. During the five-day suspension, the learner was expected to attend a rehabilitation program or get help from social workers. The question is how it would be possible for the learner himself to get such help within such a short space of time – or at all? Is it sound educational practice to suspend a learner and in the process to expect that this minor will be able to engage in self-help strategies? The suspension of learners for smoking of dagga was in agreement with the study by Morrison et al., (2006) who assert that reasons for suspension range from offenses such as drug selling or possession to weapon possession.

Unlike Lioness secondary, Scooby secondary was not in denial of the fact that school violence took place within and outside the school premises. The records of their school Tribunal book recorded the following cases:

*Ntozakhe\* gave Siphon\* a cell-phone and Ntozakhe\* took it home, on his way home he was robbed a cell-phone and his girlfriend was also robbed. On Friday, 22 July 2011 Siphon\* assaulted Ntozakhe\* on their way home. Siphon\* promised to pay R300 for the cell-phone of Ntozakhe\*. Siphon\* accepted the punishment (Tribunal book: Scooby secondary, 28 July 2011 – verbatim transcription).*

Additionally, another case held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2011 was recorded:

*A male learner stabbed another male two deep wounds on the left hand biceps and the third one missed and cut the jersey on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2011. The SGB and the SDSSC and the SMT will meet and come out with the solution (Tribunal book: Scooby secondary, 24 August 2011 – verbatim transcription).*

The discussions about where violence took place the most in schools were further substantiated by observation schedule records for the purpose of the study. For example, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2011, I witnessed a sequence of burglaries by observing broken roof ceilings in two separate staff rooms. The deputy principal from Scooby secondary took me around the school and showed me all the places which had recently been vandalized by community thugs through burglary. Furthermore, additional evidence of burglary was observed where two staff room doors and very strong burglar-proof doors had been replaced with new ones as further incidents of burglary had taken place here in quick succession. I was informed that a spate of burglaries usually took place during weekends.

In addition to spate of burglary I further observed a series of incidents where corporal punishment was used by the SMT on learners. At Scooby it was the norm that, whenever learners had committed an offence, they were sent by the teacher concerned to the office of the SMT for corporal punishment. Learners were punished literally on a daily basis by the staff for various offenses. Corporal punishment can be described as “...any physical action that hurts a child in the name of discipline” (Childline S.A.). This could mean: hitting, slapping, pinching, pushing, shaking and kicking; depriving the child of food or rest or movement; forcing chillies, washing-up liquid or other irritating substances into a child’s mouth or anywhere on his or her body; and/or forcing them to sit or stand for any length of time (supra).

The major factor in the spread of corporal punishment globally was colonialism, particularly British colonialism (Harber, 2004). Although it has been argued that corporal punishment can be justified on the grounds that it is ‘part of the African culture’, evidence on pre-colonial education systems suggests that this is unlikely. Harber further notes that when neighbouring Zambia banned caning in 2000, it was described as “a brutal relic of British rule”. He argues:

‘Caning became embedded in the popular minds as critical to school discipline, hence the common refrain that its abolition equals classroom disorder and failure. The result is a cycle of caning transmitted from one generation to another and justified in on the basis of experience and sentiment...In a class of 35-40 authoritarianism is a means of orchestrating ‘mob control’ (Harber, 2004, p. 3).

### **7.3.1 Discussion**

The interviews on violence demonstrated that violence occurred both inside and outside the school premises. A great deal of violence took place inside the school premises in places like classrooms, vacant buildings, toilets, and under verandas. The types of violence that took place outside the school premises were acts resulting in grievous bodily harm (GBH) and acts with an aim to inflict or cause great bodily pain. Such an incident occurred when a learner stabbed another learner causing two deep wounds in the biceps and missing in a third attempt when the victim’s jersey was cut. Additionally, a male learner assaulted another male learner on their way home over a cell-phone issue. In a study focussing on the surroundings in which bullying occurred in Turkish schools, Bulut and Gunduz (2012) found that 29% of the incidents occurred in classes, 24% of the incidents occurred outside the school, 17% of the incidents occurred in the school corridors, 14% of the incidents occurred on the playgrounds, and 16% of the incidents occurred in other areas such as sport centres, the school canteen or refectories (supra, p. 167). In line with Burton (2007), a recent study on school violence demonstrated that GBH violence is taking its toll in South African schools. A male learner from one of the high schools in Gauteng province

was stabbed to death on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2012 by gang members from the community. It was alleged that the victim and his friends had been playing soccer on the school playground when a ball kicked by the victim accidentally hit a female learner. The unknown boys who were accompanying the female learner then stabbed the victim to death (SABC 1, 2012). The news broadcast further reported that in another high school, still in the Gauteng province, a boy had been stabbed to death during the same week. Shortage of school furniture in one of the high schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal province resulted in a death. Male learners were fighting over newly delivered classroom chairs when they stabbed each other, after which one learner died at the local clinic (Ndlovu, 2012).

Acts of violence or resulting in violence that took place within the school premises ranged from smoking of dagga and cigarettes, drinking of liquor, stealing of school bags and snatching of cash, and showing a great deal of disrespect to the school officials. Additionally, one of the principals revealed that, in most cases, violence occurred during break times. Learners would come running to the offices claiming that somebody had slapped them or that somebody had stolen their bags or money. Most acts of theft were reported to be perpetrated by male learners against female learners. This finding is supported by Harber (2004) who contends that violence is overwhelmingly a male problem and that the roots for this appear to be primarily social rather than biological. This highlights the inadequacies of current socialisation strategies of male learners.

Furthermore, gangs often recruit new members among the school population and schools are increasingly becoming sites for turf wars between competing groups. Competing groups on school grounds are often gangsters and wealthy 'sugar daddies' who prey for young, beautiful girls. In most cases gangsters induce youngsters to sell drugs to their schoolmates (Burton, 2007). In South African schools, gangsterism is re-gaining momentum. Recent studies have revealed that continuous fights between teenage gangs in Western Cape schools resulted in the death of three school children which led to pupils dropping out of school due to constant fear of attack. About nine pupils dropped out in one

secondary school alone, while two pupils were fighting for their lives in one of the hospital after being stabbed and beaten with weapons such as axes and pangas. Additionally, it was further revealed that up to six gangs can be found in a single school and affiliated pupils are as young as 12 or 13 years old (Damba, 2012).

#### 7.4 Strategies to Cope with School Violence

In question 9 the participants were asked: “What strategies do Principals/SGB/SDSSC/teachers and Life Orientation teachers/support staff use to cope with school violence?” This question originated from the interviews questions which are found in the appendix section of this study.

The participants suggested various strategies to cope with violence in schools. One of the principals asserted:

*We tried to involve psychiatric [psychology] services of the department although were not effective, but as leaders of the school we had to do damage control mechanism (Principal: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent stated:

*After the incident of beating teachers, we were reporting to the district – and the school was closed. We reported until such time that the department was convinced that the school was safe for us go there (LO Teacher B1: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

A teacher respondent felt that there was nothing much that they could do to cope with violence except to report incidences to the TLO:

*Eyi... there is nothing, except that we send them to the office or the TLO. We also rely a lot to the TLO, he is skilled in disciplining the child and he is not afraid to approach the defiant learners. He has been a TLO since the inception of this*

*position, each time we re-elect him because we don't see anyone who can do liaison work as he does. Over and above being a TLO, he is also a site steward (LO Teacher B2: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Some teachers felt that there was nothing they could do to deal with the issue of learner misconduct. These teachers relied heavily on referring disorderly learners to the TLO or the principal's office for disciplinary purposes. This study revealed that such referrals were not recorded in the data mechanism book of the school, but that only serious offenses were recorded in the tribunal or disciplinary books. Office referrals were defined as 'practice', whereas teachers and learners considered office referrals as 'consequences' for misbehaviour. Teachers used the threat of an office referral as a lever to change learner behaviour. Additionally, teachers viewed a referral as a sufficient consequence for a transgression, in particular if the offense is minor (Morrison, et al., 2006). McIntoch et al. (2012) add that office discipline referrals (ODRs) are used by schools to document problematic behaviour by learners on school grounds. ODRs provide immediate appeal to school personnel because of their availability and potential for use for a wide variety of decision-making tasks.

Another respondent, the SGB chair, felt that sitting in various forums like community policing forums (CPF) and the South African Policing Services (SAPS) equipped her to deal with issues of violence at school:

*We sit in various forums where we share knowledge on disciplinary measures, where involve community policing forums in school, where at least two parents will be invited to patrol within the school premises. We also involve SAPS from time to time to do random searching. We as SGB, we also talk to learners about their behaviours (SGB Chair: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The SDSSC chair respondent felt that his education had skilled him to cope with issues of school violence:

*Most of the teachers approach me in solving issues of violence, as a TLO. Fortunately I did a course on Social justice, they taught things that we will come across within schools, things like the one I'm experiencing now, so this education of mine assisted me a lot, including critical friends (SDSSC chair: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another teacher respondent stated:

*We strategise because they will always caught us off-guard. We reinforce the security, installing the razor fence on the ceiling of the offices, but in the main office they came and pass through the razor fence. We reinforce the office again, install the burglar guard, of course there is no one way of dealing with these types of violence and burglary, we treat the matter as they come. We have reported the series of burglary to the police, we have lost a number of items, but we never recovered even a single one, so they are not helpful (Teacher A1: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

During the era of violence at Lioness secondary when teachers were beaten up by learners which led to the closure of the school, teachers relied heavily on the District Office personnel and also on the psychology services from the provincial Department of Basic Education (DBE). Teachers, especially female teachers, relied on the services of the teacher liaison officer (TLO) to discipline learners for their misconduct. At Scooby secondary teachers and school management employed various strategies to cope with violence, including reinforcement of security systems such as installing a razor fence on top of the roof ceiling board in the offices. The SGB chair stated that she sat on various forums where issues of discipline were discussed and she implied that her involvement and experiences supported her decision-making skills in terms of coping with school violence.

A parent and cleaner respondent expressed her disappointment in the manner in which learners looked down on her:

*We try hard to cope with violence though it is not easy. At some stage when we spot learners drunk, smelling alcohol or fighting, we usually ask for advice from the teacher who is available at the time to say what we can do if we see learners fighting or high on drugs. This is because at times we feel for our learners as parents and we don't want to report them to the office each time we come across them misbehaving. At times after reporting learners to the office after we caught them smoking dagga, learners turn round and tell us they didn't come to us here in this school and also tell us we must do our duty of cleaning and forget about them. They even have nerves to say they were not there in our youthful time; therefore we must leave them alone as they are enjoying their youthfulness. Such words are painful to us as parents, because I regard and treat them as my own children (General assistant: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

A learner respondent who fell in the learner victim category stated:

*...to cope with situation I was advised by my teachers to stay away from her, I did that and even now we don't talk that much, we just greet and part ways. The incident was resolved by the teachers who knew me very well. The teachers intervened and stated that it was not true that I was involved in the wrongdoings of my friend, because the accused had been behaving like this even before I enrolled at this school (Learner victim A1: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another learner respondent who belonged to the learner perpetrator category asserted:

*...both our parents were called by the school. During the case proceedings the truth came out that, my opponent was actual lying by saying that my girlfriend is also in love with him, he was jealousy over her and wanted me to be angry and then dump my girlfriend. We were both punished – using stick and we were both warned that if we could be found in a similar situation our sentences will be much heavier.*

*I was happy about the manner the case was resolved because I learnt that it is not right to harm other people, and also because we were both punished (Learner perpetrator D1: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

One of the guards declared:

*When learners misbehave by coming late, for example, I have an authority to give them alternative punishment like cleaning the yard, cleaning other places where necessary. But if a learner persists to come late after he had been cleaning the yard, I then send him to clean the toilets. If he still persists I then send him to the principal. But this is not something which is happening all the time, but once a while (Security guard: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Not only the teachers but also support staff members were troubled by learner misconduct. A security guard and a cleaner (a mother) experienced the dilemma of trying to deal with the issues of learner misconduct. For example, the cleaner endeavoured to deal with the issue of violence by talking to learners who had been smoking dagga or fighting, but in the process learners would disrespectfully dismiss her. However, she managed to cope with the day-to-day ordeals of learner misconduct through seeking social support from teachers. To further cope with violence, learners were advised by teachers to use the avoidance strategy; that is, learner victims were advised to distance themselves from their perpetrators. One learner innocently avoided a perpetrator who had once been her best friend; as a result the victim appeared satisfied with the decision she took. Social support for learner victims of violence is another way to eliminate school violence. Demaray, Malecki and Delong (2006) are in agreement with this finding of the study when they argue that social support may be a prominent factor in preventing violence. For example, one focus of the National School Safety Centre is to create a supportive student environment which includes establishing a sense of learner ownership and pride in the school and offering support services for troubled youth.

#### **7.4.1 Discussion**

It became clear that, to cope with violence, the majority of teachers in both schools relied heavily to the TLO and the security guards at the main gates as agents of eliminating violence at school. At Lioness secondary, in addition to the TLO assistance, the security guard was regarded as the only person who had the power, authority and means to instil discipline among the learners through the use of corporal punishment and other alternative ways to maintain order. In so doing teachers were further reinforcing gender hierarchy by using male counterparts to administer corporal punishment on their behalves. Moreover, through this transfer of authority teachers forfeited their position as the custodians not only of academic excellence, but also of a sound and positive school climate. Still at Lioness secondary, the security guard managed to cope with learners' misconduct by using the power and authority vested in him - by default. In disciplining learners, he followed a system of self-designed hierarchical steps which were as follows: for a first offence, the learner had to clean the yard; for the second offence, the learner had to clean the toilets; and thirdly, if a learner still persisted with the same offence, he/she would be sent to the principal.

Parker-Jenkins (1999) argues that the history of childhood, at least in Western societies, has recorded many examples of ordinary abuse and terrorising of children by their caretakers. At worst, in these societies the expectation that child-rearing and corporal punishment should go hand in hand has been carried over into school life. She adds that, in Britain, law courts consistently upheld the right of schools to beat children and corporal punishment was only finally banned in state schools in 1986 as a result of legal decisions stemming from European courts in Strasbourg. However, the ban on corporal punishment was only extended to children in all schools as late as 1999. Harber (2004) notes in Thailand, caning was finally banned only at the end of 2000, where it was reported that it had been used across schools as well as in colleges and universities. Additionally, Harber

asserts that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has illustrated that the efforts to prohibit corporal punishment date as far back as 1947. Harber (2004, p. 9) contends that the continued use of corporal punishment stems from the need to reinforce order and control in an authoritarian context; but it is also important that in such a context children are not seen as fully human. Justifications for the use of corporal punishment in terms of the immaturity of young people suggest that simply being young denies the existence of the human right not to be subject to cruel and degrading punishment.

The TLO at Lioness secondary further asserted that his education skilled him to handle the issues of violence. The principal of this school requested assistance from the psychological services of the provincial Department of Basic Education. However, he was quick to state that such a service was not effective as the department did not commit themselves to assist the learners at all. At Scooby secondary teachers used various strategies to cope with violence. The most evident one was where the school installed various security systems including a razor wire, obviously at great cost. It was noted that a similar razor wire had once been bridged by burglars who targeted the principal's office. A teacher who was also a member of the SMT alluded that there was no single way to deal with violence except that they always had to be on the look-out for burglars. The cleaner respondent felt helpless because of, for example, the manner in which learners conducted themselves through smoking dagga and fighting in front of her. She stated that learners humiliated the support staff each time they tried to stop them [learners] from misbehaving; however, she felt that reporting to the nearest teacher was the only way to cope with violence rather than reporting to the office of the principal.

## **7.5 Initiatives Taken by the Schools to Reduce Schools Violence**

In question 10 the participants were asked: "What programs / measures have been taken by your school or the state to reduce violence in your school?" Question 10 is part of the interviews schedule questions which are attached in the appendix section of this study.

One of the principals affirmed:

*With burglary and stealing which takes place weekly in this school, the school management always reports the incidences to the local police station. However, the policemen will take their time to come or don't come at all. Consequently, the school will proceed with repairs, as it was happening today. Most unfortunately, the moment you repair, the community will come the following day to steal again, just look at the classroom doors and windows, they are all new after a series of vandalism and stealing by the local community. The department had intervene by allocating the norms and standards budget to the school, then within the norms and standards budget, there was 15% of the total amount allocated for safety and security. Now it is the duty of the school and the SGB to look for a person who will look after the school (Principal: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent asserted:

*What I believed is the involvement and the ownership of the school by teachers and learners first, then the parents. Before, there was no co-operation between learners and teachers – it was 'we' and 'they', we as learners and they as teachers. I think these measures of co-operation and sense of ownership have improved a lot, and the position of TLO created a smooth link between teachers and learners. Learners are now able to communicate freely with the TLO and many issues are ironed through the TLO. Also the visibility of the school structures adds value in reducing violence. The department is not visible, during the era of violence, we could easily tell that the department is non-existence, but they only start to react after the big incident of teachers being beaten by learners (LO Teacher B1: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The implementation of a code of conduct for learners was viewed as another way of mitigating violence but to a very limited extent, while partnering with NGOs was viewed as a positive way to alleviate school violence:

*The school is using the government's disciplinary measures because we are not allowed to come up with our own measures. In case anything goes wrong or reported when one had applied corporal punishment to discipline a child, the teacher is punished severely. So it is better to stick to the provided rules by the government. There are so many programs that we, as LO teachers use to do in school, like liaising with NGOs, liaising with other governmental organisations, for example, the department of Safety and Security. We had this program where we bring prisoners from local maximum prison. Another program was called Isiyalo program, where the offenders will come to school and talk directly to all learners in their respective classrooms, teaching them that crime does not pay. Unfortunately all these programs had been discontinued by the Safe and Security department for particular reasons which are known to them (LO Teacher A1: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The two schools reported different measures to mitigate the impact of school violence. At Scooby secondary the SMT reported a spate of burglaries to the local police station from whom no assistance was received. The school also reported that they followed the DBE's disciplinary measures to instil discipline among learners. Additionally, the school had developed programs in conjunction with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other government departments as another measure to mitigate school violence. At Lioness secondary, the emphasis was on a tripartite alliance between the school (teachers), learners and parents to infuse a sense of co-operation among the three stakeholders. Furthermore, participants from Lioness secondary reported concerted efforts to instil moral support and values among learners. With regards to state support, both schools recorded feelings of being let down as poor or no support was received from the DBE.

A SDSSC chair stated:

*The role of human rights and emphasis on values is very important. Another thing, get more role players to come and visit the school. For example, I used to invite SAPS and Health department to come and visit us. The state has done nothing at all (SDSSC Chair: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

A parent respondent felt that communication is the answer between the school, learners and parents to deal with the issue of school violence. He felt that the DBE had done nothing for the school either for general support or to reduce school violence:

*Communication is the key and I don't think there is much more than the strong tripartite alliance of learners, teachers and parents in reducing violence. The three stakeholders should understand that each party is important in eliminating or dealing with issues of violence. Nothing has been done by the state. For example, the school will be launching a sponsored state of the art science lab which was not built by the department, we made a request to the department for the burglar guards for the lab, but until today they have never responded. That is just one out of hundred issues that they have not honoured (SGB Chair: Lioness Secondary – verbatim transcription).*

A teacher respondent shared similar sentiments with regards to the lack of support by the DBE:

*I think is to appeal to the community and conscientise [respondent's term] them that if they steal from the school they are self-defeating and robbing their own kids from receiving quality education. Maybe to allow them to use the school, I'm not too sure, so that they feel that they own the school– they are partners with the school. Also beefing up the security personnel. We have made several calls to the department to give us a security, but they have never responded. The security guard that we have is paid for by the sponsor, the cleaners and gardeners are also paid*

*for by the sponsor. I think beefing the security could suffice in terms of reducing school violence (Teacher A1: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent asserted:

*There were programs for drugs and alcohol awareness which were run by the NGOs in attempt to reduce drug and alcohol abuse by our learners. The NGOs used to come and identify learners with the help of the school, who are on drugs and then they assisted them with strategies to deal with drugs. As time went by we were able to see a difference to those learners and some of them really change and leave drugs. However, these programs came to an end and learners had relapsed and more and more are taking drugs again (General assistant: Scooby secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The security guard respondent disclosed that the school did a lot of searching and seizing of dangerous weapons and illegal drugs to reduce school violence. He further mentioned that a small group of trusted learners would be selected and secretively used as spies against the unruly learners:

*The principal usually call meetings with teachers, but I don't know what expires in their meetings as I'm not a part. But with learners, we also call a meeting for the class-reps, and we have those learners who are "above" the class-reps but who are unknown to other learners. We use these secret learners to be our eyes and ears to check those who carry weapons, do drugs and so on. If they see someone with a knife or dagga, they simply come to me and/or the TLO. Then I will go and search the whole class and I will find whatever had been reported. At times it is difficult to get them because now they are clever, they keep their stuff with girls, unfortunately I can't search girls or they just drop dagga on the floor. So in our meetings with the class-reps, the TLO, secret leaders and me, we will discuss the problem and decided what can be done to resolve the issue. With regard to state, nothing that I'm aware of (Security guard: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another learner respondent mentioned:

*At one stage the policemen with police dogs visited the school unannounced while we were still in the assembly. The police loosen up the dogs to search for weapons and drugs among learners. Drugs and weapons were found and confiscated by police force from learners. The police then took those who were liable for the stuff, but they came back to school after a while. The school has locked the vacant classes underground where learners used to smoke. Also searching of drugs and weapons is done here at school where male learners will stand in front and they will search our bags. They usually find dagga and knives. (Learner perpetrator D2: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

The principal and other participants from Lioness secondary felt that there was no need to have school programs to mitigate the impact of violence in his school as they argued that violence was a thing of the past; however, learners and other teachers held different opinions. One respondent stated:

*Bottom classrooms had been locked, also when we arrived here at the beginning of the year there were no classroom doors in certain classes had been stolen by the community people who are informed by some of the learners. The doors have been fixed now, and the electricity has been also fixed recently. There is nothing that I am aware of that has been done by the state (Learner victim C2: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Another respondent concurred with the learner:

*We used to tell them that we are family, no one is supposed to hurt anybody, we must love each other always give moral support moral lesson everything. We will find out that learners will come out with secrets; they will tell you that I'm violent because somebody abused me, somebody raped me, somebody close to me did this to me and so on. You will find out that there is something which provoked them to*

*be violent. During the time when the violence was at peak, a psychologist from the department used to come to school to find out about problems (Teacher B1: Lioness secondary – verbatim transcription).*

Pinheiro (2006) contend that gender-based violence stems from inequality, stereotypes and socially imposed roles. In addition these harmful cultural stereotypes that degrade children due to their sex or suspected sexuality create environments in which children can be abused with impunity, including adults in positions of trust and authority such as clerics in religious schools, boarding masters in boarding schools.

### **7.5.1 Discussion**

The study revealed that the implementation of learners' code of conduct was viewed as another way of mitigating violence but to a very limited extent, while partnering with NGOs was viewed as a positive way to alleviate school violence. Notably, programs were implemented at Scooby secondary to address the issue of violence. One such program involved the Department of Safety and Security (Correctional Services) which was rendered by staff and inmates from a local maximum security prison; another program was called the *Isiyalo* program. The services provided by inmates from the maximum security prison aimed at teaching learners that crime does not pay. Prisoners demonstrated to the learners what real life in a prison was like and how bad and difficult it was to live in detention centres. In another program, *Isiyalo* program, the school would identify those learners who showed symptoms of deep anger and this program then assisted learners with impulsive skills and anger management problems on how to deal with challenges in life and how to cope with stress in general.

At Lioness secondary, communication between the tripartite parties was promoted as a means to reduce violence. However, while communication was envisaged as a positive tool

to reduce school violence, it became necessary for the school to threaten learners with an aim reduce flooding of weapons and drugs to school. This was evident where a security guard respondent disclosed that the school often engaged in searching and seizing of dangerous weapons and illegal drugs to reduce school violence. In the process of 'raiding', he further mentioned that a small group of trusted learners would be selected secretly to spy on drug abusers and those learners who carried weapons at school. Pinheiro (2006, p. 115) contends that historically, many cultures have had hierarchical social structures where those in positions of power have controlled those who are powerless through violence and threat of violence. These structures and practices have extended to families and the relations between men and women and between parents and their children. They have also extended to schools and the relations between school staff and children. In both families and schools, corporal punishment and other forms of cruel and degrading punishment have been widely favoured methods of "discipline" perceived as "taming" the ungovernable child, training the presumptuous child to take his "proper place" in the society, and hardening the unseasoned child to the difficult, brutal and abrasive world.

The majority of participants from both schools reported that too little support was rendered by the provincial DBE in reducing school violence. The situation was dire at Lioness secondary where the security guard's salary was paid by the SGB. Moreover, there were no cleaners to take responsibility for the cleanliness of the school. In this regard, Haffejee (2006) contends that violence in schools has been exacerbated by the lack of action on the part of government departments, schools and society in general.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The study reported that minor yet persistent teasing led to defensive violence. This type of violence occurs when victims lash out at their perpetrators, as was evidenced by a victim learner who brought a gun to school and fired random shots at the perpetrator and other learners. Many more examples of such retaliatory actions have been reported in the media,

as discussed earlier. Therefore, this study established that low-level forms of violence like persistent teasing may lead to high-level forms of violence which could result in fatalities. Teachers need to be aware and compassionate of children in trauma; action needs to be taken in the form of counselling, emotional support, and even referral of victims to appropriate schools where they can receive help. The study revealed that no such actions had been taken as, for example, the victimised and bullied epileptic learner had been left to fend for himself to the point where he took violent action that came close to a tragedy. Fortunately no one was killed in this incident, but the media have reported extensively on other cases that ended in fatalities.

The study found that fear of thugs as well as of gangs and gangsterism was a real threat to the learners and teachers of the school. In this regard, participants reported incidents of theft, burglary and intimidation of teachers and learners of both schools. The arrogance and lack of fear of perpetrators from the community were evidenced by a spate of burglaries that remained unresolved by the police. If nothing happens to perpetrators, they get a clear message that their acts of violence will remain unchallenged, resulting in an upward spiral of threats to the safety and security of schools. In this regard, Burton (2007) posits that gangsters often recruit new members among the school population and that schools are increasingly becoming sites for turf wars among competing groups. Moreover, the study found that deliberate and aggressive attempts to breach the security of the school occurred on a regular basis, such as the breaching of a concrete fence and finding access to administrative offices despite razor wire in strategic places.

It was noted with a sense of optimism that participants from both schools were enthused to come up with measures to support victims of violence in the form of clubs and/or by embracing the support of outside groups such as Life Line and prison inmates to create awareness of the consequences of violence among learners.

At Scooby secondary various strategies were employed to reduce acts of violence from outside the premises. The most evident of these measures was that the school installed various security systems, including razor wire in the roof of the staff rooms. As this strategy had been used before with no obvious success – the wire was simply breached again – the conclusion must be reached that very little success has been or will be achieved by this measure. Even a concrete fence was breached to create easy access to the school for community thugs. Moreover, this breach was used by learners to facilitate their acts of truancy.

Efforts to reduce school violence by implementing a code of conduct for learners and teachers was viewed as another way of breaking the spiral of violence. However, this measure was executed to a very limited extent. It was revealed that, instead of developing a code of conduct that involved all the role players of the school, the regulations by the provincial DBE were adopted. This practice is fraught with problems and, in my view, is doomed to fail. Certainly, use the Departmental code as a guide, but if the voice of all role players is not heard and if these role players do not “buy into” a code of conduct that reflects their ethos, values and vision, such a code is not worth the paper that it is written on. Moreover, the lack of a school-specific code of conduct reflects poorly on the leadership will of the principals. Leadership requires action which was, in this regard, clearly absent in the schools under study.

Another measure to mitigate violence was to create partnerships with NGOs. This was a step in the right direction and can be viewed as a positive way to alleviate school violence. The question remains whether these partnerships will be maintained and even extended in the future in an effort to break the spiral of violence. In conclusion, at Lioness secondary communication between the tripartite parties was promoted as a means to reduce violence. Based on the findings related to continued violence and the lack of respect for teachers by their learners, I have to question the success of this strategy. Participants reported a breakdown in communication at many levels; lack of communication seemed to lead to

strained relationships among learners, between learners and teachers, between teachers and management, among teachers, between management and the provincial Department (DBE), between the SGB and the Department, and among teachers, management and parents. Unless workable strategies are developed to heal this break in communication, the spiral of violence will only be exacerbated in the not so distant future.

The next chapter presents a discussion on the themes that emerged from the findings of the study.

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THEMES EMERGING FROM THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

**8.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the themes that emerged from the data that were analysed and discussed in the three previous chapters. In chapters 5, 6 and 7, I presented and discussed the findings of the study. Although there were many issues emanated from the data, this chapter reports on major issues derived from the study. There were five prevalent themes that emerged from this study and of these were:

- a) Levels of violence
- b) Causes of violence
- c) The impact of violence
- d) The outcomes of violence
- e) Strategies to cope with violence

The above themes that emerged from data would be discussed after I had presented a comparisons and contradictions found between the two schools under study. These comparisons are presented in a tabula format as shown below using the emerging themes.

<b>Levels of violence: Scooby secondary</b>	<b>Levels of violence: Lioness secondary</b>
More violent behaviours were reported at Scooby secondary.	The school was in violence but slowly coming out of it. Fewer incidents of violence were reported.
Learners who were caught smoking dagga were warned against its use.	Some learners who were caught smoking cigarettes and also involved in substance abuse were suspended from school for a period of six months.
Community thugs snatched cell-phones from learners and teachers inside the school	No intrusions of criminals from the community were reported.

premises.	
Violence perpetrated by learners in school includes weaponry possessions, stealing bags from other learners, snatching of cash from other learners, bunking of classes, learners fought one another over trivial issues. Learners also display a great deal of disrespect to school officials	Violence perpetrated by learners in school includes weaponry possessions, stealing bags from other learners, snatching of cash from other learners, bunking of classes, learners fought one another over trivial issues. Learners also display a great deal of disrespect to school officials
Learners were punished through caning on for various sorts of bad behaviour.	Another measure was to make them clean the toilets or the garden as an alternative to corporal punishment.
Learners displayed aggressive behaviour to both teachers and learners at times.	Learners displayed aggressive behaviour to both teachers and learners at times.
Learners were caned for late coming where a teacher would wait at the gate for late comers. Some would simply disappear once realised that they were punished for late coming.	Learners were often suspended from school for inordinate periods of time. Learners who persistently come late even during morning study were automatically sent home to come with parents.
Violence perpetrated by teachers in school includes coming late to school, absenting themselves from school and also not honouring classes whilst at school as they were simply sitting in the staff rooms.	Violence perpetrated by teachers in school includes coming late to school, absenting themselves from school and also not honouring classes whilst at school as they were simply sitting in the staff rooms.
Conflict of opinion among teachers existed variably.	The dominant factor conflict of opinion between a certain group of teachers was prevalent – group dynamics violence.
The security guard reported that he had been stabbed by a learner inside the school premises.	The security guard reported that he had once been attacked by learners within the school premises.
In support of the security guard who had been stabbed, the culprit (the learner involved) was	At this school a court case pending between the learners and the security guard.

expelled from the school by the school management.	
To 'cope' with violence, majority of teachers in both schools relied heavily to the TLO and the Deputy principal as agents of eliminating violence at school.	To 'cope' with violence, majority of teachers in both schools relied heavily to the TLO and the security guards as agents of eliminating violence at school.
Reinforcing of gender hierarchy by using male (deputy principal) counterparts to administer corporal punishment on behalf of female teachers.	Reinforcing of gender hierarchy by using male (the TLO) counterparts to administer corporal punishment on behalf of female teachers.
Majority of the participants felt varying factors, including the location of the school within a high crime area.	Majority of the participants felt safe as the school is situated within the elite middle class community.
Due to poverty in the communities, burglary at presented a severe challenge.	Burglary at this school was reported a while ago.
<b>Outcomes of violence: Scooby secondary</b>	<b>Outcomes of violence: Lioness secondary</b>
Both teachers and learners felt unsafe with the school premises.	Learners and teachers feel safe within the school premises.
Severe violent behaviours were prevalent in their schools as they revealed that some learners carried weapons and sexually harassed girls by touching their breasts.	Severe violent behaviours were prevalent in their schools as they revealed that some learners exhibit violent behaviour by carrying weapon and harassed girls by touching their breasts.
Security guard revealed that the source of crime in their schools was abuse of substances, in particular dagga.	Security guard reported the source of crime in their schools was abuse of substances, in particular dagga.
Teachers failed to protect learners where learners lost their belongings in classes while they were kept longer in assembly than usual.	No stealing of learner belongings were reported missing through the intrusion of criminals from the community.
The majority of participants from Scooby secondary reported feeling insecure within and	While only a few of the participants from Lioness Secondary felt unsafe within and around

around the school premises,	the school premises.
<b>Impact of violence: Scooby secondary</b>	<b>Impact of violence: Lioness secondary</b>
Old and un-refurbished school buildings, together with a lack of proper security personnel, posed significant threats to teachers and a positive climate within which teaching and learning could take place.	Safety school buildings existed with security personnel who was effective and went extra miles with his work.
Teachers feared learners who were an apparent threat to other learners and to the staff as a whole.	No fear for learners was reported.
A spate of burglaries targeting the main office, computer lab and staff rooms at Scooby secondary allegedly involved ex-learners result to the loss of school property and vandalism of buildings.	No measure burglary was reported during the course of the study
Loss of time through bunking of classes by both learners and teachers	Loss of time through bunking of classes by both learners and teachers
Learner drop out from school was reported	Learner drop out from school was reported
Poor academic achievement was reported.	Poor academic achievement was reported.
<b>Strategies to cope with violence: Scooby secondary</b>	<b>Strategies to cope with violence: Lioness secondary</b>
Teachers relied heavily to the TLO and the security guards at the main gates as agents of eliminating violence at school.	Teachers relied heavily to the TLO and the security guards at the main gates as agents of eliminating violence at school.
The implementation of a code of conduct for learners was viewed as another way of mitigating violence but this was done to a very limited extent. Rather, partnering with NGOs	The implementation of a code of conduct for learners was viewed as another way of mitigating violence which was not effective as expected.

appeared to be viewed as a more positive way to alleviate school violence.	
---	--

## 8.2 Levels of Violence

Various levels of violence were emerged from this study, these include the influence of school culture; places of violence; teacher tendencies of inducing violence; and other violent practices.

### 8.2.1 *The Influence of School Culture*

The majority of participants of both schools indicated that they felt unsafe within the school premises. Not only were teachers concerned about their own safety, but they were also concerned about the safety of their learners. However, the levels of discomfort varied between the two schools. More violent behaviours were reported at Scooby secondary than at Lioness secondary. Despite the safety measures that were in place at Scooby secondary, the teachers still expressed strong feelings of unease. However, in my opinion their wish for a safer school environment was merely a utopia as the school is situated within a community where acts of violence are at the order of the day. At Lioness secondary the majority of participants felt relatively safe in and outside the school premises.

Despite the fact that Scooby reported that they had all the basic measures to keep the school safe in terms of security with facilities such as an alarm system, the school continued to live in fear of some of its learners who were alleged to be violent as they emanated from a violent community. Questions to address in the light of this persistent violence were: What did the school do to assist its learners to unlearn their violent

behaviours? And: What were the ethos and values of the school in support of a violent-free environment?

It emerged from this study that the school was doing too little to support its learners. This was evident where the acting principal struggled to run the school due to poor support from her SMT and other teachers. Some teachers had a tendency not to attend classes even if they were present at school and incidences of violence were not recorded, to name only two. Such tendencies resulted in a poor or unsafe school environment with perpetrators running amok during teaching and learning. The findings of this study were supported by Barnes et al. (2012) who contend that violence and crime in South African schools are a critical problem; schools in our new democracy are viewed as the most dangerous in the world. If the problem is not addressed, it could adversely influence the education and training of many learners. Furlong and Morrison (2000) view school violence as a multi-faceted construct that involves both criminal acts and aggression which inhibit development and learning and harm the school's climate. In addition, Mncube and Harber (2012) contend that teachers are part of the problem as they take leave of absence without reason, arrive late or leave early, and refrain from attending classes even though they may be present at school. Many excuses had been widely used for leave of absence/absenteeism: funerals, council duties and union meetings, sports or school events, strikes, stay-aways, teachers' examinations and other municipality activities. Fridays become 'early closing' days and on paydays non-attendance is the norm in many schools. This study demonstrated that the schools under study exhibited similar challenges and teachers became negative role models for learners who consequently exhibited similar traits.

Many writers contend that schools are microcosms of the society and that schools reflect the violence or the attitudes of the wider society. Of course, not all schools reflect what is happening in their societies; some schools are resilient and can excel to function as being violent-free within violent communities. Barnes et al. (2012) describes a safe school as a

place where the school climate allows learners, teachers, administrators, parents and visitors to communicate with one another in a positive and non-threatening manner. This was not found to be the case in the two schools under study: in Scooby secondary the rift between the principal and teachers appeared unbridgeable. Teachers openly challenged her authority and maintained and even exacerbated their acts of disobedience and open rebellion. They ignored her pleas to return to the classrooms to teach, rendering the learners the victims of this 'war of wills' and adding to the school culture of defiance and disobedience. In their study "The influence of school culture and school climate on violence in schools of the Eastern Cape Province", Barnes et al. (2012) surveyed 30 schools in the Eastern Cape Province, concluding that the school culture and school climate scales showed a negative correlation with the violence scales. Based on this negative correlation they concluded that the Eastern Cape schools were relatively safe places. It therefore follows that the better the school culture and school climate at a school, the lower the levels of school violence. Conversely, the lack of a sense of school safety contributes to learners experiencing higher levels of violence at schools (supra). The outcomes of the Eastern Cape study by Barnes et al. (2012) differed from the outcomes of this study where the school climate was not conducive to learning; rather, it contributed to school violence that manifested in various forms.

Consistent reports on misconduct from both schools regarding the use and abuse of drugs and other illegal substances on and outside the school premises by learners attested to a school climate of violence, and weaponry possessions by learners. In this regard, evidence of stabbing, shooting, open rebellion and disobedience contributed to a sense of fear and the lack of a feeling of safety among learners and teachers. O'Malley, Katz, Renshaw and Furlong (2012, pp. 321-322) identify three domains that impact school climate: the first is learner outcomes (i.e., learners who have a positive perception of their school environment/school climate are more likely to enjoy school, perform well academically, have positive peer relationships, and act and feel safer than learners who have negative or neutral perceptions of their school climate); the second is staff outcomes (a positive perception of school climate among teachers results in teacher effectiveness, increased

teacher retention, and positive teacher practices that are likely to influence positive psychosocial outcomes for their learners); and the third is school safety outcomes (poor perceptions of school climate are associated with risk taking and violent behaviours among learners as well as reduced feelings of safety). In the light of this, the findings of this study supported the outcomes of the study by O'Malley et al. (2012). Both learners and teachers were involved in various misconducts on a daily basis such as those mentioned above, as well as taking and possession of drugs (mostly learners, although alcoholism among teachers was mentioned), absenteeism and truancy (both teachers and learners), carrying of weapons (learners), disobedience and defiance (teachers and learners), extramarital affairs (teachers), and teenage pregnancies among school girls.

Additionally, the study revealed that one of the schools experienced bad influences from its community resulting in poor relationships between the school, the community and the learners who emanated from this community. This was evident as the school had become a receptacle for the violent imbalances that spilled over from the immediate environment as people from the community used the school as a playground for violence. Scooby secondary reported that community thugs went inside the school to snatch cellphones from learners and teachers, learners brought weapons to school which they had obviously obtained from gangsters and thugs, they smoked and used illegal drugs which they must have obtained from community peddlers, they were pulled into drug-trafficking, learners snatched cash from other learners, learners misbehaved (e.g., loud noises, use of bad language, hanging outside the classes during instructional time). In essence, the school's learners tended to exhibit many of the symptoms associated with gangs and gangsterism that were prevalent in the community.

A well-run school creates an inclusive and democratic environment which fosters a climate of openness and a sense of ownership, commitment and responsibility among all its members (UNISA, 2012). Resilient schools strive to reach out to, and have healthy relationships with, the local communities in which they are situated. The majority of

participants of both schools indicated that they felt unsafe on the school premises. However, in the second school the lack of school connectedness led to general school violence such as the acts mentioned above (carrying weapons at school, possession of drugs and drug-trafficking, theft of cash and other possessions, lack of support between the school principal and teachers, truancy and absenteeism, and the use of derogatory language). The findings support those of other studies. For example, studies have found an opposite association between school connectedness and engagement in violent behaviour (Fong and Vogel, 2008; Wilson, 2004). Shochet and Smith (2012) revealed that in a national probability study of 14 738 learners of grades 7 to 12 in US schools, fewer learners with higher levels of school connectedness engaged in violent behaviour compared with learners with lower levels of school connectedness. The phenomenon of connectedness (Osher, Dwyer and Jimerson, 2006) involves feelings of belonging at schools, connection to learners, staff and parents in both classroom and school, and a caring environment at school where learners who believe that they are cared for put more effort into their schooling, which in turn yields good results. More scholars define school connectedness as the extent to which learners feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school environment (Sharkey, Furlong, Dowdy, Felix, Grimm and Ritchey, 2012).

Learners who feel connected to a school are less likely to use drugs and/or alcohol, act aggressively, and drop out of school (Sharkey et al., 2012). The findings of this study revealed a high rate of drug use in both schools. This phenomenon implies that most learners in these schools didn't feel personally accepted, respected, included or supported by significant others or even their peers. Therefore it can be concluded that learner poor school connectedness resulted in various types of learner misconduct including substance abuse, coming late to school in the morning as they would go via certain areas to get drugs before attending school, joining classes late after break as they would eat and do drugs simultaneously, no submission of school work, absenteeism and truancy, carrying of weapons, stealing, stabbing and even shooting randomly at class mates, just to mention a few. The current study further established that there were poor work relations between the

staff members and the administrators and that dishonouring of classes by teachers was prevalent. It may be argued that leading the teachers as a new member of the school and as an acting principal was a daunting and stressful task. This was manifested where teachers were dishonouring their core duty of teaching and learning. When requested to attend to their duties, they refused to take orders from the acting principal.

The study further established that there were various types of ill-discipline and disruptive learner behaviours, ranging from substance abuse which is associated with bullying to fist fights, carrying of dangerous weapons – mainly knives - threats and intimidation of stabbing, disrespecting of own learning through failure to submit school work, bunking of classes and truancy. The findings of this study concurred with those of Wright (2005); Jimerson, Morrison, Pletcher and Furlong (2006); Harber (2010); and Swearer, Espelage, Koenig, Berry, Collins, and Lembeck (2012). The study by Jimerson et al. (2006) revealed that the Youth Risk Behaviour Surveillance (YRBS) in the US found that 41% of males and 25% of females in grades 9-12 indicated that they had been in a physical fight in the previous year. Additionally, 27% of males and 7% of females in grades 9-12 reported that they had carried a gun at school. They also found that alcohol or drug abuse (AOD) was related to involvement in bullying. This association is not surprising given the well-documented correlation between substance abuse and aggressive behaviours (Swearer et al., 2012). Furthermore, they argue that there is a link between fighting others and alcohol consumption. It was also revealed in a study of high school learners (Swearer et al., 2012) that youths who bullied others were more likely to smoke, chew tobacco and drink alcohol than learners who did not bully.

The current study similarly established that learners frequently carried weapons like knives at school, but learner participants argued that these learners who carried weapons didn't actually use them to stab other learners during fights. It appeared that weapons were mainly used as a tool by some learners to intimidate others. Wright (2005) attests to this as he found that in 83% of simple assault offenses that were reported, no weapons other than

hands, fists or feet were used; 14% of the weapons used were other dangerous weapons; 2% of the weapons used were guns; and the other 2% of the weapons used were knives.

What can teachers do to keep learners connected? As is the case in many other schools, this study established that teachers had a vacuum on how to keep their learners connected to school. A study by Sharkey et al. (2012) contends that teachers can keep learners connected to school by simply observing and doing small things to and for the learners, such as:

- a) Stand at the classroom door and greet each learner.
- b) Spend the first 5 minutes of class on Mondays to allow learners to share news about their weekends.
- c) Rotate seating arrangements so that learners get a chance to meet everyone in the class, and to get close attention from teachers.
- d) Educate learners on the importance of individual differences by discussing this with them.
- e) Relate coursework to learners' interests (e.g., analyse a music video, use local sports teams' stats in math / accounting).
- f) Use progress monitoring to chart learners' growth and reward successes.
- g) Collaborate with learners on the creation of classroom rules. (Sharkey, Furlong, Dowdy, Felix, Grimm and Ritchey, 2012, p. 499).

### **8.2.2 Hotspots of Violence**

The study established that violence occurred both inside and outside the school premises. However, this study reports only on internal occurrences of violence and their impact on teaching and learning. A great deal of violence took place inside the school premises in places like classrooms, vacant buildings, toilets, and in veranda areas. The types of violence which took place outside the school premises comprised incidences of grievous bodily harm (GBH) with the aim to inflict or cause great bodily pain. In one incident a

learner stabbed another, causing two deep wounds in the biceps. The third attempt fortunately missed but the victim's jersey was badly cut. As mentioned earlier, media reports on school violence demonstrated that GBH violence is taking its toll in South African schools. The following examples were cited: A male learner from one of the high schools in Gauteng province was stabbed to death on 28 February 2012 by gangs from the community (SABC 1, 2012). In another high school in the Gauteng province a boy was stabbed to death during the same week. In a high school in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal province, shortage of school furniture resulted in the death of a learner (Ndlovu, 2012).

In Lioness secondary it was the security guard who took full charge of issues of learner misconduct and general discipline for both teachers and learners. For example, he disciplined learners for late coming by instructing them to clean the school yard and/or toilets and he dealt with the issue of bunking of classes by admonishing both learners and teachers. It was not clear how teachers were disciplined for their late coming, bunking of classes and other misconduct. Ironically, teacher participants were not pleased with the security guard's interference in their professional domain although they acknowledge that teachers did very little to remedy misconduct in spaces where they felt uninvolved. This attitude was corroborated by Furlong and Morrison (2000, p. 9) who criticise teachers' lack of ownership of playground discipline as follows: "Children see teachers walking by pretending not to notice and they learn that the way we treat others, the way we interact on the street or on the playground, is nobody's business but our own. Teachers must talk about violence, they must recognise it, examine it, dissect it and let children see and understand its secrets and its sources. Without this examination it remains a fallacy that society will understand and control youth violence".

The study further established that violence which took place within the two schools ranged from carrying of weapons to stealing of school bags, snatching of cash and showing a great deal of disrespect to school officials. Abuse of substances, such as dagga and liquor also influenced the tendencies of violent behaviour among learners. Additionally,

one of the principals revealed that, in most cases, violence occurred during break times. Learners would run to the office complaining about various acts of violence such as physical attacks (slapping) and theft. Most thefts were reported to be perpetrated by male learners against female learners. Harber (2004) contends that violence is overwhelmingly a male problem. He posits that the roots for this appear to be primarily social rather than biological, highlighting the inadequacies of the current socialisation of male children. Furlong and Morrison (2000) also attest to this as they found that 8.2% of [male] learners in their urban sample carried weapons both inside and outside the school premises. Ironically, such weapons had mostly been stolen from other learners.

Participants at Scooby secondary were in agreement with each other about the spaces of violence in school. Violence took place everywhere within the school premises including the following areas: classrooms, toilets, behind the cottages, behind the classrooms, on the playground, and even in veranda areas. There are numerous unsupervised areas on school campuses such as hallways, cafeterias or bathrooms where behaviours occur that warrant an office referral; however, these incidents are usually not recorded because of the absence of an adult to observe the behaviour (Morrison et al., 2006).

The study further established that learners were concerned about perpetrators of violence who misbehaved once they were under the influence of drugs. This was when they would become highly aggressive and cause fighting. It was also noted that most violent incidences took place during break times. Such incidences occurred mostly as learner-on-learner violence and were perpetrated by male learners against female learners. The most referred incidences of violence to the office during break times included stealing of bags or money and learners hitting/slapping one another. It must be noted that stealing of bags and snatching of cash from learners by other learners is regarded as bullying. Rigby (2006) argues that bullying occurs as a result of encounters between children who differ in their personal power; that is, the more powerful the child is the more motivated s/he becomes to seek out and oppress the less powerful. Similarly, in a school context there are always

considerable imbalances in power among children. Such imbalances are related to physical and/or psychological disparities.

Learner self-referrals of incidences of violence to the office during break times indicated that the school did not deploy staff members to monitor learner behaviours on the playground during recess. Schools are expected to have a grounds duty record book of incidents and a roster indicating when teachers are expected to take turns in monitoring and supporting learners during break times, thus creating a social support component for all learners. Research studies suggest that during transition or unstructured times or break times, misbehaviour is likely to occur (Morrison et al., 2006). For learners to be safe on the schools premises during unstructured times, Morrison et al. (2006) found that some schools organize staff/teachers to supervise the learners; however, it was clear that other schools would still leave these areas unsupervised. In this study it was obvious that teachers were not expected to perform this task as no grounds duty rosters could be provided. Demaray, Malecki and DeLong (2006) suggest that schools that are most effective in preventing behaviour problems and violence are those that provide innovative social support for teachers, learners and support staff. Additionally, school climates that reflect a sense of community and promote tight relationships among learners and teachers are safer and more welcoming. The schools' failure to establish a grounds duty record book and their lack of commitment to assign teachers to monitor learners' behaviours during break times indirectly constituted and promoted school violence which, as was demonstrated in the schools, resulted in bullying.

### ***8.2.3 Teacher-Induced Violence: Persistent Use of Physical Punishment***

Traditionally, research has focused on violence that emerged from learners or on bullying behaviours among learners; however, in recent years a few studies, including this one, have touched on the issue of teacher-induced violence (Bulut and Gunduz, 2012). To many people, a teacher spanking and/or verbally abusing a learner for starting a fight or talking

back in class might seem like a relic of the past, but it's more common than one might think. Though the trend is down, as recently as six years ago a quarter of a million learners were spanked at school, and regulations in 19 states of USA schools allowed corporal punishment (Bulut and Gunduz, 2012).

Experts argue whether corporal punishment is effective. Critics call it 'child abuse' and note that learners continue to misbehave even after repeated spankings. Supporters say it is a form of badly needed discipline and that such punishment teaches kids respect and keeps them in school. In this regard, Canon (2012) poses the following questions: Does it [corporal punishment] work? Are parents notified? And if so, do they have to give permission?

This study established that the level of conflict at Scooby secondary was escalating and unmanageable; this was evident where teachers reported that learner disciplinary issues were a way of life and they lived with it on day-to-day basis. It emerged that it was a norm at Scooby secondary that whenever learners had committed an offence, they were referred to the office of the Deputy Principal for corporal punishment. Literally on daily basis learners were being caned in the office for various offenses committed on the school premises, thus inducing violence to learners. Childline S.A. contends that corporal punishment teaches children that hurting others is okay. This study revealed that the Deputy Principal was good at his work of punishing learners and thus he was regarded as a specialist in sanctioning corporal punishment. It also emerged that learners were not merely punished after being referred, but that the Deputy Principal would take his time to interrogate the learners to establish the nature of the problem before they were physically punished. The findings of this study relating to corporal punishment were supported by Osher, Dwyer, Jimerson and Brown (2012, p. 33) who assert that schools sometimes emphasize punitive measures to manage learner behaviour and that teachers may use disapproval more frequently than approval as a consequence for learner behaviour. They contend that teachers respond to learner behavioural problems in a reactive, negative and

harsh manner, which includes hostile adult responses, discipline referrals, punishment, segregation and removal from the school environment. Additionally, these negative responses also affect the learning process; learners with behavioural problems are provided with lower levels of instruction, are praised less, and are called upon less frequently than other learners.

The study further established that the majority of teachers at Lioness secondary relied heavily on the TLO and the security guard to cope with violence at the school. The TLO and the security guard were regarded as the only people who had the power, authority and means to instil discipline in learners through the use of corporal punishment and other alternative ways to maintain order among learners. Female teachers' practice of referring learners to male teachers for discipline was questionable. Do such practices promote discipline among learners? In my view this tendency corroborates Furlong and Morrison's (2000, p. 9) contention that female teachers serve to reinforce gender hierarchy as they use their male counterparts to administer corporal punishment on their behalf. Conversely, in this school with such a high climate of violence, female teachers may have referred matters to their male counterparts because they feared 'powerful' – often drugged - male learners who could threaten and overpower them. However, Furlong and Morrison (supra) contend that, as long as teachers treat violence at arm's length as something that is someone else's problem, they will continue to neglect the opportunity to intervene in crucial aspects of children's lives.

Physical violence against children in the form of corporal punishment is still widespread in schools internationally. Bulut and Gunduz (2012) describe corporal punishment as an old-fashioned and ineffective disciplinary tool, stating that it has been banned in many countries. They argue that although corporal punishment is officially banned in both home and school settings, it is still widely used in many countries. In Turkey, corporal punishment was banned in the 1930s and a teacher who used corporal punishment was to be given monthly salary cuts. Bulut and Gunduz (2012) argue that although corporal

punishment was officially banned, it has never been so successful; it just changed its form and still persists today. Numerous incidents of physical punishment go unreported. Research studies have revealed that minors are being subjected to physical punishment in schools, welfare institutions and other places, but this goes unreported due to the nature of this practice and the stigma attached to the victims. Especially in school settings, teasing and name calling still exist, but victims do not want to report these to the authorities or their parents in fear of further reprisals (*supra*, p. 169). The study found that the practice of corporal punishment is still common in South Africa despite the fact that the law is very clear about it.

The use of corporal punishment in schools has been prohibited since 1996 in South Africa; however, it is still commonly used, particularly in rural areas, and is still supported by many parents and learners (Morrell, 1999; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Bhana, 2012; Hunt, 2007). Oosthuizen et al. (2003) contend that while corporal punishment has been abolished, it has left a definite vacuum in methods to deal with serious misconduct in schools. Does this mean that schools globally have been operating with one method of disciplining learners, which is physical punishment? Or are learners generally viewed as ‘inhuman’ or ‘non-human’ and can they therefore be disciplined only through instilling pain and fear? The study by Burton et al. (2009) reveals that South African schools continue to employ physical punishment as a means of affecting discipline in schools as more than half (55.6%) of the interviewed participants had been physically hurt at school for their wrongdoings.

The study revealed that female teachers ‘stepped away’ from acts of direct violence in that they referred learners to their male counterparts for corporal punishment; however, particularly female teachers had a tendency to indulge in different forms of violence such as abusing learners emotionally and psychologically. This was evident where a learner was reprimanded and verbally victimised for requesting to go home to look after her sickly mother. According to SASA no. 84 of 1996, sub-section 18.1(i) and 18.1(iii), teachers are

forbidden to use obscene or abusive language and use of corporal punishment or any form of humiliation and intimidation of any sort, whether physical or psychological, is forbidden. However, it became clear that teachers breached the law by continually abusing learners through abusive language and corporal punishment instead of following the code of conduct provided by the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

The study further established that some female teachers were reinforcing the gender hierarchy by using their male counterparts to administer corporal punishment on their behalf. The link of authority and masculinity relations is crucial to comprehend the gendered nature of school violence. This finding was substantiated by Dunne, Humphreys and Leach (2006) who suggest that boys' performances of masculinity are an attempt to subordinate female teachers according to gender order in schools and society and thus to challenge male teachers' authoritative position in the school hierarchy. Further, in some cases, this gender hierarchy is reinforced by the female teachers themselves who use their male colleagues to administer corporal punishment on their behalf. Historically, many cultures have had hierarchical social structures where those in positions of power have controlled those who are powerless through violence and threat of violence. These structures and practices have extended to families and the relations between men and women and between parents and their children (Pinheiro, 2006).

It further emerged that the security guard at Lioness secondary managed to cope with learners' misconduct by using the power and authority vested in him by the school (in my opinion, by default) to create a self-designed hierarchy of disciplinary steps. These measures included gardening and cleaning toilets. This practice of abdicating teacher/management responsibilities and the measures taken by the security guard must be questioned in the strongest terms by all role players. Is it good educational practice for learners to acquire cleaning skills at the expense of academic time? Should security guards be capacitated to deal with issues of discipline among learners? Moreover, who took care of his core duties to ensure that the safety and security in and around the school were

maintained when he was occupied with learner discipline matters? A frightening image appears in the mind's eye: teachers are sitting in the staff room, chatting and drinking tea, while a security guard interacts with learners who have disobeyed a basic school rule – i.e., arriving late for school.

A matter of deep concern that the study revealed was that some teachers felt that there was nothing they could do to contribute in dealing with the issues of learner misconduct. These teachers relied heavily on referrals of disorderly learners to the TLO or the principal's office for disciplinary purposes. This study revealed that such referrals were not recorded in the data mechanism book of the school and that only serious offenses were recorded in the tribunal or disciplinary books. Office referrals are defined by Morrison et al. (2006) as 'practice' whereas teachers and learners consider office referrals as a 'consequence' for misbehaviour. Teachers used the threat of an office referral as a lever to change learner behaviour. Teachers viewed a referral as a sufficient consequence for a transgression, in particular if the offense was minor. McIntoch et al. (2012) argue that office discipline referrals (ODRs) are used by schools to document learner problem behaviour on school premises. ODRs provide immediate appeal to school personnel because of their ready availability and potential use for a wide variety of decision-making tasks.

The TLO at Lioness secondary asserted that his education skilled him to deal with issues of violence. The principal of this school mentioned that assistance had been requested from the Psychological Services unit of the provincial Department of Basic Education; however, he was quick to state that such a service was not effective as no commitment had been forthcoming from the department at all.

Another matter that came under scrutiny was sexual harassment and related issues. The study by Human Rights Watch (2001) suggests widespread sexual misconduct by teachers with underage learners. It has been reported that male teachers tend to demand sexual

favours from girls with threats of physical violence or corporal punishment if they refuse. Verbal degradations and the use of highly sexualised language have been widely reported. Offering better grades or money to pressure girls for sex occurs and can also be construed as violence. This practice is called 'STMs' – sexually transmitted marks. Sadly, such cases often go unreported as parents may feel that monetary payment is more useful than lengthy trials and enquiries. There also exists what is called 'corrective rape' of a lesbian pupil by a male pupil to "...make her heterosexual" or "...straight" (*Mercury*, March 13, 2008, p.3). Mshengu and the Midlands Women's Group (2003) report a culture of silence surrounding gender violence in schools, which is becoming normalised. Gender-based violence has been under-reported as girls are afraid of being blamed or victimised. They also experience an unhealthy over-respect for teachers.

Additionally, those in positions of authority (e.g., teachers and prefects) and those with physical and economic power (like wealthy 'sugar daddies' and senior male learners) may use a range of measures that constitute violence in the form of bullying; in many countries this includes the use of corporal punishment by teachers and chasing learners from class (Dunne et al., 2006). Bulut and Gunduz (2012) add that being a "bully" is culturally considered as 'macho' or 'masculine and it is widely accepted and socially sanctioned by both males and females in Turkish society. Bulut and Gunduz (2012) refer to this cultural phenomenon as 'soft violence'. They further argue that, until recently, researchers in Turkey have regarded bully/victim behaviours in school as a natural part of growing up, thus a lot of bullying is widely witnessed at all levels of Turkish schools. Turkish culture has traditionally denied the existence of bullying by ignoring acts of bullying, making efforts to cover up bullying in schools and regarding bullying as a natural part of growing up. Efforts to cover up bullying activities in Turkish society stem from the fact that there is a dominant conception that outsiders should not be informed about domestic issues. This could be summed up by a Turkish proverb that, roughly translated says: "an arm is broken but it stays inside the sleeve" - meaning that only the victim knows of the broken [and painful] arm but that outsiders cannot see it (supra, p. 166).

There are various common reasons why teachers induce violence through the use of corporal punishment throughout the world. Bulut and Gunduz (2012) assert that Turkish schools physically punish learners for various reasons, including: sexual harassment or making sexual jokes; destruction of school buildings or property; talking in class and causing disruptions; fighting; failure to do homework; failure to pay attention in class; being inappropriately dressed; inappropriate hair styles, damage of teachers' goods; and smoking. It appears that adolescents have a natural interest in sexual topics and sexuality. Thus, schools should endeavour to incorporate sex education classes and seminars so that children and adolescents can have authentic information and be informed about sexual topics (supra, p.169). This study established that one of the schools under study was running sex education sessions for its learners by inviting an NGO called Love Life to address students. The many transgressions by learners related to sexual matters make it essential that schools offer sex education classes and, where possible, involve learners in counselling and guidance programs.

#### **8.2.4 *Violent Practices in Schools***

The study established that, in some instances, learners were treated unfairly. For example, in one of the schools they were coerced to leave the school for an extended period of time. This was evident where a female learner was sent home due to her pregnancy status and so-called bad attitude. The pregnant learner was rescued by the TLO teacher who mentioned that many more learners had fallen pregnant but they had never been sent home willy-nilly or before they were due for delivery. This type of behaviour by teachers can be described as discrimination, violent and gender bias based on the temporary disability of a pregnant learner. Pregnancy at school is not something to be proud of, but teachers need to educate learners on the issues of pregnancies, and not discriminate against them. Barnes et al. (2012) state that to satisfy youths' developmental needs regarding safety, respect, authority, love, skills, challenges, independence and existence, it is vital that schools should make learners aware of the fact that they are important as human beings and

learners and that they can make a difference in their determination towards a better life. This attitude would have served this pregnant girl – and others like her – very well.

Disturbing statistics of learner pregnancies have been reported in South African schools and in other countries. For example, close to 50 000 learner pregnancies were reported by principals of SA public schools in 2007 (The Annual School Survey report, 2010). The majority of these learners were from Kwazulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces. Most of the learners that fell pregnant in 2007 were in Grade 10 (12 465). According to records, 49 636 learners fell pregnant in 2007. KwaZulu-Natal had the highest number of learners who fell pregnant (14 246) followed by Limpopo province (10 195). Disturbing figures of learner pregnancies were revealed for the intermediate phase (Grades 4, 5 and 6) with 106 pregnancies for Grade 4 nationally, 287 pregnancies for Grade 5 nationally, and an alarming 832 pregnancies for Grade 6 nationally. The trend over years has revealed that the majority of learners who became pregnant were from Grade 10 (2010, p. 25).

The study established that acts of insolence or disrespectful behaviour existed in one of the schools as a form of teacher-on-learner, teacher-on-teacher, and teacher-on-administrator violence. It was reported that the majority of teachers had a tendency to bunk classes. When they were reminded by the principal of their core duties, their responses were offensive and dehumanising in nature; for example, they would say, “Go and tell them that I’m not coming”. These teachers would at times verbally victimise learners when they reminded them that they should attend to their class periods. No one can expect learners to be disciplined if teachers are acting defiantly and in an ill disciplined manner; moreover, learners will quickly adopt this attitude and exhibit similar traits of violence. School violence can be understood as episodes of violence generated in the pedagogical environment, and these violence acts are usually associated with threats, physical and verbal aggressions, drug use by learners, and bullying (Guzzo, et al., 2006). They argue that school violence is occasionally viewed narrowly by understanding it only as physical violence between learners and by learners against teachers. Such narrow views ignore

other elements of school violence such as teachers' lack of commitment, the arbitrary actions of teachers and administrators (Guzzo et al., p. 503). Ultimately, other violence studies like the one conducted by Wilson (2006) and Abromevay (2003) define school violence as incorporating a wide range of violent acts and attitudes which may be verbal, symbolic, institutional and physical. In this study, acts of violence like bunking of classes by teachers and learners, poor support from staff and use of drugs were widely reported.

The study also established that over-aged learners were not supported to become part of mainstream schooling. At Scooby secondary, over-aged learners in lower grades were reported to behave in a very chaotic and disruptive manner and had no sense of direction about their learning. At Lioness secondary, if older learners were trying to be vocal and speak their minds, teachers would victimise them using derogatory language such as: "Who are you? Whose aunt are you? You are not supposed to be here, you are supposed to be at work." Instead of supporting over-aged learners, teachers ridiculed them, suppressing those who were trying to stand up for their rights to education and singling them out as renegades and rebels. This finding was not directly supported by the literature on school violence. For example Bear, Webster-Straton, Furlong and Ree (2000); Lee, Smith, Perry and Smylie (1999); and Osher and Kendziora (2010) are of the opinion that learners may miss school due to fear for their physical safety and emotional ridicule or threats, including being bullied or harassed by students or staff for their gender, sexual orientation, appearance, and/or disability. In the schools under study learners were being bullied or harassed by their teachers for different aspects than the ones covered by other studies. This study established that learners were often bullied by their teachers because they wanted to be taught; older learners opted to stay at school but were harassed and ridiculed because of their age. Abusive language such as "aunties", "supposed to be at work", and "[you do] not [belong] here" were used against them.

It further emerged that teachers victimised learners by calling them names when they (learners) stood up for their rights to education. This was revealed where teachers used

pejorative language when class representatives called the teachers to come to class to teach. It was reported that these teachers would further harass and ridicule other teachers who attended to their work of teaching. The behaviour of teachers who dishonoured their duties and disrespected both their colleagues and learners consequently led to violence against learners, other teachers and the principal. Such behaviour resulted in disorganised schooling since no one took responsibility for upholding the academic development of learners. When a group of learners are unattended, they usually resort to various types of mischief like making noises, teasing, bullying and even fighting. At worst, valuable teaching and learning time is lost. Like UNISA (2012), this study found that teachers would absent themselves from schools without reason; that some would arrive late or would leave early; and that others would be at school but would refrain from attending classes. The study by Furlong, Michael, Morrison and Gale (2006) also corroborates these findings where they argue that, by ignoring acts of violence [by implication, among learners as well as among their colleagues], teachers are condoning violence at schools (Furlong, Michael, Morrison and Gale, 2006). Harber (2010) and Guzzo et al. (2006) contend that every action to prevent violence in schools should consider the many influences that contribute to violence, including the potentially violent practices that teachers commit against learners. In the same vein, Guzzo et al. (2006) assert that in Brazilian schools, teachers' position of authority and control are used to blame learners for initiating violence in schools. Because of their authority, teachers and school staff are rarely identified as the source of violence and are protected by their power. This is clearly a matter for urgent attention by school administrators and provincial school authorities.

Teachers need the support from school administrators through consistent disciplinary practice and technical assistance for classroom management in order to keep problematic learners in their classrooms (Jimerson et al., 2006). Contrary to this, the study revealed that teachers were unruly themselves and defied the person in authority. This was similar to findings by Greene (2008) who suggests that the "who" of school violence is most frequently understood as learner-on-learner aggression or violence, thus ignoring the many

other versions of violence among teachers, staff, administrators and learners; for example, teacher-on-learner bullying or coercion.

The study established that the two schools ignored learners' right to education a) by grouping learners together for long hours while they were unoccupied (i.e., teachers were absent from class) and b) by ignoring the learner leader component (class representatives) by disallowing them to participate in decision-making processes. In this way teachers were dehumanising learners at these schools. The findings were corroborated in Discipline and Punish theory which proposes that organisations like factories, schools and hospitals resemble prisons (Giddens, 1997), thus theorising that schools have become one of the new institutions of social control, along with prisons, hospital and factories, that use continual surveillance to Discipline and Punish in order to avoid social fragmentation and to create order and docility (Harber, 2002). They deny learners the fundamental human rights of participation, voice and consent – and often those of teachers as well as they have to follow instructions from DBE officials and school managers without the opportunity to voice their concerns or views.

The study established that learners were both victims and perpetrators of school violence. A female Grade 9 learner was both strangled and slapped by her school mates using their bare hands. This confirms the notion that tools of violence are at the disposal of the perpetrators of violence, which implies that learners and teachers are not safe as violence is perpetrated with or without the use of dangerous weapons. Wright (2005) argues that the tools to commit crime are at the disposal of many perpetrators, which makes it difficult to guarantee the safety of both learners and teachers at school. In this regard, a survey conducted by SAIRR (2008) found that only 23% of pupils felt safe at school, whereas the world average of pupils declaring that they felt a high degree of safety at school was only 47% – i.e. a low proportion felt safe. The study by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC, 2006) reported that one in five learners (21%) had been threatened or hurt by someone at school and a third had been verbally abused by someone at school.

Research conducted in Southern USA schools, has revealed that about 83% of simple assault offenses where only hands, fists or feet were used as a weapon were reported. In 14% of the cases reported in this study the weapon was “other dangerous weapons”, in 2% the weapon was a gun, and in another 2% the weapon used was a knife. In 47% of the offenses the victim and offender were acquaintances. In 18% of the offenses the victim and offender were teachers/learners, in 3% the victim and offender were friends, and in another 3% they were in a more intimate relationships (boyfriend/girlfriend), whereas in 18% of the cases the relationship was not reported or unknown (Wright, 2005).

The study further established that a learner had been victimized by other learners. This learner was implicated by class mates on a list of learners who had been drinking liquor inside a classroom. The case was so serious that he was sent home and ordered to come back with a parent. These incidents were amicably resolved by the school officials who involved a parent in one instance. Childline S.A. contends that ‘restorative justice’ as an alternative to corporal punishment often provides answers that will result in an acceptable compromise, so such a measure should be encouraged. For instance, a useful technique with most children is used in ‘restorative justice’ practices (which are well-known in African cultures). ‘Restorative justice’ involves both ‘victim’ and ‘offender’ in a meeting aimed at planning a way to repair any harm caused. In addition, some set plans to prevent future misbehaviour by all concerned. These techniques have been successfully used by school governing bodies seeking alternative punishments in the school system in South Africa.

The study established that the majority of participants echoed a lack of commitment among teachers to perform their core duty of teaching. Teachers at Scooby secondary and Lioness secondary were not honouring classes for different reasons, one being their fear of violent

learners. At times teachers would abandon the entire class if they were unable to handle disruptive learner/s. It was also found that teachers were often simply too lazy to attend classes. Those learners who were serious about their education were often disturbed by their peers who were violent or just disorderly.

The above excerpts of school violence were supported by local and international literature on school violence. Teachers use their hegemony to suppress, bully and verbally victimise learners; however, such actions were condoned in the schools under study because the teachers were not prohibited from verbally inflicting harm on learners or bunking of classes; in the process they perpetrated violence on learners. The findings of this study were corroborated by Haffejee (2006) who notes that some educational effects of violence include avoidance of school, lack of engagement in class, difficulty with concentration, increased isolation, lower academic attainment and possible drop-out. It was noted that about 40% of girls dropped out within 5 years of starting school in developing countries.

It emerged from this study that although the majority of learners were affected by violence, Christian learners were reported to be worst hit as they would become confused and have no idea how to react, especially if other learners engaged in fist fights. It was further reported that while learners were affected by violence, some of them seemed to enjoy violence as they would become excited and abandon whatever they were engaged in to join the fight through clapping hands and making encouraging noises to the fighters. One teacher defined learner fights as a “boy thing”, meaning that every boy has a tendency to engage in fist fights and that boys treat violence as fun or a game. Wright (2005) attests to this when he argues that in 83% of simple assault offenses, no weapons other than hands, fists or feet were used; in 14% the weapon was other dangerous weapons; in 2% the weapon was a gun; and in 2% the weapon used was a knife.

### **8.3 Causes of Violence in Schools**

Various causes of violence reported in this study were not exclusive to other causes of violence present in South African schools today. These include: absence of leadership skills, lack of meetings and parental involvement.

### **8.3.1 *Absence of Leadership Skills***

The study revealed a range of improper leadership strategies and a lack of leadership skills in both schools. Although it was established that there was no overt conflict among staff members in either of the two schools, there was clear evidence of strained and poor working relations. The extent of these poor working relations varied between the two schools. At Scooby secondary it emerged that teachers were not willing to stand in for and support one another in carrying out duties like invigilation. As a visitor to the school I found myself invigilating Grade 12 learners during their Trial examination while the responsible teacher was occupied with Grade 9 learners who were due to attend a drug awareness campaign that had been organised by myself for both schools. Furthermore, lack of teamwork was also reported among teachers, where there was no team spirit and team connectedness between teachers and the school management at Scooby secondary. Teachers would at times struggle to meet the deadlines for submission of work to their respective cluster coordinators for moderation purposes. Failure to meet deadlines is part of poor management and leadership on the part of schools' management team.

It further emerged that a lot of hidden hatred, non-cooperation and distrust among the teachers were common in both schools. This hatred was not on the basis of diversity among staff members in terms of different racial groupings, language or culture as common diversity issues in South Africa, but on the basis of group dynamics. The dominant cause of diversity at Lioness secondary was conflict of opinion between a group of teachers who had been employed at the inception of the school and those teachers who had been employed at later stages. At Lioness secondary it was clear that two distinct groupings existed: one comprised those teachers who were willing to uphold their core

duty of teaching and learning and the other was those teachers who were just lazy and unwilling to teach. Those teachers who had been employed earlier regarded themselves as “the owners” / “the founders” of the school and refused to take orders from either the SMT or the school principal. It was not surprising that the “founders” refused to take orders from the principal because she only joined the school later as the successor of the first principal of this school. Of the 23 teachers, 18 regarded themselves as “owners” of the school whereas only five were reported to be fully committed to teaching and learning. The “owners” disowned their duties through bunking of classes. In doing so they discouraged the other group from attending to their duties by ridiculing them whenever they would leave the staff room to teach or when coming back from teaching. Such behaviour equates to violence. A second distinct feature of the group dynamics prevalent in the school was that the two groups differed in terms of their attitude towards their core duties of teaching and learning, but all teachers were reportedly well connected in terms of socialising.

The nature of the violence experienced by teachers, the administrator and learners was what I refer to as multi-faceted and systematic violence. It was both multi-faceted and systematic violence because it was perpetrated by a certain group of individuals on various stakeholders within the school, thus leading to a poor school climate and affecting teaching and learning processes. The findings of this study posit that there is still a huge responsibility resting on the shoulders of policy makers and educational leaders to establish a positive school culture and school connectedness.

The findings of this study were corroborated by Furlong and Morrison (2000) who provided an interesting framework that connects the concepts of ‘school’ and ‘violence’. In their view, ‘systematic violence’ is an institutional practice or procedure that adversely impacts on individuals or groups by burdening them psychologically, mentally, culturally, spiritually, economically or physically. In an educational context it refers to practices and procedures that prevent learners from learning, thus harming them (supra, p. 11). Barnes et

al. (2012) contend that when policy makers and educational leaders forsake their responsibility, they violate learners' right to quality education.

The study further establish that fraudulent practices involving Grades 8 and 9 learners' marks (informally referred to as 'crooking' of marks) was a norm for some teachers at Lioness secondary. Crooking is a term used in SA schools which refers to the process of making marks available without learners' participation in writing of particular assessments. It was reported that these teachers who tended to 'crook' marks were good at filing; their work was always neat and orderly. However, the actual picture reflected irregular practices: marks would be 'sucked out of their thumbs' and/or learners' marks would be mixed up (i.e., a learner who performed well might be allocated poor marks, and vice versa). Experience has taught me that, in some instances, teachers crooked not only with learners' marks, but even with their identity numbers. At worst, they would retain records of learners who had left the school. Therefore, although drop-out rates were significant, the levels of learner drop-outs that existed were not monitored or recorded. Learners would drop out from school for various reasons such as negative school connectedness and teachers' absenteeism or absence from classes. Therefore, the end results of school violence manifest as school drop-out, reluctance to attend school, increased risk of teenage pregnancy, transmission of HIV/Aids, community disintegration and academic underperformance (UNISA, 2012). Harber (2004) asserts that, at times, beatings by teachers leave children permanently disfigured, disabled or dead. A major consequence of violence, which could be directly and indirectly related to poor leadership, was learner drop-outs. Although the drop-out rates couldn't be traced in the schools' records however, the matric pass rates in both schools manifested learner drop-outs. For example, at Scooby secondary, the matric pass rate has been persisting low with below 60% for pass three years. At Lioness secondary the matric pass rate has just improved from below 40% to miraculously just above 80%. The findings of this study were supported by Haffejee (2006) who notes that some educational effects of violence include avoidance of school, lack of engagement in class, difficulty with concentration, increased isolation, lower

academic attainment and possible drop-out. He found that, in developing countries, 40% of girls would drop out within 5 years of starting school.

In this study it was found that a group of teachers held significant negative power over other teachers, the principal and the learners. This negative force perpetrated violence which spiralled into the school climate that was everything but conducive to teaching and learning. I would argue that learners' education was hijacked by arrogance, laziness and a lack of professional ethics among some teachers. It was highly ironic to find this lack of democratic principles and leadership in schools – schools that function in a country that prides itself on the fact that it has one of the most advanced constitutions in the world. UNISA (2012, p. 18) sees a functional school as one that is the opposite of an authoritarian institution: “It must be made clear that the alternative to these authoritarian forms, which is more democratic relationships in schools as a means of reducing violence, does not mean lack of discipline or order. Schools that are organized along more democratic lines would have a culture of mutual respect, civility and politeness as well as the freedom to make constructive criticism and engage in free and open debate”.

Based on the findings of this study, it emerged that ineffective leadership bred violence among teachers through dissention, overt and covert rebellion, negative and opposing groupings, dishonesty (particularly with marks) and laziness. This spiral extended and impacted on the learners, manifesting in a range of school violence incidences in both schools such as doing drugs, use of bad language, snatching of cash, stealing, disobedience, truancy and rudeness. The study further established that some of the teacher participants defined learner fights as a “boy thing”, meaning that every boy has a tendency to engage in fist fights and that they treat violence as fun or a game. As a result of poor teacher leadership among their learners, some learners were so worried about violence that, at times, they would wish to go home before the end of the school day. It is a sad day when teachers, who fought so hard and consistently for their right to “freedom”/ “a voice” /democratic leadership, seem to deny their learners these very rights.

It also emerged that at Lioness secondary teachers and the principal had distanced themselves from the issues of disciplining learners who were disrespecting the school rules. This manifested where the security guard took ownership of disciplining learners for late coming, making loud noises, bunking classes, untidy appearance, and all other kinds of learner misconduct. The security guard also engaged in following up on teachers who dishonoured their core duties of teaching, by sending learners to call teachers who were not in class during their time slots or periods. When the security guard would seek the support of teachers in disciplining learners, teachers' response was: "Oh no, it is not my duty to discipline learners". It has been argued that the abolition of corporal punishment left a definite vacuum in methods of dealing with serious learner misconduct (Oosthuizen, 2007). However, as stated before, section 10 of the South Africa Schools Act (SA, 1996(a)) prohibits corporal punishment in South African schools. The fact that teachers at this school abstained from disciplining learners in meaningful, corrective ways therefore implies that the culture of violence was exacerbated; moreover, teachers simply abdicated their right to learners' trust and respect. Furlong and Morrison (2000) corroborate this finding, stating that schools in which the culture of violence has invaded the classrooms and halls and where teachers' response to behavioural issues is that of "hands-off", implies that teachers have defined their role as belonging strictly within the learning/classroom realm. By implication, in schools where behaviour and social interaction challenges are relegated to security staff - few of whom are capacitated and prepared to handle these problems - it is expected that the culture of violence will experience an upward spiral. Furlong and Morrison further argue that violent behaviour regularly occurs in undefined spaces in schools such as hallways, on playgrounds and in other unsupervised locations as there are no professional staff members (administrator or teachers) who claim responsibility for these locales as part of their assigned duties. As long as teachers treat violence at arms' length and as something that is somebody else's responsibility, they will continue to neglect the opportunity to intervene in a crucial aspect of learners' lives (Morrison, 2000, p. 9).

Moreover, Oosthuizen (2007) contends that no parent may lawfully authorize or grant a teacher permission to administer corporal punishment to his or her child. Consequently, a teacher who administers corporal punishment may be found guilty of assault (Oosthuizen, 2007). Is it good educational practice for teachers to turn a blind eye to learner misconducts due to lack of effective and innovative methods of dealing with learner misconduct? If teachers fear punitive measures against them after disciplining learners something is seriously wrong in the educational system. A matter for concern therefore was that the security guard was quick to point out that he was managing the school in terms of the general discipline of learners. For this, he received threats and unwelcome visits from learners. Are security guards equipped for this responsibility and should they be permitted to take up the responsibilities of teachers and the principal to maintain general discipline in a school? Should this person not stick to his primary duty which is ensuring the safety and security of the school? This study maintains that learner misconduct should be dealt with by teachers who should adhere to official school regulations as enacted by the SASA

### ***8.3.2 Lack of Meetings and Parental Involvement***

The study established that meetings such as staff meetings, safety and security meetings, parents' meetings and other meetings were not held as stipulated by the SASA of 1996 and other regulations. Lack of meetings can result in the reproduction of violence, when for example, a parent had been called by the school to a meeting to deal with an aggressive or bully child, instead of attending the meeting a parent fails to avail himself/herself all the time. A problematic child can on the other hand continue to be bully to more learners. Another example, would be, when teachers dishonour curriculum meetings this can result for instance in the late submission of learners' marks when due. Failure to submit marks on time can fuel violence where teachers will resort to submission of wrong marks or no submission of marks and learners can fail that particular subject. It was reported that staff meetings were held in both schools but that they were not effective at all. 'Meetings' where teachers were gathered were mainly held for the purpose of briefing sessions. Moreover,

the resolutions taken at these staff gatherings were not implemented. Most of the participants reported that safety and security meetings were not taking place in either of the schools. Parents' meetings at Scooby secondary had not been convened for three years prior to my visits to the schools, while parents' meetings at Lioness secondary had been convened but poor percentages of parents' involvement epitomised these meetings. At Scooby secondary the lack of all types of meetings was mainly due to the fact that the school had a principal who had been in an acting position for three years. It was clear that it was not possible for the acting principal to enforce activities on the general school management as she lacked support from staff members and the local DBE. Appointing a principal to a school is the duty of the DBE who were lacking in their duty as it took such a long time to appoint a permanent administrator. According to the schools' act and all regulations governing a principal's position, an acting principal has exactly the same duties, responsibilities and authority as a permanent administrator. Lack of leadership skills and the will to succeed seemed to underpin this acting principal's failure to perform in many of her key duties. At Lioness secondary meetings were reported to have taken place as stipulated by the relevant regulations; however, these meetings seemed to fail in their purpose as there were no leadership initiatives to ensure commitment to the resolutions of such meetings.

It is given that school meetings are vital to the functioning and smooth running of a school. Education policy has changed to introduce a) a curriculum aimed at encouraging more active and participant classrooms and b) new governance structures in which parents, teachers and learners are actively involved in more democratic forms of decision-making and school organisation (Harber and Mncube, 2010). In this study, lack of parents' involvement in their children's education contributed to a negative school climate and to learners' low academic achievements. It was also demonstrated that the majority of learners lacked social support and backup from their homes as most of them lived with distant relations or grandmothers and some headed their homes. Additionally, a lack of social and emotional support for learners at the schools under study reduced the feelings of connectedness with the school. Leoschut and Burton (2009) argue that young people who

are attached to their caregivers and who abide by their expectations and regulations are more inclined to accept and conform to conventional society. Strong social bonds are believed to limit involvement in antisocial activities. Poor childhood rearing of young people in SA has involved multiple levels of challenges including poverty, unstable living arrangements, absence of parents, indifferent or violent fathers and alcohol or other substance abusive parents or relatives. Consequently, South African children are exposed to various risk factors which then enhance the opportunities that they will become involved in criminality and violence (CSVR 2007; CSVR, 2010). The impact of income loss, financial strain and parental unemployment was found to be related to rejection or indifference toward children and insufficient discipline and monitoring (Akiba et al., 2002).

#### **8.4 The Impact of Violence in Schools**

Violence in schools has a serious impact on both learners and teachers. The impact of violence emerged in this study were harassment and bullying, and fatal reactions of victims of violence.

##### ***8.4.1 Harassment and Bullying of Girls***

Bullying is not confined to boys. Girl-on-girl bullying is an increasing problem and, among girls, it tends to be verbal, sexually motivated and about competition for boys. Apart from the distress and unhappiness caused by bullying among girls, it can result in absenteeism and some victims will move school to escape the problem (UNISA, 2012).

The study established that a lot of harassment occurred at the schools under study where boys harassed girls and where girls also overpowered and harassed other girls, stating they behaved like ladies. Most girl-on-girl harassment was verbal in nature and comprised

mainly insults. Learners also felt that a lot of violent behaviours were prevalent in their schools as learners sexually harassed other learners. For example, boys would touch girls' private parts, particularly their breasts. However, it further emerged that while some girls felt harassed by male learners' tendency to touch their private parts, some girls were reported to be in favour of being touched by boys. The participants argued that if those girls did not enjoy being touched, they should have reported it to the office instead of talking about it with pride. In some instances boys (perpetrators of violence) avoided being punished or disciplined because they were good at pretending and even cried when they denied their violent acts.

Bulut and Gunduz (2012) argue that bullying shows no similarities with respect to gender. Their study revealed that the gender distribution of the participants who regarded certain behaviours in school as sexual harassment was as follows: 67% stated that males committed shameful behaviours, 29% stated that females committed shameful behaviours and 54% stated that both males and females committed shameful behaviours in schools. Additionally, the proportion of female victims was 14% and the proportion for male victims was 11%. Wilson (2006) argues that most gender-based violence in schools, especially when it is of a sexual nature, is left unchecked. It has a negative impact on the educational and emotional needs of girls and acts as a barrier to attaining education. She states that rape and other forms of sexual violence place girls at risk of contracting the *HIV/AIDS* virus which, in turn, takes its toll in that it disrupts the educational potential of young people, especially girls.

These findings were further supported by Burton (2007) who argues that violence perpetrated against girls can be traced to gender identities through masculine authority and age. The emerging concern is that girls who are perceived by boys to be arrogant, assertive or who hold leadership positions and perform well at school are more likely to be victimised. The study by Dunne et al. (2006) argues that girls are not only the victims of sexual harassment, but boys too are subjected to sexual harassment. In Pakistan it was

reported that some boys were enrolled in girls' schools because families believe that female teachers are "less likely to be sexually abusive or violent". The coercion of young men into sexual acts by older women has also been reported in Pakistan (Dunne et al., 2006). Additionally, a study by Wilson (2006) revealed that 50% of learners had experienced violence either as victims or perpetrators. Girls in South Africa reported being unable to concentrate, not being interested in school, transferring to a different school and some dropping out of school all together due to the problem of sexual harassment.

It emerged that teachers at Lioness secondary felt that violence still persisted, but that it occurred to a lesser degree than in previous years. Late coming by both learners and teachers, sexual harassment of learners by other learners and taking of drugs were reported. In a large nationwide survey on peer sexual harassment in Jewish and Arab state schools in Israel, boys reported much higher levels of sexual harassment (between 21% and 50.5%) than girls (between 11.4% and 35.7%), although sexual assault and rape were excluded in the survey (Dunne et al., 2006, p. 89). Greek schools have experienced relatively few incidents of school violence as compared to other European countries. In this country the most reported form of violence was vandalism (e.g., destruction of school equipment), verbal attacks (insults, threats), peer conflicts, and social exclusion (Hatzichristou et al., 2012).

Sexual violence in schools is not a new phenomenon. Wilson (working document) shows that sexual relations between teachers and schoolgirls in sub-Saharan Africa were common even in the 1950s. It has been made more common place by the bias and prejudice that exist against women. A Human Rights Watch (2001) survey found that eight in ten young men believed that women were responsible for causing sexual violence and that three in ten thought that women who were raped "asked for it". Research studies have shown that in schools gender violence is mainly driven or influenced by peer pressure, young males' need to be seen to be brave, and the need among boys to have a girlfriend (Jeffthas and Artz, 2007). They further argue that dominant male and female peer group cultures

encourage learners to conform to certain stereotypical behaviours which make girls vulnerable to sexual violence. In this regard, Burton (2007) states that this stereotypical behaviour applies to all South African boys. It is further contended that the situation is aggravated by structural inequalities. The statement of structural inequalities as another source of school violence is supported by a CSVR (2007) study entitled, “*Tackling armed violence*”. This study notes that the core of the problem of violent crime in South Africa is a culture of violence and criminality, associated with a strong emphasis on the use of weapons where some specific factors sustain this culture; these factors include inequality, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalisation.

Greene (2008) and Burton (2007) assert that sexual abuse may occur anywhere inside school premises, suggesting that in many schools there are few, if any, safe places for girls. The study revealed that girls were raped in school toilets, empty classrooms, hallways, hostels and dormitories. A study by Burton, Leoschut and Bonora (2009) revealed the following: 14.6% of the study sample indicated that there were particular places at school they were afraid of, for example toilets (48.9%), playing fields/sports areas (12.5%) and classrooms (9.1%).

Haffejee (2006) asserts that, while schools are regarded as unsafe places and school responses to abuse are unsatisfactory, no mechanisms are in place to protect or educate girls on gender-based violence. If anything, this issue is treated superficially and dismissed. Schools as sites that house captive adolescents on a daily basis need to be at the forefront in promoting equal rights, empowering young women and teaching both young women and young men about the non-acceptability of violence.

Researchers have argued that school violence does not start in the school per se. Meyer (2006) and Burton (2010) contend that most behaviours are learnt responses to circumstances and situations that are exhibited in our everyday life. Meyer states that home

life conditions exert influences on all children; if a child grows up in a home where one parent is or both are abusive, whether verbally or physically, the child will take this as a norm. Studies have shown that a child living in an abusive home will himself become an abuser (Meyer, 2006; Burton, 2008; Burton, 2010; CSV, 2010). While children who witness violence view it as a solution, the violence they see and experience may at times spill over into public spaces like schools (Meyer, 2006).

#### **8.4.2 *Fatal Reactions of Victims of Violence***

The study established that low-level forms of violence like teasing and harassment can lead to high-level forms of violence which could be fatal in nature. The reactions of victims vary from one context to another. For example, it emerged that an epileptic learner who had been persistently teased escaped school to fetch a gun from his home. On his return to school, this previously shy victim fired several gunshots at his perpetrator and other learners. It appeared that learners had victimized this learner in three ways: through teasing, by supporting the perpetrator, and by laughing at the victim learner. A matter that was not a focus of the study but that warrants mention here is that the learners' parents/caregiver directly exacerbated the situation by leaving an unsecured gun at home and making it accessible to the child. This finding about victim reaction was corroborated by Hatzichristou et al. (2012, p. 148-149) who contend that teasing involves aggression. For some scholars teasing is a type of bullying, whereas others argue that teasing incorporates more prosocial behaviours such as humour or play, depending on the target's interpretation. An ideal definition of teasing accounts for how teasing can lead to both antisocial and prosocial outcomes. In this study teasing led to antisocial outcomes where the victim was a target of humour as he was teased almost daily because of his obesity that was largely due to medical treatment. Teasing and name calling were the behaviours experienced most, according to 12 to 17-year-old participants in a recent survey carried out in UK schools. Furthermore, in a study in the US, the majority of learners reported that they sometimes or always struggled with classmates teasing them or arguing with them (Hatzichristou et al., 2012). This study was further corroborated by the findings of other

studies such as those by Demaray, Malecki and DeLong (2006), Greene (2006), Harel-Fisch, Walsh, Fogel-Grinvald, Amitai, Pickett, de Matos and Craig (2009), and UNESCO (2010). Demaray et al. (2006) argue that although the term school violence is associated with extreme behaviours such as shootings, violence in schools encompasses a much wider variety of behaviours including bullying, teasing and harassment. This oversight is troubling, given that seemingly less harmful kinds of behaviour like teasing can lead to more serious, violent behaviours.

Additionally, a research study revealed that passive participants in the bullying process are those learners who provide social support for the bullies and may thereby perpetuate such bullying behaviour (Demaray, Malecki and DeLong, 2006). It is therefore imperative that schools are alerted to the potentially negative impact of different kinds of social support of school violence and aggressive behaviour.

The findings of this study further concurred with those of a study by DioGuardi and Theodore (2006). They argue that the behaviour of passive victims is similar to the response of aggressive victims which often results in an emotional pay-off for the perpetrator. Aggressive victims are also referred to as bully-victims or provocative victims (DioGuardi and Theodore, 2006). These aggressive victims may be characterized as impulsive, attention-seeking, confrontational and demonstrating a low level of tolerance at times.

This study further established that learners who have rare medical conditions like epilepsy may be emotionally and psychologically victimized at schools by both their teachers and peers. This was evident where teachers victimized an epileptic sufferer in various ways. For example, not only did teachers fail to refer the learner to an appropriate educational institution where his condition would be understood and dealt with, but they also failed to stop the persistent bullying and teasing of which they were apparently aware. Harber

(2004) posits that by doing nothing or ignoring a negative or dangerous aspect of the surrounding society such as bullying, the role of schools can be said to be reproductive. However, as stated before, schooling isn't only reproductive institutions but also institutions that perpetrate violence.

The study clearly demonstrated that there are various types of victims within the school context. Similarly, research has shown that victims themselves are a heterogeneous population with respect to stages of aggression, manifesting in aggressive and nonaggressive victims (Diaguardi and Theodore, 2006, p. 341). Nonaggressive victims are characterized as having submissive and passive behavioural styles and this category comprises the overwhelming majority of children that are bullied. Nonaggressive victims are also described as passive victims; these learners have a tendency to be anxious, sensitive, insecure and cautious. They are inclined to cry easily, are typically isolated or socially withdrawn, exhibit low self-esteem and are usually without a single, reliable friendship among their classmates. Behaviours of passive victims often result in an emotional pay-off for the perpetrator.

In contrast, aggressive victims who are also described as bully-victims or provocative victims may be characterized as impulsive and demonstrating low frustration levels. Bully-victims are mostly disliked and ostracized by their peers, possibly due to their hostile, unpredictable and uncontrolled behaviour. Similar to the behaviour of passive victims, responses of aggressive victims often result in an emotional pay-off for the perpetrator. This pay-off appears in the form of elevated emotional reactions and excessive hostile vengeance. The study findings were corroborated by the findings of Diaguardi and Theodore (2006). They found that a bullied learner could not control his temper after being teased and laughed at persistently by other learners. Similarly, this study demonstrated how an overweight, epileptic learner who was a victim of persistent teasing by his classmate was typical of the bully-victim type. This was evident where he ran away from school,

obtained a loaded gun from his home and fired randomly at his perpetrator and other students, narrowly causing a tragedy.

Any child can be bullied but some are more vulnerable to bullying than others. Many children are bullied because of one or a combination of the following reasons: their age – younger children are often picked on by older ones; their race – minority or ethnic groups and the colour of their skin; how they look – fat, skinny, short or tall; in; their religion; ability – academically bright or struggling; early or late sexual development; the way they dress; how much money they have; and disability (UNESCO, 2010). Additionally, Harel-Fisch et al. (2009) have shown that violence promotes failure but, at the same time, school failure to deal with violence has been generating violent practices among teachers and learners, excluding young people from educational opportunities. Bullying has led to children committing suicide or dropping out of school because of the stress of being bullied (Childline S.A.).

Teasing in this study was associated with bullying. Various studies define bullying variably. Childline S.A. defines some experiences of bullying as being teased, called names, having your money taken, being beaten up, and being left out and ignored (ostracised). In the eyes of the law bullying is an offence, a violation of a child's right to physical and psychological safety. Greene (2006) further defines school bullying as a concept which broadly involves the idea of repeated bullying of learners or harassment between peers. It implies the deliberate intention of a learner or group of learners to cause harm to one of their peers. It is an imbalance of forces and constitutes repetitive acts (Greene, 2008).

## **8.5 The Outcomes of Violence**

This study reported various outcomes of violence, these include: learner exclusion and occurrences of school theft.

### ***8.5.1 Learner Exclusion***

A range of suspension and expulsion cases were recorded in this study where, in my view, the suspension and expulsion measures were too harsh. It is argued that this practice directly impacted on the learners' potential to succeed in their studies as they were compelled to be away from school for an inordinate length of time. Suspensions and expulsions from school equate to school (and therefore education) exclusion.

The study established that the school management, in particular a principal, had the tendency of dismissing learners summarily from school when they came late for morning study. Again, it may be argued that educational principles are breached if a principal punishes learners by excluding them from their right to education simply because they come late, particularly when this happens early in the morning for study before the official school starting time. The position is taken that the principal should have acted according to the ambit of SASA in disciplining the learners. Section 9 (1) of SASA no. 84 of 1996 stipulates that, subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, the governing body of a public school may, after a fair hearing, suspend a learner from attending the school- (a) as a correctional measure for a period not longer than one week; or (b) pending a decision as to whether the learner is to be expelled from the school by the Head of Department. Did the principal run out of options of disciplining learners due to the fact that corporal punishment had been abolished? From the discourses of violence it was clear that the learners were dismissed from school for the rest of that particular day. The actions of the principal were too harsh as learners were unfairly and unlawfully excluded from learning and teaching.

In support of this finding, McIntosh, Fisher, Kennedy, Craft and Morrison (2012) contend that schools continue to exclude learners. Exclusion is an inclusive term to describe school discipline practices that remove learners from the school environment through measures such as suspension and expulsion. School expulsion often begins with office discipline referrals (ODRs), but then continues with an additional sanction in order to document the offense. This is done to warrant exclusion and to intensify the consequence (e.g., the number of days suspended, or indication of a zero tolerance offence). ODRs are forms used to document learner problem behaviour on school premises. Offenses leading to school exclusion are generally defined by state or provincial education codes and most often include offenses such as possession or selling of drugs, possession of weaponry, physical harm to others, wilful disobedience, destruction of property, disruption of activities, and threat of harm (supra, p. 308) . According to this research study, learners were simply dismissed without establishing the reasons why they came late and learners were also not afforded an opportunity to state their side of the story. Most importantly, the school had no right to expel learners from school as it should have referred the matter to provincial DBE officials. Section 9(2) of SASA no. 84 of 1996 stipulates that, subject to any applicable provincial law, a learner at a public school may be expelled only- (a) by the Head of Department; and (b) if found guilty of serious misconduct after a fair hearing. Contrary to these stipulations, research has illustrated that learners were suspended from school for minor incidences of violence, as was witnessed in this study. McIntosh et al. (2012) assert that US schools suspended 7% of learners whereas 0.2% were expelled in one year. Schools now show a tendency to use school exclusion (in particular suspension) for less severe incidents such as interpersonal difficulties with peers or with adults.

Oosthuizen (2007) contends that the principal, staff members, disciplinary committee or the SGB disciplining learners must appropriately apply their minds to the duty at hand and ensure that decisions taken: are not decisions taken in bad faith (*male fide*); have been properly considered; are not based on irrelevant reasons; and are not a result of a failure to take into account all the relevant considerations. Oosthuizen (2007) further argues that some matters may be mundane and will not warrant legal representation while other

circumstances may require legal representation to ensure procedural fairness. The decision-maker, in this case the principal, has discretion that must be properly exercised every time disciplinary action is taken. All relevant factors have to be taken into account before decisions are taken. For example, the learners in question have to be informed in clear and understandable language what they are held liable for and what disciplinary measures are being imposed.

Discipline may take various forms ranging from a simple rebuke to expulsion from school (Bailey, 2006). Bailey further argues that schools may implement almost any reasonable method of discipline provided it is directed at controlling, training, or educating a learner. However, Bailey is quick to note that schools should endeavour to ensure that their methods are not oppressive, arbitrary or contrary to the law. The question remains whether it is reasonable to chase learners away from school for coming late. In any such incident a principal has to act within the ambit of the law.

A review of the selected documents further revealed that learner misconducts committed within the school premises were mostly of a serious nature. These included: the abuse substances and being rude or lying to teachers. In one instance, a learner was warned at Scooby secondary for smoking dagga, while at Lioness secondary four learners who had been caught smoking cigarettes and using substances were suspended from school for a period of six months. Such a harsh sentence taken by the school – i.e., suspension of learners for a period longer than a week - was and still is unacceptable as it impacted negatively on the future education of these learners. These four learners were suspended at the end of April which implies that they would miss the trial examinations and would only be back towards the commencement of the final examination. It could not be established from the documents whether the learners were allowed to write the Trial Examinations despite being suspended. The South African schooling system requires learners to have accumulated continuous assessment (CASS) marks during the course of the year. The CASS marks form part of the final examination marks which implies that without CASS

marks it is impossible for a learner to progress to the next grade. Did the school management consider the repercussions of suspending learners for six months? Was the provincial DBE informed about the decision to suspend these learners for six months? Clearly, the school was aware that they had the authority to suspend learners who committed serious misconduct after a fair hearing. However, the school missed the point when suspending learners for the unfairly prolonged period of six months. The Departmental code of conduct existed in both schools, yet it was not implemented according to the stipulations. This was evident where three female learners were disciplined for absconding from class (i.e, playing truant), smoking dagga and cigarettes, using drugs and drinking liquor. The learners pleaded guilty to most of the allegations, but the verdict was six months' suspension. In my view this was too harsh. Giving a six months' suspension resembled expulsion from school; effectively, learners were laid off from school for the rest of the year as they were suspended at the end of April 2010. Moreover, this verdict the school arrived at was against the law as SASA no. 84 of 1996 states categorically that the governing body of a public school may, after a fair hearing, suspend a learner from attending the school as a correctional measure for a period not longer than one week. According to section 9 (4) of SASA no. 84 of 1996 a learner, or the parent of a learner who has been expelled from a public school, may appeal against the decision by the Head of Department to the Members of the Executive Council. However, no evidence of any action by the parents could be traced as, in my view, they were not aware of their rights in this regard.

The study established further that security guards were also vulnerable to violence in schools. This was evident where one security guard reported that he had once been attacked by learners and ex-learners. There was also a pending court case linked to school violence. In Scooby secondary the security guard reported that he had once been stabbed by a learner inside the school premises. As the school viewed this as a serious offense, the culprit was expelled from school by the school management. The question can be posed whether the school had the authority to expel learners when they committed a serious misconduct like this one. Expulsion is the permanent refusal of admission of a learner to a

particular school and/or hostel (Oosthuizen, 2007). If expulsion is a permanent refusal of admission, what impact does such a decision have on learners and their parents? Was it good practice by a school management to expel a learner who was dangerous and presented a threat to the school? In terms of section 9 (2) of the SA Schools Act (1996(a), such a recommendation has to be forwarded to the Head of the provincial Department of Basic of Education who then, after the learner has been found guilty of serious misconduct at a fair hearing, has to decide on the expulsion (or not) of the learner (Oosthuizen, 2007).

A learner was disciplined due to defiance of authority as in this case the learner was disrespectful towards a security guard. This learner had been found smoking dagga within the school premises. The verdict was that the learner's misconduct warranted expulsion; however, due to his family background the learner was suspended for five days. During the five-day suspension, the learner was expected to identify and then attend a rehabilitation program or get help from social workers. How would it be possible for a learner to get such help within a short space of time? Is it good practice when a school suspends a learner and in addition expects a child to initiate self-help strategies? The suspension of learners for smoking of dagga was in agreement with the findings of a study by Morrison et al. (2006) who found that the reasons for suspension ranged from offenses such as drug selling and/or possession to possession of weapons.

This study established that the schools were not in possession of some of the documents which should be used to record incidences of violence. The documents that were requested from each participating school were: the code of conduct, the misconduct record book, disciplinary hearing minutes by the Disciplinary Committee of the SGB for suspension and expulsion cases, class discipline or misconduct record books, grounds duty record books of incidents, and the correspondence file of letters to parents whose children had been involved in incidents of violence. However, of the range of documents requested, only the files of the Disciplinary Committee of the SGB for suspension and expulsion cases were submitted. The schools were aware that in the process of controlling and/or eliminating

incidences of violence, their duty was to record learner misbehaviours in different specified record books. Recording data in a conscientious manner would have assisted the schools in adequately capturing the following: the names of perpetrators; the names of victims; the reasons why some learners were more victimised than others; the causes of violence/victimization; the spaces where violence occurred most frequently; and, most importantly, what kind of support victims of violence received, to mention only a few.

### **8.5.2 School Theft**

The study established that a spate of burglaries in the main office, computer lab and staff rooms of a school were further evidences of school violence. Ex-learners were allegedly involved in this spate of burglaries as well as in drug trafficking and ganging up with community thugs. Ex-learners may steal from and vandalise the school if they feel that they were mistreated by the school staff while they were learners. In such incidences it may be argued that schools perpetrate violence by omission. A survey of recent media reports has shown that numerous incidents of extreme violence against learners in elementary schools posed a huge risk to other learners. A 23-year-old ex-pupil from a public school in Brazil gunned down 12 learners between the ages of 12 and 15 (SABC, 2011b). Apart from media reports, this study was also supported by various other studies. For example, Burton (2007) contends that while most of the areas within the school premises are unsafe mainly for a girl child, studies have also revealed that a number of gangs have infiltrated schools with gangs actively utilising the school grounds to increase their power and influence. Furthermore, gangs often recruit new members among the school population and schools are increasingly the site of wars between competing groups. Competing groups in school grounds are gangsters and wealthy 'sugar daddies' who prey for young, beautiful girls. In most cases the gangs induce youngsters to sell drugs to their schoolmates (supra, p. 47). In South African schools, gangsterism is gaining momentum. Recent studies have revealed that continuous fights between teenage gangs in Western Cape schools have resulted in the death of three school children which led to pupils dropping out of school due to constant fear of attack. Nine pupils dropped out from one

secondary school alone, while two pupils were fighting for their lives in one of the hospitals after being stabbed and beaten with weapons such as axes and pangas. Additionally, it was further revealed that up to six gangs can be found in a single school and affiliated pupils are as young as 12 or 13 years old (Damba, 2012).

It was reported that, in New York schools, approximately 6% of public school learners were involved in gangs, approximately 20% of learners aged 12-18 reported the presence of gangs in or around their school, and 20% of public school administrators reported some gang activity at their schools in 2011 (Peterson and Morgan, 2012, p. 117). The study further established that learners who were drug addicts had developed tendencies of kleptomania as they would steal whatever they could lay their hands on in order to support their drug habit. These and other acts of learner misconduct render the school environment unfriendly to learners and teachers alike. The studies by Jimerson et al. (2006) and Oosthuizen (2007) concur with the findings of this study. These researchers found that behaviours among youth diagnosed with conduct disorder may vary; their actions may include deceitfulness; theft (such as breaking into someone else's house and stealing items of nontrivial value without confronting a victim such as in the case of shoplifting); breaking and entering; forgery; and lying to obtain favours.

The study revealed that the main source of crime and violence in the schools under study could be linked to the abuse of illegal drugs, in particular dagga. Drugs were sold in the schools by very intelligent learners who had been recruited by community thugs. This study further established that social structures appear to have a great impact on children's deviant behaviours. For example, it was widely reported that learners arrived late at school as they started the day by doing drugs before coming to school. This was in line with a report by (Burton et al., 2009) where it was revealed that the four major risk factors associated with violent behaviours among the youth were: individual factors; family factors; school factors and community factors. Individual factors involve aggression, the early onset of violent and impulsive behaviour, beliefs and attitudes favourable to deviant

behaviour, being male, being involved in antisocial behaviour such as substance abuse and stealing, and low intelligence attainment. School risk factors involve aspects like lack of education, poor academic performance, school failure, poor schooling, truancy, and low bonding with school. Family risk factors involve: economically stressed families, child abuse, neglect, a lack of parental interaction, poor parental supervision and monitoring, exposure to high levels of family violence or conflict, criminal behaviour by siblings, harsh or inconsistent disciplinary practices, parent criminality and teenage parenthood. Community factors involve: poverty, high levels of crime, unemployment, availability of drugs and firearms, lack of access to recreational opportunities and facilities, neighbourhood adults involved in crime, and exposure to community violence.

## **8.6 Strategies to Cope with School Violence**

Various strategies to mitigate violence in schools were implemented by these schools variably. The two schools under study reported different measures to mitigate the impact of school violence. At Lioness secondary, communication between the tripartite parties was promoted as a means to reduce violence at school. At Scooby secondary the SMT reported a range of burglaries to the local police station; however, the police rendered no assistance and the burglaries remained unresolved. The school also reported that they followed the DBE's disciplinary measures to instil discipline among learners. Additionally, the school developed programs in conjunction with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other government departments as another measure to mitigate school violence.

The implementation of a code of conduct for learners was viewed as another way of mitigating violence but this was done to a very limited extent. Rather, partnering with NGOs appeared to be viewed as a more positive way to alleviate school violence. Notable programs were implemented at Scooby secondary. In one programme, which was initiated by the Department of Safety and Security, local maximum prison inmates visited the school. Another was known as the *Isiyalo* program. The services provided by local

prisoners from the maximum prison aimed at teaching learners that crime does not pay. Prisoners demonstrated to the learners the real life of prisoners and how bad and difficult it is to live in detention centres. In the *Isiyalo* program, the school would identify distressed learners who would be invited to attend this program. The *Isiyalo* program assisted learners with impulsive behaviour on how to deal with the challenges of life and how to cope with stress in general.

The majority of participants reported that too little support was rendered by the provincial DBE to both schools in reducing school violence. The situation was dire at Lioness secondary where the security guard's salary was paid by the SGB and not by the Department. Moreover, the Department did not employ a cleaner to take responsibility for the cleanliness of the school, hence the school made use of learners to clean the school under the guise of discipline. Haffejee (2006) contends that violence in schools has been exacerbated by the lack of action on the part of government departments, schools and society in general.

The above initiatives to mitigate violence in schools were supported by both local and international literature. A cross-cultural policy program and other measures of mitigating school violence were examined. For example, (Wilson, 2006) asserts that school-based curricular programs (SBCP) were developed to promote a gender-sensitive and gender-safe school environment by providing learners with learning materials and experiences that reflect equity and equality between men and women. Most interestingly, these programs developed curricula that further aimed at empowering girls with sexual information in order to demystify sexual matters.

Furthermore, Greene (2006) stipulates that there are various school-based curriculum programs that vary in terms of theoretical foundation, target audience, duration and intensity. Some programs focus on appropriateness of aggressive and violent behaviours

(cognitive behavioural approach), and some focus on how learners learn and unlearn aggressive and violent behaviours (social learning), just to mention two.

The findings on measures to support victims of violence were in line with what was reported in the literature. Wilson (2006) argues that schools should consider engaging peer teachers (adolescents or young adults) who can visit schools to talk about sexual violence and other issues that concern learners. Additionally, the research revealed that the South African Ministry of Education initiated the Girls' Education Movement (GEM) in 2003 in Parliament in collaboration with UNICEF (Wilson, 2006). The premise for this program was to combat gender inequality and to promote school safety in South African schools and communities. According to Wilson (2006), the program was implemented in all nine South African provinces after 2003 as per the project plan. The idea was to establish the program in all nine provinces by 2006. The GEM program supported 164 primary schools and 53 secondary schools in South Africa. Some of the GEM program's objectives were: to protect the rights of girls and the special needs of any child at risk of exploitation or abuse in schools; to sensitize key factors in the importance of girls' education and mobilize policies and programs that will ensure quality education for all girls; to enable girls to participate in decision making about their education; to tap into the potential of boys, men and women to work in partnership with girls to promote equitable, accessible, high quality education in Africa and through education to create equitable and just societies (Wilson, 2006, p. 7).

## **8.7 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the themes that emerged from the study. With regards to theme 1, the majority of participants of both schools indicated that they felt unsafe within the school premises. Not only were teacher participants concerned about their own safety, but they were also concerned about the safety of their learners. With regard to school meetings, the study established that school meetings, including staff meetings, safety and security

meetings and parents' meetings, were not held as stipulated in the schools' act policy. It was reported that staff meetings were held in both schools but that they were not effective at all as they were mainly held in the form of briefing sessions.

Theme 2 highlighted that the many suspension and expulsion cases were harsh and impacted negatively on learners' potential for succeeding in their studies, even after school. Security guards were also vulnerable to violence in schools. This was evident where one security guard reported that he had once been attacked by learners.

With regards to themes 3 and 4, the study revealed that violence occurred both inside and outside the school premises. A great deal of violence took place inside the school premises in places like classrooms, vacant buildings, toilets and veranda areas. A spate of burglaries in the main office, computer lab and staff rooms was also reported. It was alleged that ex-learners were involved in the spate of burglaries that hit the school; moreover, ex-learners were also implicated in drug trafficking and involvement in gangsterism with community thugs. In one of the schools, teachers and the principal distanced themselves from the issue of disciplining learners who were disrespecting the school rules. This manifested where the security guard took ownership of disciplining learners for late coming, making loud noises, bunking of classes, wearing inappropriate clothes, and other sorts of learner misconduct. He also dealt with teachers who did not attend to their teaching responsibility by asking learners to call teachers who were chatting in the staffroom instead of attending to classes. Learner-on-learner harassment was also reported where boys harassed girls and girls overpowered and harassed other girls. The study further established that poor work relations existed between the staff members and the administrators, and dishonouring of classes by some teachers was prevalent. The study found that the new acting principal's job was tenuous. She found it extremely daunting and stressful to lead teachers as a new member of the staff and as an acting principal. This resulted in poor work relations between the staff members and the administrators which spiralled down to the learners.

In the next chapter I present the main contributions of my study to the body of knowledge on how school violence manifests in schools. I also discuss the recommendations regarding the role of the school in reducing violence within the school premises. I further identify the implications of the findings of this study for policy and practice, as well as for further research.

## CHAPTER 9

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 9.1 Introduction

In chapter eight I re-contextualised the findings of this study in the literature and theories, drawing on research in support of and contradictory to my findings. As illustrated in Chapter 1, the main focus of the study was threefold: First, the study aimed at investigating the perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, school governors and support staff about school violence in two secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Secondly, in order to comprehend the views of schools about school violence, the study examined how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status shape violence production within schools. Thirdly, this study explored the policies, measures and initiatives taken by schools to promote a violence-free school environment.

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, demonstrating how they address the research questions. This is followed by an outline of the implications of this study practice and the contribution the study has made to the pool of knowledge. Limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further study are outlined and then final reflections are provided.

#### 9.2 Summary of Findings Addressing Research Questions

##### *9.2.1 Research question one: What are the perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, school governors and support staff of school violence?*

The majority of participants of both schools indicated that they felt unsafe within the school premises. Teacher participants were not only concerned about their own safety, but they were also concerned about the safety of their learners. However, the levels of comfort

varied between the two schools. More violent behaviours were reported at Scooby secondary than at Lioness secondary.

Learners experienced violence episodes differently from one school to another. In one instance a learner was both slapped and strangled by school bullies inside the school premises. Another learner was victimized by both learners and the school officials where other learners included him in a list of learners who had been drinking inside a classroom.

The study further demonstrated that learners were treated badly by teachers and were even coerced to leave school. For example, a pregnant learner was sent home due to her pregnancy and so-called bad attitude. This type of behaviour by teachers can be described as discrimination on the basis of gender bias because of the temporary disability of the pregnant learner. Pregnancy at school is not something to be proud of, but teachers need to educate learners on the issues of pregnancies and not discriminate them.

The study established that, as expected, school violence had an adverse impact on learners which in turn affected their academic performances. The majority of participants echoed a lack of commitments among teachers in performing their core duty of teaching. Teachers at both Scooby secondary and Lioness secondary were reported to be dishonouring classes due to different reasons including fear of being in class as learners were too violent. At times teachers would abandon the entire class as they were unable to handle disruptive learner/s, or teachers were simply too lazy to attend to classes. Teachers used their hegemony to suppress, bully and verbally victimise learners. Sadly, such actions were condoned in this school because these teachers were not prohibited from verbally inflicting harm on learners and bunking classes; in the process they perpetrated violence on learners. Additionally, a range of suspension and expulsion cases was recorded. In my view, all the suspensions and expulsions were too harsh as the periods stipulated were longer than legally allowed. Hence these measures directly impacted on the learners' potential to

succeed in their education. Suspensions and expulsions from school equate to school exclusion.

The study established that the schools were not in possession of some of the documents which are used to record incidences of violence. The schools were aware that for them to control or eliminate incidences of violence they should record learner misbehaviours in different specified record books. Such recorded data will assist the schools in adequately capturing the names of those learners involved in violence, the names of victims, why some learners are more victimised than others, the causes of violence, the spaces of violence, and in particular to support the victims of violence.

The study established that the level of conflict in one of the schools under study was escalating and unmanageable. This was evident where teachers reported that learner disciplinary issues were a way of life and that they had learnt to live with it on a day-to-day basis. It further emerged that it was common practice at Scooby secondary that whenever learners had committed an offence, they were referred to the office of the Deputy Principal for corporal punishment. Learners were beaten literally on a daily basis in the office for various offenses committed on the school premises. This practice constituted violence perpetrated on learners; in this regard, (Childline S.A.,15 February 2011) contends that corporal punishment teaches children that hurting others is okay.

The study established that the levels of harassment were high at this school as boys harassed girls and girls overpowered and harassed other girls. The nature of girls' harassment of other girls was mostly and consisted mainly of insults. Learners of both schools felt that many incidences of sexual harassment occurred, particularly as boys would touch girls' private parts such as their breasts. However, it further emerged that while some learners felt harassed by male learners' tendency to touch their private parts, some girls were reported to be in favour of being touched by boys.

The study further revealed that, among the many consequences of school violence, a notable effect was mounting depression among the staff members. The principal stated that "...other teachers are being affected by school violence as a result they have been away for medical treatment. For example, there was a teacher who has been diagnosed with depression after she had witnessed the hijacking incident which occurred at Scooby secondary" (verbatim transcription).

The study established that school meetings, including staff meetings, school safety and security meetings, parents' meetings and other meetings (such as subject- and grade-related meetings) were not held as stipulated in the schools' act policy. It was reported that staff meetings were held in both schools but were not effective at all as they were mainly held in the form of briefing sessions. However, the resolutions taken from staff meetings were not implemented.

### ***9.2.2 Research Question two: How do Wider Social Structures Such as Gender, Age and Socio-Economic Status Shape Violence Production within Schools?***

This study established that it was particularly deviant social structures prevalent in the community that had a great impact on children's deviant behaviours. For example, learners would arrive late for school because they would start the day by doing drugs in the morning before coming to school. To obtain drugs they possibly liaised with drug peddlers and gangster members emanating from the community.

The study established that the main source of crime and violence in schools was linked to abuse of illegal drugs; in particular, dagga. This substance was sold in schools by brilliant learners who had been recruited by drug traffickers. The schools became receptacles for social violent imbalances that spilled over from the immediate environment as criminal elements from the community used the schools as a playground for violence. It was

reported that thugs from the community would snatch cellphones from learners and teachers inside the school premises. Moreover, learners brought weapons to school, smoked dagga and/or used other illegal drugs and substances within the school premises and became involved in drug-trafficking. Sadly, some learners became drug addicts and, as a consequence, developed tendencies of kleptomania to feed their addiction. In general, many learners misbehaved as they bunked classes, used bad language, and were often rude and disobedient in class.

The study also established that a spate of burglaries occurred in the main office, computer lab and staff rooms. It was alleged that ex-learners were involved in burglaries and drug trafficking as they had ganged up with community thugs. It is possible that ex-learners stole from and vandalised the school if they felt that they had been mistreated by the staff while they were learners. In this regard, schools could have perpetrated violence by omission as teachers had failed to ensure that these students experienced a sense of connectedness with the school.

The study further established that violence occurred both inside and outside the school premises. A great deal of violence occurred inside the school premises in places like classrooms, vacant buildings, toilets, in veranda areas and other places. Violence that occurred outside the school premises resulted in grievous bodily harm (GBH) as it was perpetrated with the aim of inflicting great bodily pain. For example, in one incident a learner stabbed another learner twice in the biceps. The third attempt missed but the victim's jersey was slashed. Such a violent attack was also aimed at a security guard who reported that he had once been attacked by ex-learners. He was also involved in a pending court case that was linked to school violence. The security guard of Scooby secondary reported that he had once been stabbed by a learner inside the school premises. Stabbing someone is a criminal offence. If this phenomenon is not stemmed it will exacerbate acts of extreme violence in schools. Moreover, if the school fails to report the incident to the SAPS and simply expel the culprit, a clear message is sent that the school is unable to act

within the law themselves. It was also abnormal that the security guard felt unsafe as people in his position are expected to uphold the safety of the school.

### ***9.2.3 Research question three: How do Policies, Measures and Initiatives Taken by Schools Promote a Violence-Free School Environment?***

The study revealed that the implementation of a code of conduct for learners was viewed as another way of mitigating violence but to a very limited extent, while partnering with NGOs was viewed as a positive way to alleviate school violence. Notable programs to mitigate violence were implemented at Scooby secondary. One was initiated by the Department of Safety and Security which involved local maximum prison inmates. Another project was called the Isiyalo program. The services provided by local prisoners from the maximum prison aimed at teaching learners that crime does not pay.

Both schools reported different measures to mitigate the impact of school violence. In one school communication between the tripartite parties was promoted as a means of reducing violence at school. However, while communication was envisaged as a positive tool to reduce school related violence. The majority of participants reported that too little support was rendered by the provincial DBE to support the schools in reducing school violence. The situation was dire at Lioness secondary where the security guard's salary was paid by the SGB and where there was no cleaner to attend to the cleanliness of the school. Hence the school made use of learners to clean the school under the guise of discipline. The study further established that school meetings such as staff meetings, safety and security meetings, parents' meetings and subject/grade meetings were not held as stipulated in the schools' act policy.

### 9.3 Theoretical Contribution of the Study

In this study an interpretive research approach explored how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status (SES) shape violence production in schools. The methodological approach used in this study was informed by the theoretical frameworks of Discipline and Punish theory (Foucault, 1975) which proposes that institutions like factories, schools and hospitals resemble prisons (Giddens, 1997). As it was hypothesised that schools have become one of the new institutions of social control along with prisons, hospitals and factories as they use continual surveillance to in order to avoid social fragmentation and to create order and docility (Harber, 2002). This study revealed that schools continue to use surveillance approach in order to control and instil discipline to learners. Among other findings, the study revealed that from time to time the security guard patrolled classes in the absence of teachers to control and punish learners who were noisy and unoccupied. With regard to this theory, the purpose of this thesis was to further explore the theoretical impact of teacher-group dynamics in the reproduction of violence in schools.

Participants in this study articulated that issues of ill-discipline existed among both learners and teachers. Teachers deliberately bunked classes and refused to take orders from management when they were ordered by the SMT to own up to their core duty of teaching. Although they bunked classes, this group of teachers ensured that their administrative work - their files, their schedules and even learners' fraudulent marks - were always in order and presentable. Some marks were fraudulent – and obviously illegitimate - since these teachers didn't bother to teach but had the nerve to create false ('crooked') marks for learners. At best, they allowed a few learners to undertake continuous assessments tasks which were submitted for moderations as representative of the entire class. The system of moderation is easy to manipulate as Departmental moderators require that a 10% sample of scripts be submitted. In many instances, due to time constraints, three or a maximum of five files are required representing the top, middle and low range of marks per school (Coertze, 2012). Mixing of learners' marks was also widely reported. This practice also

adversely affected academic performance and killed the morale of learners who felt that they had been cheated. In this entire predicament, learners were the worst victims as some were allowed to progress while others remained in the same grade by default. The above was corroborated by UNISA (2012) asserted that the problem of disorganized schools in South Africa has been recognized as a serious challenge in this democratic country. Teachers take leave of absence from schools without reason, some arrive late or leave early and others may be at school but do not teach. Teachers use funerals, council duties, union meetings, sports or school events as a convenient excuse to be absent or to come late for school.

The distinctions between how external violence affects schools and how schools themselves indirectly reproduce violence are not necessarily clear-cut and there are often connections between what goes on outside a school and what goes on inside that school in terms of violence. However, as we have seen in the above discussions, schools are not only directly involved in internal forms of violence, but they actually perpetrate violence themselves rather than have it imposed upon them from the outside or reproducing it by failure to act (UNISA, 2012).

In this study hatred, non-cooperation and distrust among staff members were prevalent not on the basis of diversity factors such as racial groupings, language or culture, but on the basis of group dynamics. It was found that the conflict of opinions between a group of teachers who had been employed at the inception of the school and those teachers who had been employed at later stages created much ill-will and dissention. Those who had been employed at the inception of the school regarded themselves as “the owners” and refused to take orders either from the SMT or from the school principal, thus acting in defiance and in an insolent manner.

Drawing from the theory of school violence, i.e., “Discipline and Punish (Foucault, 1975), my own ‘Multi-faceted Systematic Perpetration theory’ emerged from this study.

The multi-faceted systematic perpetration theory posits that hatred/anger, non-cooperation and distrust among group members result in a multi-faceted systematic perpetration of violence. This type of conflict is embedded in group dynamics and is not based on diversity in terms of race, language, or culture as common diversity issues in South Africa.

This theory is underpinned by:

- a) The multi-faceted nature of violence in schools. It manifests in defiance, verbal abuse, omission, trust in group and external support, ridicule of others, dishonesty (with marks in this instance) and a general attitude of arrogance coupled with laziness.
- b) The systematic perpetration of violence in schools. Violence is not inflicted upon, but perpetrated (in this instance, by educators). Perpetrators feel secure, powerful and in control. Hence violence is planned and systematically executed with no fear of reprisals from immediate superiors or higher authority. Learners were harmed by this systematic violence that involved practices that prevented them from learning.
- c) Violence is based on group dynamics. Perpetrators lack the courage to act alone; it is the group that supports and lends dominance to them, leading to a systematic perpetration of violence.

The dominant group possessed unique characteristics that differed from the normal characteristics required for good teachers.

Below are the characteristics of the dominant group in the school:

- a) Refusal to take instructions from either the SMT or the school principal
- b) Bunking of classes while they are present at the school
- c) Cheating with learners’ marks (‘crooking’)
- d) Mixing of learners’ marks

- e) Discouraging other teachers who are willing to teach – thus reducing their morale
- f) Use of pejorative language and demeaning body language
- g) Victimising learners by calling them names when called to teach.

It was not surprising that the “founders” refused to take orders from the principal because she only joined the school after the first principal had left. Moreover, the teachers refused to take orders and to commit to their work because the principal was in an acting position. This situation raised the following question: What made the ‘founders’ so confident of their position that they could disrespect the principal and act in defiance against her requests to continue with their core task while, at the same time, arriving late at the school on a daily basis? In my view the answer was simple: their behaviour and attitude were backed up by the protection of the local members of their teachers’ union. Also, they were in defiance of the principal because he was among the ‘new’ members at the school and therefore classified as an intruder. The founders felt that the principal of the school should have ‘come amongst them’. Additionally, the principal was resisted because he himself lacked focus and commitment in running the school. The ‘owners’ were disrespectful of the principal, ridiculed other teachers who attended classes and reprimanded and name-called learners instead of teaching them.

Although not a focus of the study, the finding regarding trade union ‘involvement’ in school violence raised a red flag. The fact that teachers’ negative and defiant behaviour was prompted by a feeling of security because they would be supported by their trade union members should there be any repercussions bodes ill for the future of learners and education in general. This implies that not only the school, but also the democratic institution that should serve as the custodian of learners’ right to an education, perpetrated violence against learners. If a trade union omits to instil educational values and principles in the teachers that they represent, then such a trade union, by omission and instigation, is a perpetrator of violence.

The use of offensive language by some teachers aimed at all three stakeholders (principal, teachers and learners), bunking of classes and discouraging others from teaching by the majority of teachers impacted negatively on the education system. Through such behaviour the morale of other teachers who were willing to uphold their duties was reduced. The study further established that learners became despondent and lost motivation; they would drop out of school as some teachers would produce fraudulent or “crooked” marks which did not reflect their actual achievements. Participants echoed that marks were even produced for learners who had left the school during the first term. In the light of these findings this study purports that group dynamism hindered the learning, development and progression of learners.

As stated above, the nature of the violence experienced by the administrator/principal, teachers and learners is referred to in this study as ‘multi-faceted systematic perpetration’. This multi-faceted systematic perpetration of violence resulted from the actions of those teachers (the ‘owners’) who perpetrated violence on various school stakeholders (the principal, teachers and learners). As the so-called “founders” of the school, they operated from their hegemonic position; i.e., as the majority grouping they perpetrated various acts of violence simultaneously against a less powerful minority group of new member teachers and learners. This position of hegemony appeared to be exacerbated by the power vested in them through trade union support. Their power and control were further strengthened as the principal did nothing tangible (such as reporting the dishonouring of duties to the provincial DBE) in order to circumvent the problem of the dominant group’s insolent behaviour. Although obviously suffering under these teachers’ attitude, the principal continued to tolerate them. Therefore, by ignoring not only the behaviour of defiant teachers but also name-calling, shoving, fighting, teachers having affairs with underage girls and harassment of learners, violence at the schools under study was condoned (Furlong, Michael, Morrison and Gale, 2000; Harber and Mncube, 2010).

It was concluded that this study revealed that schooling in the two schools under study served to both reproduce and perpetrate violence because the kind of violence experienced by the three stakeholders (principal, teachers and learners) emanated not only from the community, but from the school itself: perpetrators were found among teachers, deviant learners, support staff (a security guard who acted outside his duties and training to discipline learners) and even a principal who failed to act against teacher defiance. Foucault (1975) in punish and discipline theory contends that prisons are more than just places where liberty was deprived; they were places where discipline could be instilled to instill useful, social qualities into the convicts. Moreover, violence did not only manifest as ‘...episodes of violence’ such as bullying among learners. The findings were in line with the contention by Guzzo et al. (2006) in that they refuted the narrow view that violence is “...only as physical violence between learners and by learners against teachers”. As was argued by Guzzo, et al. (2006), the study found lack of commitment among teachers and arbitrary actions by teachers and administrators.

The findings of this study also corroborated the framework proposed by Furlong and Morrison (2000) as elucidated previously. As proposed by their framework, the nature of the violence in the two schools was found to be “systematic” in nature and, in fact, became “...an institutional practice or procedure that adversely impact[ed] on individuals or groups by burdening them psychologically, mentally, culturally, spiritually, economically, [and] physically. Who provided an interesting framework that connects the concepts of “school” and “violence” and facilitates understanding the impact of specific schooling contexts on learners from culturally different populations; which is referred to it as “systematic violence”. They contend that systematic violence is an institutional practice or procedure that adversely impacts on individuals or groups by burdening them psychologically, mentally, culturally, spiritually, economically, or physically. In an educational context, it refers to practices and procedures that prevent learning and teaching. Indeed, learners were prevented from learning and thus they were harmed (Furlong and Morrison, 2000). Moreover, the study revealed that the kind of violence perpetrated by the schools was multi-faced and systematic in nature simply because those teachers who perpetrated

violence planned their strategies. For example, they would first defy the principal who would remind them to attend to classes, after which they would victimise learners for revealing the truth; i.e., that they had not been taught a certain subject/s for a few weeks or more. Most interestingly, at the end of each term learners' marks would be readily available; yet it was reported that in some instances teachers would submit fraudulent ('crooked') marks. Furlong and Morrison's framework (2000) posits that violence perpetrated by teachers to learners, other teachers and the school principal adversely impacts on both the individuals and groups of learners, teachers and the principal by burdens victims psychologically, mentally, spiritually, economically, or physically. Such practices and procedures prevent learners from learning, thus harming them and their future development. This was corroborated as, indeed, the study revealed that the majority of school stakeholders were adversely affected by violence perpetrated by a dominant group of teachers:

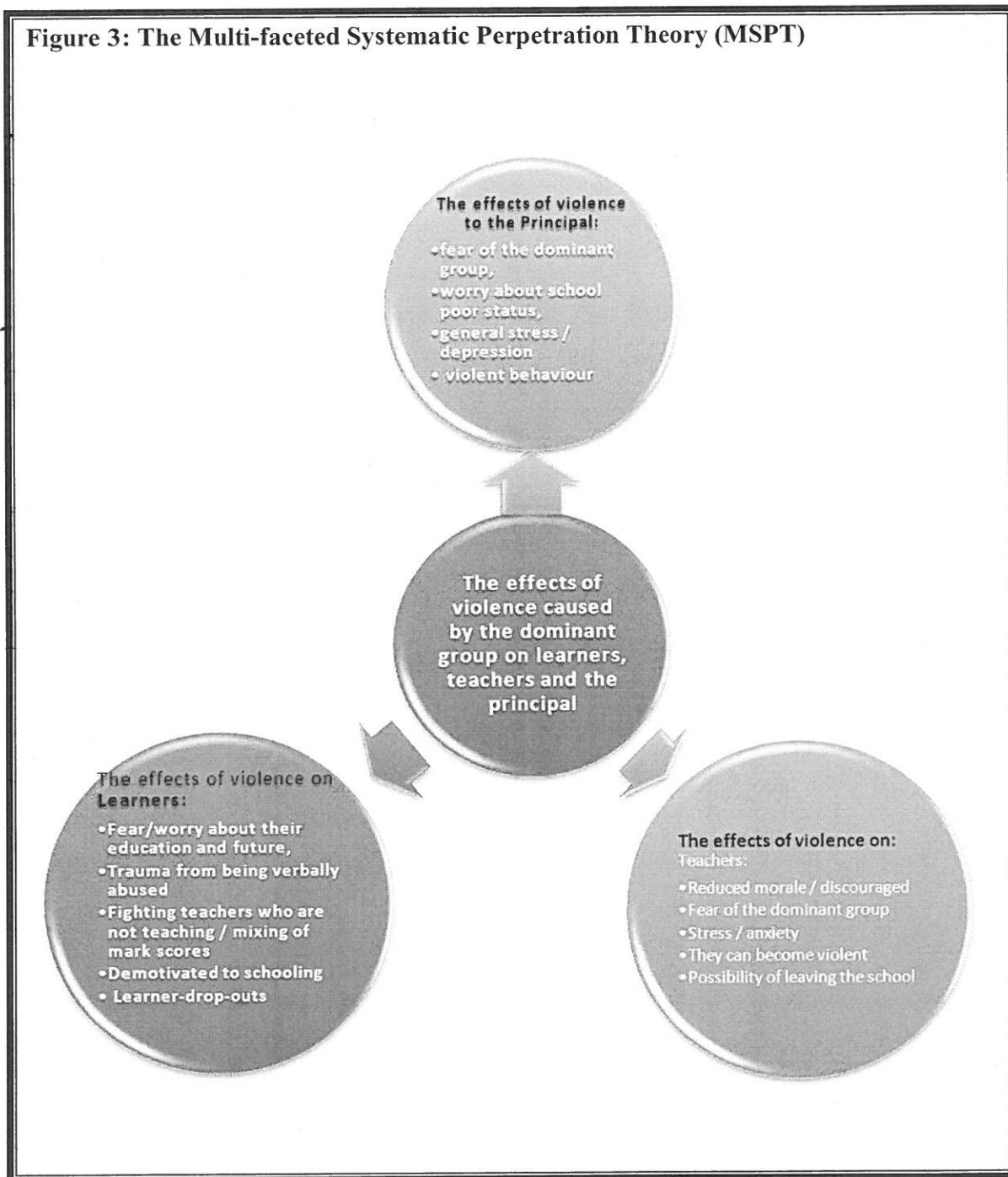
The learners: Learners were affected psychologically and emotionally which led to stress, fear, worry and anxiety because they were not receiving the education they had hoped for. Moreover, they experienced trauma through being verbally abused. At times learners would pluck up courage and challenge or confront the teachers who were not teaching or who were 'fiddling' and cheating with their marks. However, as it became clear through my observations and records that these issues were not resolved, learners' efforts to mitigate violence were therefore in vain. Conversely, unruly learners who had fallen into the habit of doing nothing would often disturb those teachers who were actually teaching, which exacerbated the upward spiral of school violence. The end results were clear: learners were not learning and teachers were not teaching, resulting in poor academic achievements and/or learner drop-outs. The pass rates for Scooby secondary for the past three years (2009, 2010, 2011) were between 50-59%. While at Lioness Secondary the grade 12 pass rate was improving from 40% and below in the past three years to 82.5% in the year 2011. Looking at the both schools' grade 12 pass rates, the learner drop-outs (although no traceable records were available) could be traced to the effects of multi-faceted violence experienced in both schools.

The teachers: Teachers outside the “owner” group attested to being affected psychologically and emotionally, leading to stress and anxiety. In this regard it was revealed that a female teacher experienced severe problems during her pregnancy due to stress at school. Conversely, teachers became immune to the perpetration of both overt and covert violence and they adopted a turn-a-blind-eye attitude: they would ‘...deal with it on a day-to-day basis’. The end results could be reduced morale and attrition (i.e. leaving the school). A deep sense of unease must be evoked by the knowledge that, while generally all teachers belong to a trade union, the negative behaviour of only some seemed to be supported. It is a sad day when members of the same union cannot voice their concerns - either because they are intimidated or because they give up without trying, knowing that any efforts will be in vain. This aspect needs urgent further investigation.

The principal: The principals in this study responded differently to violence in their schools. While the more secure principal seemed to be in denial about the reality of the violence perpetrated in his school, the acting principal became ineffective and lacked decision-making skills. Failing to discipline defiant teachers or, at best, report them to a higher authority showed a lack of leadership skills. His inability to act could have been psychologically and emotionally based as she may have been afraid not only of the dominant group, but also of the trade union members who would support this group. Knowing that his teachers were not performing in class, she should also have been worried about the poor results and therefore the poor status of the school as it would be labelled as a poorly performing and violent school. The school could lose enrolment and teachers.

Below is a schematic presentation of the effects Multi-faceted Systematic Perpetration violence

**Figure 3: The Multi-faceted Systematic Perpetration Theory (MSPT)**



A brief summary of the impact of group dynamism and multi-faceted violence on learners, teachers and the principal is provided below.

The learners: Learners will be affected psychologically and emotionally, which will lead to stress, fear/worry and/or anxiety for being not receiving education, and the trauma from being verbally abused. At times learners can challenge and fight the teachers who are NOT teaching / mixing their mark scores, or they disturb those teachers are teaching as some will be immune in doing nothing– which lead to school violence. Learners are traumatised and confused. They will see no need to go to school and consequently they will play truant or drop out. Moreover, aggressive behaviours will manifest in violent behaviour such as, inter alia, rebellion, rudeness, drug and substance abuse, taking revenge on teachers, sexual transgressions and, at worst, criminality.

The teachers: Teachers are affected psychologically and emotionally. They will be stressed and anxious, a state of mind that manifests in reduced morale, feelings of hopelessness, absenteeism and teacher truancy. When teachers are additionally burdened with an excessive teaching load, they provide poor quality teaching. Providing poor quality teaching constitutes violence against learners.

The principal: Persistent violence in schools impact psychologically and emotionally on principals. This may lead to fear (particularly of a dominant group that perpetrates violence) and worry that the school will be labelled as a poor performing and violent school, thus lowering the status of the school which will, in turn, result in limited enrolment and learner drop-out. If violence persists a principal may in turn revert to violent and unlawful action (note the suspension for an inordinately long time) as was demonstrated by this study.

The dominant group: At the centre of the schema exists the dominant group who possesses the power, authority and support to perpetrate violence on learners, other teachers and even the school principal.

## 9.4 Discussion

Upon reflection, three major images of my engagement with this study emerge:

- a) Unruly, undisciplined learners, some 'high on drugs and/or their physical power, running amok in schools riddled by noise while a security guards wields his power;
- b) Chatty, well-dressed teachers drinking tea and chatting at the staff room, while
- c) Learners sit in class or stroll along passages waiting for something to happen.

## 9.5 Recommendations

The findings of this study have a number of significant implications and recommendations for the National Department of Basic Education and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education in particular.

Item	Recommendation
1.	Development of a program to foster teachers' professional behavior a
2.	Collaboration skills necessary to foster team spirit and collegiality
3.	Establishment of safety and security strategy
4.	Development of safety and security guidelines/policy
5.	Maintenance of record of violence critical

**Table 9.1 : Summary of recommendations**

In general, present determinations (the South African Schools' act and other policy statements) aimed at increasing basic levels of good management, school effectiveness and teacher professionalism in South African schools should be supported and enriched as this will have a beneficial effect on reducing school violence.

Covert hatred, lack of cooperation and distrust existed among the teachers and were common in both schools. In the light of these finding strategies should be developed to manage group dynamism. Social teacher development and fun activities can help in this regard as it was revealed that teachers tended to enjoy socialising. Such activities could replace information meetings once or twice a term. Late coming, unnecessary leave of absence, disrespecting their duties of teaching and use of corporal punishment to enforce learner discipline were evident in both schools. This study contends that many teachers still need to be informed why corporal punishment is ineffective academically and psychologically. Teachers need to be trained in developing constructive alternatives to corporal punishment.

Schools that experience problems of violence need an active safety and security committee that monitors violence, recommends violence prevention measures, and oversees their implementation. This committee would need to advise on the necessity for, and the appropriateness and consequences of any searches for drugs and weapons among learners. In addition, the Ministry of Basic Education should take responsibility for providing schools with security personnel.

The study therefore argues that policy makers and educational leaders should develop explicit guidelines for security guards in schools. Should school administrators operate outside these guidelines, officials of the higher authority (local officers of the DBE) should address the issue immediately and without fail. In the light of the findings pertaining to school security guards and cleaners, it is recommended that further studies continue this trend in order to illuminate their role and impact on violence in more depth. Security guards are not allowed to be involved in corporal punishment.

Schools have a responsibility to keep records of violence. This study therefore recommends that keeping of records of violence should be made compulsory for all the

schools. Lastly, the study further contends that search of weapons inside the schools' premises should be made compulsory.

## **9.6 Possible Themes for Future Research**

As is the case in any research project, it was impractical for this study to address all aspects of the dynamics of school violence sufficiently.

Although this study involved only two selected schools, it was successful in providing significant insights into the perceptions and experiences of the entire school community. It was also possible to illuminate the impact of wider social structures such as gender (male and female learners, teachers, perpetrators, victims, principals, participants), age (adolescent learners and adult teachers) and socio-economic status (poverty-stricken and needy communities) on violence production within schools. The study adequately showed how people in schools are affected by violence. But, more importantly, how we resolve this violence became a critical focus of the study. It is suggested that similar studies be conducted to address ways to solve school violence.

## **9.7 Limitations of the Study**

The design of this study limited the scope as it involved a small population and sample consisting of only two secondary schools and selected participants. This meant that investigations could not deal with all the aspects that could have shed more light on what was actually taking place in the schools in relation to the dynamics of schools violence; in particular, on how wider social structures such as gender, age and socio-economic status (SES) shaped violence production in the selected schools and in broader education communities.

I noted that learners who had been provided with reflective journals struggled to write; those who managed to bring back the journals had expressed their feelings and experiences of school violence in a very few words. Therefore, poor language and expressive skills seemed to limit the findings of the study to a certain degree.

A certain category of teachers were provided with reflective journals in order to document their feelings and experiences of school violence. However, teachers did not respond as had been envisaged as they mentioned that they were too occupied to assist in this regard. This can be regarded as a limitation as their frank and detailed responses may have illuminated aspects that appeared nebulous or limited in the study.

An additional limitation was that schools did not provide extensive documentation regarding the records of violence (disciplinary conduct) in the schools. This limited my ability to peruse further records testifying to acts of violence and sanctions for these acts.

Learners were not directly questioned about management's leadership style in schools as it was felt that it would be inappropriate. Consequently, only the principals enjoyed the privilege of responding to questions on their leadership style. However, issues of management style were illuminated inadvertently by other participants during the one-on-one interviews.

## **9.8 Conclusion**

Many South African schools and some schools elsewhere are consumed with violence. This study explored the prevalence and nature of school violence and was conducted in two secondary schools in Umlazi, South Africa. The data collection relied on diverse

methods which were: semi-structured interviews, documentation reviews, observation schedules and reflective journals. The study revealed that both schools experienced different types and levels of violence. The types of violence that affected the schools predominantly were burglaries and the abuse of substances which promoted violence. The latter occurred inside the schools but often originated outside the school premises. Some forms of violent behaviour that were observed, such as bullying and sexual harassment of female learners by male learners, may well have been learned in families and communities beyond the school. Lack of a sense of ownership of the schools by both the community and the learners further exacerbated school violence as burglaries, theft and vandalism were prevalent. The study also found evidence of the consequences of violence for learners such as a lack of trust in teachers, high drop-out rates and poor academic results, as was reflected particularly in the Grade 12 results that were reported earlier.

The findings that raised the deepest concern pertained to the prevalence of direct forms of violence which emanated from the school itself. Low-level forms of bullying and teasing among learners continued unabated to the point where such actions erupted, in one incidence, into violence that proved to be nearly fatal. The haphazard manner in which an epileptic sufferer fired gunshots at his classmates because he could stand their teasing and ridicule no longer was corroborated by many such incidents that had been reported in the local and overseas media. Not only learners, but also teachers engaged in bullying behaviour that exacerbated the culture of violence at the schools. Some teachers were verbally, physically and psychologically violent towards learners, particularly in the way that corporal punishment as a 'corrective measure' was applied despite strict laws against it.

The multi-faceted nature of violence perpetrated in the schools was apparent. Among teachers it manifested in defiance, verbal abuse, omission, trust in group and external support for negative behaviour, ridicule of others, dishonesty (with marks in this instance) and a general attitude of arrogance coupled with laziness. This systematic perpetration of

violence, particularly in one school by a group of teachers, facilitated violence. The findings suggest that violence was not only inflicted upon, but also perpetrated by educators. These perpetrators felt secure, powerful and in control and their forms of violence were planned and systematically executed with no fear of reprisals from immediate superiors or higher authority. Learners were harmed by this systematic violence that involved practices that prevented them from learning.

In the final analysis it could be concluded that the violence experienced by learners varied between the two schools as some were victimized mainly by other learners, whereas others were victimized by both learners and teachers. The worst kind of psychological and emotional violence perpetrated against learners was where 'corrective measures' entailed illegally suspending learners for six months, thus effectively withholding them from their right to an education.

Involvement of trade unions in schools raised a red flag. The fact that teachers' negative and defiant behaviour was prompted by a feeling of security because they would be supported by their trade union members should there be any repercussions bodes ill for the future of learners and education in general. This implies that not only the school, but also the democratic institution that should serve as the custodian of learners' right to an education, perpetrated violence against learners.

The findings further suggest that group dynamics will serve to support the perpetration of violence. While a disgruntled or criminally minded person might lack the courage to act alone, it is the groups' support and dynamics that lend dominance to a group or groups of teachers, leading to a systematic perpetration of violence in schools.

As stated in this study, failure to protect learners is part of violence. In one school learners lost their belongings while they were kept longer in assembly than usual. Stealing from classrooms (which were not visible while learners were in assembly) was a strong

possibility of which teachers were aware. Preventative measures should have been taken by teachers to preempt violence and thus protect the learners in their care. This oversight by teachers constituted violence by omission.

Relevant to what constitutes a safe or unsafe school environment, the study found that security guards are as defenseless to violence in schools as are learners and teachers. As a first line of defence against violence spilling over into school premises from dysfunctional and criminal elements in communities, their presence at schools is not only desirable but necessary. In this regard the study has revealed that involving schools' support staff (such as cleaners and security guards) in research can be reflective and empowering. However, the study discovered that one of the security guards was empowered by the school principal to manage the general discipline of learners in the school. Security guards are trained to deal with criminals, in particular dangerous criminals, and not to deal with disciplinary issues at school. It is my contention that security guards are not trained to deal with the naughty behaviours of learners and that such practices should be rooted out by all teachers by ensuring that good discipline is maintained in schools.

Absence of some of the documents from schools further facilitated violence as no proper procedures were documented on how to deal with violence. This led to school management dealing with violence in a haphazard manner. This absence of records of violence was a serious oversight on the side of the schools and can be said to point to a lack of good management of the schools. However, teachers and management can positively contribute towards making schools a safer environment for teaching and learning. For example, well-run and resilient schools can do much to mitigate the incidences and effects of outside violence. Resilient, well-run schools have proper working structures in place like a safety and security committee and an SGB which ensure that there are, for example, suitable security personnel, well-maintained fences, a clear statement of rules and sanctions that are consistently applied for rule-breaking behaviour, concrete efforts to teach learners appropriate behaviour, and positive consequences available for positive behaviour. Such

structures will eliminate both social and economic effects of violence which were felt greatly in both schools through verbal and physical violence, burglary and vandalism of the school property.

## LIST OF REFERENCES

- Adler, S. (1994). *The future of equity in the social studies*. In M. Nelson (Ed), *The future of the social studies*. Boulder, CO: Social Science Education Consortium, pp 35-40
- Adler, E.S., & Clark, R. (2008). *How it's done: an invitation to social research*. Canada: ICC Macmillan Inc.
- Akiba, M., LeTendre, G. K., Baker D.P. & Goesling, B. (2002). *Student victimisation: National and School System Effects on School Violence in 37 Nations*. *American Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 39, No. 4 (Winter 2002), pp. 829-853. Also found in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/320448>.
- Akiba, M. (2005). *Nature and correlates of Ijime: Bullying in Japanese middle schools*. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 41(3), 216-235.
- Arskey, H. & Knight, P. (1999). *Interviewing for Social Scientists: An Introductory Resource with Examples*. London: Sage Publications.
- Arshad, A. (2008). Off track: The effects of corporal punishment. *The Review*, January, 2008.
- Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R. & Estrada, J.N. (2009). 'School Violence and Theoretically Atypical Schools: The Principal's Centrality in Orchestrating Safe Schools' *American Educational Research Journal* 46, pp423-461.
- Ayres, A. (Ed.). (1993). *The Wisdom of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, New York: Meridian.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2004). *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

- Bailey, K.A. (2006). Legal knowledge related to school violence. In Jimerson, S. R. and Furlong, M. J. *Handbook of School violence and School Safety. From research to practice.* New York. Routledge.
- Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (2001). *Acid and Trauma Victims.* Available at: <http://www.bhrcbd.org/victims.htm>.67
- Barnes, K.; Brynard, S.; & de Wet, C. (2012). The influence of school culture and school climate on violence in schools of the Eastern Cape Province. *South African Journal of Education*, vol. 32 no. 1 (February), pp-69-82.
- Barth, R.S. (2002). The culture builder. *Educational leadership*, 59:6-11.
- Bates, S. (2000). 'Educating Gita', *The Guardian* 14/3.
- Bhana, D. (2012) 'Girls are not free – in and out of the South African school', *International Journal of Educational Development* 32, pp352-358
- Bear, G., Webster-Stratton, C., Furlong, M. & Ree, S. (2000). Preventing aggression and violence. In Bear, G. and Minke, K. (Eds), *Prevention school problems: Strategies and programs that work* (pp. 1-70). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Berk, L.E. (2009). *Child development.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R.A. (2005). *School violence in context: Culture, neighbourhood, family, school and gender.* *International Journal of Violence and School.* New York: Oxford.

- Benbenishty, R., and Astor, R.A. (2008). *School violence in an international context: A call for global collaboration in research and prevention*. International Journal of Violence and School, 7 December 2008.
- Bettman, E. & Moore, P. (1994). *Conflict resolution programs and social justice*. Education and urban society vol. 27 no. 1 (November), pp 11-21
- Bickmore, K. (1997). *Teaching conflict Resolution in School: (Extra-) Curricular considerations*. Theory and Research in Social Education, July 1997. Australia, Sydney, New South Wales
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: Blumer,
- Bogdan, R.C. & Biklen, S.K. (1982). *Qualitative for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Bourdieu, P. (2001). *Masculine Domination* Stanford: Stanford University Press
- Brynard, & de Wet (2012). The influence of school culture and school climate on violence in schools of the Eastern Cape Province. South African Journal of Education. Vol. 32: 69-82
- Bulut, S. & Gunduz, S. (2012). Exploring school violence in the context of Turkish culture and schools. In Jimerson, S. R., Nickerson, A.B., Mayer, M. J., & Furlong, M.J. Handbook of school violence and school safety. International research and practice. New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York. Routledge.
- Burton, P. (2007). *Someone Stole My Smile: An Exploration into the causes of Youth Violence in South Africa*. Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention. Monograph series, no 3.

- Burton, P., Leoschut, L., & Bonora, A. (2008). *Walking the Tightrope: Youth Resilience to crime in South Africa*. Centre for Justice and crime prevention. Monograph series, no 7. Cape Town. September 2009.
- Burton, P., Leoschut, L., & Bonora, A. (2009). *Building Youth Resilience to Crime and Violence*. Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) 2009.29 September 2009, Johannesburg.
- Burton, P., Leoschut, L. & Bonara, A. (2009). *Walking the Tightrope: Youth Resilience to crime in South Africa*. Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention. Monograph series, no 7.
- Burton, P. (2007). *Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention*. Monograph series no.3. Cape Town. November 2007
- Bush, K.D. and Saltarelli, D. (2000). *The two faces of education in ethnic conflict: Towards a peacebuilding education for children*. UNICEF. Innocent research centre. Florence, Italy.
- Cecile, C. (2009). *European trends in research into violence and deviance in schools*. *International Journal of Violence and Schools* 10 9 version in English). Pas De Calais: University of Artois. Pp 97-110.
- Childline S.A . *Prevention & Education Manual*. Available in [[www.childlinesa.org](http://www.childlinesa.org)]
- Cicognani, L. (2004). *To punish or discipline? Teachers' attitudes towards the Abolition of corporal punishment*. Unpublished dissertation. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Citizens Commission for Human Rights International (CCHR)). Another School shooting, another psychiatric drug? Federal investigation long overdue.

Clark, H. (2009). *People power: unarmed resistance and global solidarity*. England: Pluto Press.

Clegg, S.R. (1989). *Frameworks of power*. London: Sage.

Cohen, L., & Manion, L. (1994). *Research methods in education*. New York: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. Milton Park: Routledge.

Coertze, N.D. Personal communication, (2012)

Cosgrove, J. (2000). *Breakdown; The Facts About Stress in Teaching* (London: RoutledgeFalmer).

Creswell, J.W. (2001). *Qualitative inquiry research design: Choosing among five approaches*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Daily News newspaper, 8 March 2012.

Damba N. (2012). Fatal teenage gang fights see pupils dropping out of schools. *The New Age Newspaper, Weekly*, 08 March, 2012. p. 5.

Davies, L. (2004). *Education and Conflict: Complexity and Chaos*. London: Routledge.

Davies, L. (2008) *Educating Against Extremism* Trentham Books

Day, N. (1996). *Violence in school: Learning in fear*. Enslow publishers Inc., Springfield, NY.

Demaray, M.K., Malecki, C.K., & DeLong, L.K. (2006). Support in the lives of aggressive students, their victims, and their peers. In Jimerson, S. R. & Furlong, M.J. *Handbook of School violence and School Safety. From research to practice*. New York. Routledge.

Demaray, M.K., Malecki, C.K., Jenkins, L.N., & Westermann, L.D. (2012). Social support in the lives of students involved in aggressive and bullying behaviours. In Jimerson, S. R., Nickerson, A.B., Mayer, M. J., & Furlong, M.J. *Handbook of school violence and school safety. International research and practice*. New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York. Routledge.

Denscombe, M. (2010). *Ground Rules for Social Research: Guidelines for Good Practice*. New York: Bell and Bain Ltd, Glasgow.

Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. Los Angeles: Sage publications.

Department of Education. (1997). *Quality education for all: Overcoming barriers to learning and development*. Department of Education: Pretoria.

Department of Education. (2000). *Policy Handbook for Teachers - Education Labour Relations Council Act 31 of 2000*. Department of Education: Pretoria

Department of Education. (2001) *Education White Paper 6 – Special Needs Education : Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

- Department of Education. (2003). *Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM)*. Pretoria: Department of Education. Act 267 of 2003
- De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche', C.B., & Delpont, C.S.L. (2010). *Research at grassroots for the social sciences and human service professions. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. Pietermaritzburg: Van Schaik Publishers.
- DioGuardi, R. L., & Theodore, L. A. (2006). Understanding and addressing peer victimization among students. In Jimerson, S. R. and Furlong, M. J. *Handbook of School violence and School Safety. From research to practice*. New York. Routledge.
- Diprose, R. (2008) *Safety and Security: A Proposal for Internationally Comparable*
- Dubet, F. (2005) 'Juvenile and Urban Violence' *International Handbook of Violence Research*
- Donal, E.J. MacNamara & Karman, A. (1983). *Deviants: Victims or Victimisers?* Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications Inc.
- Douglas, J.D. & Waksler, F.C. (1982). *The sociology of deviance: an introduction*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Dunne, M., Humphreys, S., & Leach, F. (2006). *Gender violence in schools in the developing world. Gender and Education*. Vol. 18, No. 1. January 2006. United Kingdom.
- Fairclough, A. (1990). *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Fagerlind, I. & Saha, L. (1989). *Education and National Development* (Oxford:Pergamon Press) Second Edition

- Farouk S. (2005). *Violence against Women: A Statistical Overview, Challenges and Gaps in Data Collection and Methodology and Approaches for Overcoming Them*. Expert Paper prepared for Expert Group Meeting of the UN Division for the Advancement of Women. 11–14 April, 2005, Geneva.
- Fennimore, B. (1997). *When mediation and equity are at odds: potential lessons in democracy*. *Theory into practice* vol. 36 no.1 (Winter), pp 59-64
- Fitzpatrick, M. (2003). Earthquake drill will not save pupils in decrepit buildings', *Times Educational Supplement* 7/3
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison*. New York. Vintage books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Trans. Colin Gordon et al. New York: Pantheon.
- Furlong, M. J., & Morrison, G.M. (2000). The school in school violence: Definitions and Facts. *Journal of emotional and behavioural disorders*, 10634266, Summer2000, Vol.8, Issue 2.
- Furlong, M. J. (2006). *Handbook of School violence and School Safety. From research to practice*. New York. Routledge.

- Furlong, M. J. & Jimerson, S. R. (2006). *Handbook of School violence and School Safety. From research to practice.* New York. Routledge.
- Furlong, M.J. & Morrison, G. (2000). The school in school violence: Definitions and facts. *Journal of emotional and behavioural disorders*, 10634266, Vol. 8, Issue 2.
- Giddens, A. (1997). *Sociology* third edition. Cambridge: Polity press
- Greene, M.B. (2005). *Reducing violence and aggression in schools. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, Volume 6 (3).* 263.
- Greene, M.B. (2006). Bullying in schools: A plea for measure of human rights. *Journal of social issues.* Volume 62 (1), 63-79.
- Greene, M. B. (2008). *Reducing school violence: School-based curricular programs and school climate.* 15(1), 12.
- Guzzo, R.S.L., Lacerda, F., & Filho, A.E..(2012). In Jimerson, S. R., Nickerson, A.B., Mayer, M. J., & Furlong, M.J. *Handbook of school violence and school safety. International research and practice.* New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York. Routledge
- Haffejee, S. (2006). *Waiting opportunities: adolescent girls' experiences of gender-based violence at schools.* Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and Department of Safety and Security.
- Handy, C. (1999). *Understanding organisations.* Rosebank: Penguin group
- Hanigan, J. P. (1984). *Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Foundations of Nonviolence.* New York: University Press of America.

- Harber, C. (2001b) 'Schooling and Violence in South Africa: Creating a Safer School', *Intercultural Education* 12,3 261-271.
- Harber, C. (2002a) 'Education, Democracy and Poverty Reduction in Africa', *Comparative Education* 38,3 pp 267-276
- Harber, C. (2004). *Schooling as Violence*. London: RoutledgeFalmer
- Harber, C. (2006). *Schooling as Violence: How Schools Harm Pupils and Societies*. Book Reviews / *International Journal of Educational Development* No. 26: Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer. Pp 123-133.
- Harber, C. and Mncube, V.S. (2010). Chronicling teacher practices and experiences in the context of democratic schooling and quality education in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development* 30 (2010) 614-624
- Harber, C. (2010). *Is schooling good for development? The case for South Africa*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Harber, C. and Mncube, V.S. (2011). *Is schooling good for development? The case for South Africa*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Harel-Fisch, Y., Walsh, S.D., Fogel-Grinvald, H., Amitai, G., Pickett, W., de Matos, M.G., & Craig, W. (2009). Negative school perceptions and involvement in school bullying: A universal relationship across 40 countries. *Journal of adolescence* 34 (2011) 639 – 652.
- Hatzichristou, C., Polychroni, F., Issari, and Yfanti, T. (2012). A Synthetic approach for the study of aggression and violence in Greek schools. In Jimerson, S. R., Nickerson, A.B., Mayer, M. J., and Furlong, M.J. *Handbook of school*

violence and school safety. International research and practice. New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York. Routledge.

Hawkins, J.D., Catalano, R.F., Kosterman, R., Abbot, R. & Hill, H.G. (1999). Preventing adolescent health risk behaviours by strengthen during childhood. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 153, 226-234

Hayden, C. (2009) 'Deviance and Violence in Schools: A Review of the Evidence in England' *International Journal of Violence and School* September, pp8-35.

Henning, E., van Rensberg, W. & Smit, B. (2010). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Paarl. Paarl Print.

Henry, S. (2000). What Is School Violence? An Integrated Definition. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 567: 16–29.

Hirschfield, P. J. (2008). *The Declining Significance of Delinquent Labels in Disadvantaged Urban Communities*. *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 23, No. 3, September 2008 (\_ 2008) DOI: 10.1111/j.1573-7861.2008.00077.x

Hirshi, T. (1969). *Causes of Delinquency*. University of California Press

Hoaken, P.N.S., & Stewart. S.H. (2003). Drugs of abuse and elicitation of human aggressive behaviour. *Addictive Behaviour*, 28, 1533-1554

Human Rights Watch (2001). *Scared at School: Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Science Research Council (HSRC). (2010). Educators' perceptions of school violence. Johannesburg, Human Science Research Council.

Hunt, F. (2007). *Schooling Citizens: a study of policy in practice in South Africa*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Sussex

<http://www.childlinekzn.co.za>

<http://www.ci.org.za> (children institute)

<http://www.scf.co.za> - Shekinah care foundation S.A.

<http://iword.com>

Hyde, K. (2001). *Girls' Education: Thematic Studies from the World Education Forum 2000*. Paris: UNESCO.

Ilanga newspaper, Thursday, 8 March 2012.

Indicators of Violence Crime Working Paper 52. Oxford: Centre for Research in Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity

International Save the Children Alliance (2005). *10 Essential Learning Points: Listen and Speak Out against Sexual Abuse of Girls and Boys*. Global Submission to the UN Study on Violence against Children. Oslo, Save the Children.

Jefthas, D. & Artz, L. (2007). *Youth violence: A gendered perspective*. In Burton, P. *Someone stole my smile: A exploration into causes of youth violence in South Africa*. Centre for justice and crime prevention. Cape Town.

Jimerson, S. R., Morrison, G. M., Pletcher S. W., & Furlong, M. J. (2006). *Foundation of school violence and safety*. In Jimerson, S. R. and Furlong, M. J. *Handbook of*

School violence and School Safety. From research to practice. New York. Routledge.

Jones, J.P. (2001). School violence. Lucent books, Inc. San Diego, California

Kang, S.W. (2002) ‘‘Democracy and Human Rights Education in South Korea’’, *Comparative Education* 38,3.

Kigotho, W. (2001). ‘Unrest Sparks Call for Cane’, *Times Educational Supplement* 24/8

King, K. E, and Dennis, M. (2008). *Third Space Activities and Change: An Exploration of Ideas from Social and Psychodynamic Theories*. *Clinical Social Work Journal*; June 2008, Vol. 36 Issue 2, p165-175,11p.

Kreiner, A. (2000). Everything you need to know about school violence. The Rosen publication group, Inc., NY.

KZN Network on Violence against women

Landsberg, E., Kruger, D. & Nel, N. (2011). Addressing barriers to learning, a South African perspective. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Last, L. M. (2001). School violence. *AllPsych Journal* online, the virtual psychology classroom.

Lee, V.E., Smith, J.B., Perry, T.E., & Smylie, M.A. (1999). Social support, academic press, and student achievement: A view from the middle grades in Chicago. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

- Leoschut, L., & Burton, P. (2009). Building resilience to crime and violence in young South Africans. Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and Department of Safety and Security.
- McGuinness, K. (1993). Gene Sharp's Theory of Power: A Feminist Critique of Consent. *Journal of Peace Research* 30 (1993): pp.101-115.
- McIntoch, K., Fisher, E.S., Kennedy, K.S., Craft, C.B., & Morrison, G.M. (2012). Using office discipline referrals and school exclusion data to assess school discipline. In Jimerson, S. R., Nickerson, A.B., Mayer, M. J., and Furlong, M.J. Handbook of school violence and school safety. International research and practice. New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York. Routledge.
- McKinlay, A. & Starkey, K. (2000). Foucault, Management and Organisation Theory. From Panopticon to Technologies of Self. New Dehli: SAGE Publications.
- MacMillan, R., & Hagan, J. (2004). Violence in the Transition to Adulthood: Adolescent Victimization, Education, and Socioeconomic Attainment in Later Life. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 1(2): 127–158.
- Maier-Katkin, Daniel (2000). Dean of the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida State University. "A bust of Radzinowicz contemplating Foucault". Presented as a lecture on a work in progress. September 20, 2000
- Maree, K. (1999). Spoil the rod, spare the child: some views on corporal punishment in South Africa. *Acta Criminologica*, 12(2): 56-64
- Martinez, D.; De Valle, L.; Fernandez, D.; & Guillen, G. (2003). *Xipe Totek*. Vol 12 Issue 3, 26p.

- Mason, M.K. (2013). Foucault and His Panopticon. Found in  
[[www.moyak.com/paper/jeremy-bentham.html](http://www.moyak.com/paper/jeremy-bentham.html)]
- Mayer, M., J.; & Furlong, M.J. (2006). Handbook of school violence and school safety. International research and practice. New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
- Mercury Newspaper, March 13, 2008, p. 3
- Mertens, D.M. (1998). Research Methods in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity with Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. London: Sage Publications.
- Mertens, D.M. (2009). Transformative research and evaluation. London: The Guilford press.
- Meyer, A.G. (2006). School violence in secondary schools: Guidelines for the establishment of Health Promoting Schools. Unpublished dissertation. North-West University, South Africa.
- Mkhize, N., Bennet, J., Reddy, V., & Moletsane, R. (2010). Human Science Research Council (HRSC) (2010). The country we want to live in: hate crimes and homophobia in the lives of black lesbian in South Africa. HRSC: Maitland.
- Mncube, V.S. (2004). School governance in the democratization of education in South Africa: The interplay between policy and practice. Unpublished thesis doctor of philosophy thesis. Birmingham University, Birmingham, United Kingdom.
- Morrell, R. (1999) 'Beating Corporal Punishment : Race, Masculinity and Educational Discipline in the Schools of Durban, South Africa, paper presented at the Voices in Gender and Education Conference, University of Warwick, March 1999.

- Morrison, G.M., Redding, M., Fisher, E. & Peterson, R. (2006). Assessing school discipline. In Jimerson, S. R. and Furlong, M. J. (2006). *Handbook of School violence and School Safety. From research to practice.* New York. Routledge.
- Molteno, M., Ogadhoh, K., Cain, E. & Crumpton, B. (2000). *Towards Responsive Schools: Supporting Better Schooling for Disadvantaged Children* (London: Department for International Development/Save the Children).
- Moses, G. (1997). *Revolution of Conscience: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Philosophy of Nonviolence*, New York: The Guilford Press.
- Mshengu S. & the Midlands Women's Group 2003. 'Ngiyakhala – I am Crying', *Children First* 7,49: 18-21. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).  
[www.slss.ie](http://www.slss.ie) <http://www.slss.ie/>
- Nansel, T.R., Overpeck, M.D., Haynie, D.L., Ruan, W.J., & Scheidt, P.C. (2003). Relationships Between Bullying and Violence Among U.S. Youth. *Archives of Paediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 157(4): 348–353.
- National Center for Mental Health and Youth Violence Prevention. Substance abuse, violence, mental health, and academic success.
- Ndengu, M.P. (2009). *Speaking their minds: Adolescents' understanding of their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in the context of existing intervention Programmes in Malawi.* Unpublished thesis doctor of philosophy theses. University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
- Ndlovu, T. (2012). *Isolezwe newspaper*, Thursday, 8 March 2012.
- Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005) *Emerging Voices* (Cape Town: HSRC Press).

- Ntombela, S. (2006). The complexities of educational policy dissemination in the South African context: A case study of teachers' experiences of inclusive education policy in selected schools in Greater Durban. Unpublished thesis doctor of philosophy thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.
- O'Malley, M., Katz, K., Renshaw, T.L. & Furlong, M.J. (2012). Gauging the system: Trends in school climate and intervention. In Jimerson, S. R., Nickerson, A.B., Mayer, M. J., and Furlong, M.J. Handbook of school violence and school safety. International research and practice. New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York. Routledge.
- Oosthuizen, I.J. (2007). Report on learner misconduct in the Southern Region, Potchefstroom: NW University.
- Oosthuizen, I.J, Wolhuter, C.C. & du Toit, P. (2003). Preventive or punitive disciplinary measures in South Africans schools: Which should be favoured?. Unpublished manuscript. Potchefstroom: Faculty of Educational sciences
- Osher, D., Dwyer, K. & Jimerson, S.R. (2006). Safe, supportive, and effective schools: Promoting school success to reduce school violence. In Jimerson, S. R. and Furlong, M. J. Handbook of School violence and School Safety. From research to practice. New York. Routledge.
- Osher, D. & Kendziora, K. (2010). Building conditions for learning and healthy adolescent development: Strategic approaches. In B. Doll, W. Pfohl, and J. Yoon (Eds), Handbook of youth prevention science (pp. 121-140). New York, NY: Routledge. Oxford English dictionary
- Parker-Jenkins, M. (1999). Sparing the Rod: School Discipline and Children's Rights. *South African Journal of Education, 2000, 20(3)*.

- Peterson, K.D. & Deal, T.E. (2002). *The shaping of culture fieldwork*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.
- Pereznieto, P., Harper C., Clench B., & Coarsa, J. (2010). *The economic impact of school violence*. London: Plan International & Overseas development institute.
- Pinheiro, P.S. (2006). *World report on violence*. UN.
- PLAN (2009). *Learn Without Fear Campaign Progress Report*. Woking: Plan Limited
- PLAN (2010). *Learn without fear. The global campaign to end violence in schools*. Working: Plan international headquarters.
- Radebe, S.B., (2010). *Psychological assessment and evaluation of learners by the Free State child guidance clinics*. Unpublished thesis doctor of philosophy theses. University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.
- Republic of South Africa (2007). *Education Laws Amendment Act 31, 2007 (Act No. 31 of 2007) (ELAA)*. Johannesburg: Polity.
- Rigby, K. (2006). What we can learn from evaluated studies of school-based programs to reduce bullying in schools. In Jimerson, S. R. and Furlong, M. J. (2006). *Handbook of School violence and School Safety. From research to practice*. New York. Routledge.
- Ric Review, (2000). *School safety: A collaborative effort*. Educational Resources Information Center: National Library Education
- Ringwalt, C.L., Ennett, S., and Johnson, R. (2003). Factors Associated With Fidelity to Substance Use Prevention Curriculum Guides in the Nation's Middle Schools. *Health Education and Behaviour*, 30: 375–391.

- Rivero, C, du Toit, P and Kotze, H. (2003). "Tracking the Development of the Middle Class in Democratic South Africa", *Politeia*, 22, 3: 6-29.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists practitioners*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Rossouw, J.P. (2008). *The effect of learner discipline on teacher security – an international qualitative inquiry*. Potchefstroom Campus, North-West University, South Africa.
- Salmi, J. (1999). 'Violence, Democracy and Education: An Analytic Framework', paper delivered to the Oxford International Conference on Education and Development, September 1999.
- Salmi, J. (2006) 'Violence, democracy and education: an analytical framework' in E. Roberts        Schweitzer, V. Greaney and K. Duer (eds) *Promoting Social Cohesion through Education*, Washington, World Bank.
- Sapa, (2012). Teachers arrested for KZN students beating. [www.timeslive.co.za](http://www.timeslive.co.za)
- Sapa, (2013). KZN man sentenced to 22 years for raping woman (85). City Press newspaper. March 13, 2013.
- Save the Children Alliance (2005). *10 Essential Learning Points: Listen and Speak Out against Sexual Abuse of Girls and Boys*. Global Submission by the International Save the Children Alliance to the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. Oslo, Save the Children Norway.
- Schonteich, M., & Louw, A. (2001). *Crime in South Africa: A country and cities profile*. Institute for Security Studies. No. 49.

- Schutte, P.J. (2002). *Tswana-speaking learners' perceptions of HIV/AIDS and poverty: implication for communication*. The article is part of a paper presented at the international Conference on Language, Literature and the discourse of HIV/AIDS in Africa University of Botswana, Gaborone, June, 2002.
- Sharkey, J.D., Furlong, M.J., Dowdy, E., Felix, E.D., Grimm, L. & Ritchey, K. (2012). The United States safe schools / healthy students initiative. Turning a national initiative into local action. In Jimerson, S. R., Nickerson, A.B., Mayer, M. J., and Furlong, M.J. Handbook of school violence and school safety. International research and practice. New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York. Routledge.
- Shochet, I. M., & Smith, C. L. (2012). Enhancing school connectedness to prevent violence and promote well-being. In Jimerson, S. R., Nickerson, A.B., Mayer, M. J., & Furlong, M.J. Handbook of school violence and school safety. International research and practice. New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York. Routledge.
- Shumba, J. (2011). Secondary school children's experiences of bereavement: implications for school counselling in Harare metropolitan province. Unpublished thesis doctor of philosophy. University of Fort Hare, South Africa.
- Skeggs, B, (1991) 'Challenging Masculinity and using Sexuality' *British Journal of Sociology of Education*
- Smith, P. & Ananiadou, K. (2003). 'The Nature of School Bullying and the Effectiveness of School-Based Interventions', *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 5,2 pp189-209
- Southall, R. (1980). 'African Capitalism in Contemporary South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7, 1: 38-70.

South African Broadcasting Corporation {SABC(a)} – Channel 1 News, August 4, 2009 at 06h39.

South African Broadcasting Corporation {SABC(b)} – e.tv channel – 3<sup>rd</sup> degree program, 11 January 2011, at 21h50.

South African Broadcasting Corporation {SABC(c)} SABC1, Saturday, 12 March 2011 at about 1935.

South African Broadcasting Corporation {SABC(d)} News etv, Thursday, 07 April 2011 at about 19h25.

South African Broadcasting Corporation {SABC(e)} SABC1, Saturday, 12 March 2011 at about 19h35.

South African Broadcasting Corporation {SABC(g)} 1 News, 01 March 2012 at 19h30

South African Broadcasting Corporation {SABC(h)} Radio news, 11 April 2011.

South African Broadcasting Corporation {SABC(i)} e. tv news, 05 September 2012 at 19h11

South African Human Rights Commission (2006). *Inquiry into School Based Violence in South Africa*. Pretoria: The South African Human Rights Commission

South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR). (2008). *South African schools most dangerous in the world*. Accessed on 01/03/2010, from <http://www.saiir.org.za/press>.

South African Medical Research Center (MRC) (2003). *The 1<sup>st</sup> National South Youth Behaviour Survey*; Department of health .

- Sprague, J.R. & Honer, R.H. (2012). School-wide positive behavioural interventions and supports: Proven practices and future directions. In Jimerson. S. R.; Nickerson, A.B.; Mayer, M. J., and Furlong, M.J. Handbook of school violence and school safety. International research and practice. New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York. Routledge.
- Straus M.A., & Yodanis, C.L. (1999). Corporal Punishment in Adolescence and Physical Assaults on Spouses in Later Life: What Accounts for the Link? Journal of Marriage and Family. Vol. 58, Issue 4.
- Straus, M.A. (1991). Discipline and Punishment of children and violence and other crime related in adulthood. Society for the study of social problems. University of California downloaded in May 2013 [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/800524>]
- Swearer, S.N., Espelage, D.L., Koenig, B., Berry, B., Collins, A., & Lembeck (2012). A social-ecological model for bullying prevention and intervention in early adolescence. In Jimerson, S. R., Nickerson, A.B., Mayer, M. J., and Furlong, M.J. Handbook of school violence and school safety. International research and practice. New York. Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York. Routledge.
- Sykes, G. M., & Matza, D. (1957). "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," American Sociological Review 22: 664–670.
- Tafa, E. (2002) 'Corporal Punishment : The Brutal Face of Botswana's Authoritarian Schools', Educational Review 54,1 17-26
- Tannenbaum, F. (1938). Crime and the Community. Boston: Ginn.

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVSR) (2007). Why does South Africa have such high rates of violent crimes. Supplement to the final report of the study on the violent nature of crime in South Africa.

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVSR). (2010). "Tackling Armed Violence": Key findings and recommendations of the study on the violent nature of crime in S.A". March 2010. Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and Department of Safety and Security.

The Annual School Survey, (2010). Report on the annual school survey 2010. Department of Basic Education – SA, Pretoria

The New Age newspaper, Monday, 11 April 2011. online [[www.thenewage.co.za](http://www.thenewage.co.za)]

Topali, V. (2005). When being good is bad: an expansion of neutralization theory. *Criminology* Aug2005, Vol. 43 Issue 3, p797-836, 40p.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): Asian Report 2001. Corporal Punishment in Schools in South Asia. Katmandu, Nepal.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO (undated) *Stopping Violence in Schools: A Guide for Teachers* Paris: UNESCO  
United

United Nations Entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women/Gender Issues / Violence Against Women.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2010). *Education under attack 2010*. Paris: UNESCO

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (undated)  
*Stopping Violence in Schools: A Guide for Teachers* Paris:
- University of South Africa (UNISA) College of Education. (2012). *The Dynamics of Violence in South African schools: Final Report*. Oxford: Symposium Books.
- Vally, S., Dolombisa, Y., & Porteus, K. (1999). Violence in South African schools. *Current issues in Comparative Education* 2 (1). 81
- White, J.M. & Klein, D.M. (2003). Symbolic interaction theory. In Adams, B.N. and Klein D. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) *Family theories* (pp.58-60). Thousands Oaks, California: Sage.
- Wilson, F. (working document). *Gender Based Violence in South African Schools*. International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Wilson, F. (2006). *Gender violence in South African schools. International Institute for Educational Planning. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)*.
- Williams, R (2009). 'Primary schools suspend 14 violent under-fives every day' *Guardian*, Thursday 31 December 2009.
- World Health Organisation (WHO) (2000). *Female Genital Mutilation*, Factsheet No 241. Geneva, World Health Organisation.
- World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002). *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organisation
- World Health Organisation (WHO) (2005). *Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence*. Geneva, World Health Organisation

Wright, L. (2005). *School Violence in Alabama*. Criminal Justice Information Center. State of Alabama. Criminal Justice Information Centre.

## APPENDIX A : REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Office CS 110 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Wing 5  
School of Education Studies  
Faculty of Education  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
P Bag X 03, Ashwood  
3605

22 February 2011

Department of Education: KwaZulu-Natal Province

### **Re: Permission to conduct research: Dynamics of Violence in schools**

My name is Dr. Vusi Mncube, senior lecturer and Discipline Head (Education and Professional studies) in the School of Education, Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal. We are currently engaged in a six year research project that is sponsored by the National Research Foundation (NRF).

This project is part of a bigger international project between the four countries (United Kingdom, Brazil, Pakistan and South Africa). It aims to facilitate international comparison of school violence through the generation of school-based indicators of violence and of security measures, and uses a comparative framework across the four countries. This individual project aims to facilitate the above in five provinces of South Africa. In identifying the dynamics of violence in schools, the project also explores the underlying reasons and types of violence as well as initiatives for prevention, with the intention to generate indicators that may inform a common framework for comparison within the five provinces in South Africa and across the four countries mentioned.

The research group will consist of me as project leader, my colleagues Dr Inbar Naicker; Dr Nsizwakhona Chili and Professor Clive Harber (Honorary Professor, from Birmingham University, UK); Dr Nomonde Mabovula (from Walter Sisulu University in the Eastern Cape) and Dr Pierre du Plessis (from University of Johannesburg). In addition the following students are part of the project: Mr Siphiwe Mthiyane, Ms. Bawinile “Winnie” Mthanti, Mr Gideon Msezane, Mr Rajen Reddy, and Mr Siphiwe Duma.

We would like to apply for permission to conduct the group research project over a period of five years (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015) to allow us to repeat the same study with the future group of students should the next student group choose to do so. This research will be conducted in the five provinces of South Africa namely, the Western Cape, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

The study will use interviews, observations, document reviews, questionnaires and teacher proforma. Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted in time for interviews, and they will be randomly selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participant have a choice to withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without any penalties.

Should you encounter any problems during this research project, please feel free to contact my line manager (the Head of School of Education Studies) using the following details:  
Professor Vitallis Chikoko at 031 260 8064

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: Vusi S Mncube (PhD); Tel: 031 260 7590; Email: [Mncubev@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Mncubev@ukzn.ac.za); Cell: 0765625104

Research tools are attached herewith

Thanking you in advance  
Vusumuzi S. Mncube (PhD)

## APPENDIX B : APPROVAL TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH



Research Office, Govan Mbeki Centre  
Westville Campus  
Private Bag x54001  
DURBAN, 4000  
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587  
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609  
[Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

28 June 2011

Dr. V5 Mncube (1628)  
School of Education Studies

Dear Dr. Mncube

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0182/011  
PROJECT TITLE: Dynamics of Violence in Schools

### FULL APPROVAL NOTIFICATION – COMMITTEE REVIEWED PROTOCOL

This letter serves to notify you that your application in connection with the above was reviewed by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee on 22 June 2011, has now been granted full approval following your responses to queries previously raised:

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol

Yours faithfully

  
.....  
PROF. STEVEN COLLINGS (CHAIR)  
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

 1910 - 2010  
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE  
Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE: LEARNER A – VICTIMS

### Interview Schedule for Individual Learners-Victims

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Learner \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this research. I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. You are selected because of the violent experience you had and the way in which you coped in the situation.

The aim of the interview is to find out how school violence affects you as an individual and how you deal with school violence. I will also ask you questions on how to help other learners to cope better and how to make schools safer.

These individual interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed. I give you my assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous. I cannot tell other people about the personal detail of our discussion and I cannot mention your name. I can however use your information and those of others in a way that is not recognized as information of one particular person.

Kindly answer the questions as honestly as possible as, your answers will assist this study to get more information on the effects associated with school violence and can assist to improve school management and support.

#### Questions for interviews: Learner A – Victims

1. Tell me about the things that you like about your school. And why?
2. Tell me about the things that you dislike about your school. And why?
3. Do you think violence or discipline is a problem at this school? Why do you think so?
4. What are the common violent/discipline incidents at the school?
5. In what places do these incidents occur the most? Who is involved?

6. How safe do you think learners feel at this school? Please explain
7. Tell me about a time you experienced violence? – prompt when necessary
8. How did you handle the situation?
9. What helped you to cope with the situation?
10. Who helped you to resolve the situation?
11. Were you satisfied about how matter resolved? Please explain.
12. Have you ever perpetrated violence? (for example, bullying, teasing) Please explain.
13. If yes, how was the matter resolved/corrected?
14. What kind of programs/measures can be used to support victims of violence in your school?
15. What programs / measures have been taken by the school to reduce violence in schools?
16. What programs / measures have been taken by the state to reduce violence in schools?

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE: LEARNER B – PERPETRATOR

### Interview Schedule for Individual Learners-Perpetrators

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Learner \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this research. I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. You are selected because of the violent experience you had and the way in which you coped in the situation.

The aim of the interview is to find out how school violence affects you as an individual and how you deal with school violence. I will also ask you questions on how to help other learners to cope better and how to make schools safer.

These individual interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed. I give you my assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous. I cannot tell other people about the personal detail of our discussion and I cannot mention your name. I can however use your information and those of others in a way that is not recognized as information of one particular person.

Kindly answer the questions as honestly as possible as, your answers will assist this study to get more information on the effects associated with school violence and can assist to improve school management and support.

#### Questions for interviews: Learner B – Perpetrator

1. Tell me about the things that you like about your school. And why?
2. Tell me about the things that you dislike about your school. And why?

3. Do you think violence or discipline is a problem at this school? Why do you think so?
4. In what places do these incidents occur the most? Who is involved?
5. How safe do you think learners feel at this school? Please explain
6. Were you ever a victim of violence in school? Tell me about the time you experienced violence?
7. How were these incidents resolved / settled?
8. I understand that you were recently accused as a perpetrator of violence. Tell me about it, or what prompted you to act that way?
9. How was the situation resolved? Were you satisfied about the manner it was resolved?
10. In what ways could you have handled the situation of violence differently?
11. What programs/measures can be used to reduce/prevent violence in schools?
12. What programs / measures have been taken by the state to reduce violence in your school?

## APPENDIX E : INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE: FOCUS GROUPS

### Interview schedule for focus groups

#### Scenario

In another school there is a grade 11 learner called “Mayibuye” who has been accused of continually carrying a knife to school which he uses to intimidate other learners. Yesterday he used offensive language against two female learners who scolded him for touching their breasts and he threatened to stab them after school.

#### **Questions**

1. Do you think Mayibuye’s behaviour is appropriate? Why do you think so?
2. Is such behaviour common in your school? Please explain.
3. Why do you think Mayibuye acts this way?
4. If he was a student here, how do you think the teachers and learners would react to his behaviour?
5. How can schools reduce/prevent such incidents?

## APPENDIX F : INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE: LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS

### Interview Schedule for Life Orientation Teachers

**Name of School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the Respondent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this research. This is my private study so I do not come here in the capacity as DoE official but as university researcher. I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. You could also benefit from this study in the sense that your knowledge of the topic will increase.

These individual interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed. I give you my assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous. I cannot tell other people about the personal detail of our discussion and I cannot mention your name. I can however use your information and those of others in a way that is not recognized as information of one particular person.

Interviews with principal, LO teacher and Governors are aimed at obtaining general information on the school's background inclusive of violence, ethos and organisational 'culture' and day-to-day life at school.

Kindly answer the questions as honestly as possible, as your responses will assist this study in obtaining information on school violence and can assist to improve school management and support.

#### Questions

1. How would you describe the ethos/ values/ principles of the school?
  - Values

- School climate
  - Discipline
2. What can you tell me about the culture of this school with regard to the following:
    - Late coming
    - Meetings – DSSC meetings
    - Conflicts / discipline problems
  3. How does the school function on a daily basis?
    - Curricular programmes
    - Application of code of conduct
  4. What kind of violence occurs in the school?
  5. Where does violence in your school normally occur?
  6. How does it affect the learners?
  7. How does it affect the teachers?
  8. What strategies do teachers use to cope with school violence?
  9. How does the school implement the search and seizure policy (ELAA 31, 2007) of illegal drugs and dangerous weapons.
  10. What else can be done to reduce violence in school?
  11. What programs / measures have been taken by the state to reduce violence in your school?

**Additional Comments**

Do you have additional comments, concerns or suggestions that you would like to make, which are not included in the interview?

## APPENDIX G : INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE: TEACHERS

### Interview Schedule for Teachers

**Name of School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the Respondent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this research. This is my private study so I do not come here in the capacity as DoE official but as university researcher. I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. You could also benefit from this study in the sense that your knowledge of the topic will increase.

These individual interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed. I give you my assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous. I cannot tell other people about the personal detail of our discussion and I cannot mention your name. I can however use your information and those of others in a way that is not recognized as information of one particular person.

Interviews with principal, LO teacher and Governors are aimed at obtaining general information on the school's background inclusive of violence, ethos and organisational 'culture' and day-to-day life at school.

Kindly answer the questions as honestly as possible, as your responses will assist this study in obtaining information on school violence and can assist to improve school management and support.

### Questions

12. How would you describe the ethos/ values/ principles of the school?

- Values
- School climate
- Discipline

13. What can you tell me about the culture of this school with regard to the following:

- Late coming
- Meetings – DSSC meetings
- Conflicts / discipline problems

14. How does the school function on a daily basis?

- Curricular programmes
- Application of code of conduct

15. What kind of violence occurs in the school?

16. Where does violence in your school normally occur?

17. How does it affect the learners?

18. How does it affect the teachers?

19. What strategies do teachers use to cope with school violence?

20. How does the school implement the search and seizure policy (ELAA 31, 2007) of illegal drugs and dangerous weapons.

21. What else can be done to reduce violence in school?

22. What programs / measures have been taken by the state to reduce violence in your school?

### **Additional Comments**

Do you have additional comments, concerns or suggestions that you would like to make, which are not included in the interview?

## APPENDIX H : INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE: PRINCIPALS

### Interview Schedule for the Principal

**Name of School name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the Respondent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this research. This is my private study so I do not come here in the capacity as DoE official but as university researcher. I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. You could also benefit from this study in the sense that your knowledge of the topic will increase.

These individual interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed. I give you my assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous. I cannot tell other people about the personal detail of our discussion and I cannot mention your name. I can however use your information and those of others in a way that is not recognized as information of one particular person.

Interviews with principal, LO teacher and Governors are aimed at obtaining general information on the school's background inclusive of violence, ethos and organisational 'culture' and day-to-day life at school.

Kindly answer the questions as honestly as possible, as your responses will assist this study in obtaining information on school violence and can assist to improve school management and support.

#### Questions

23. Tell me about the background of the school.

- Population (in terms of race)
- Size (number of learners, teachers and support staff)

- Please share with me about the history of violence /discipline in your school
24. How would you describe the ethos/ values/ principles of the school?
- Values
  - School climate
  - Discipline
25. What can you tell me about the culture of this school with regard to the following:
- Late coming
  - Meetings – DSSC meetings
  - Conflicts / discipline problems
26. How does the school function on a daily basis?
- Leadership and Management
  - Curricular programmes
  - Application of code of conduct
27. What kind of violence occurs in the school?
28. Where does violence in your school normally occur?
29. How does it affect the learners?
30. What strategies do Principal use to cope with school violence?
31. How does the school implement the search and seizure policy (ELAA 31, 2007) of illegal drugs and dangerous weapons.
32. What else can be done to reduce violence in school?
33. What programs / measures have been taken by the state to reduce violence in your school?

**Additional Comments**

Do you have additional comments, concerns or suggestions that you would like to make, which are not included in the interview?

## APPENDIX I : INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE: SUPPORT STAFF

### Interview Schedule for the Support staff

**Name of School (Pseudo):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the Respondent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this research. This is my private study so I do not come here in the capacity as DoE official but as university researcher. I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. You could also benefit from this study in the sense that your knowledge of the topic will increase.

These individual interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed. I give you my assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous. I cannot tell other people about the personal detail of our discussion and I cannot mention your name. I can however use your information and those of others in a way that is not recognized as information of one particular person.

Interviews with principal, LO teacher and Governors are aimed at obtaining general information on the school's background inclusive of violence, ethos and organisational 'culture' and day-to-day life at school.

Kindly answer the questions as honestly as possible, as your responses will assist this study in obtaining information on school violence and can assist to improve school management and support.

#### Questions

1. What kind of violence occurs in the school?
2. Where does violence in your school normally occur?

3. How does it affect the learners?
4. What strategies do support staff use to cope with school violence?
5. What else can be done to reduce violence in school?

**Additional Comments**

Do you have additional comments, concerns or suggestions that you would like to make, which are not included in the interview?

## APPENDIX J : INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE: SGB

### Interview Schedule for SGBs

**Name of School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the Respondent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this research. This is my private study so I do not come here in the capacity as DoE official but as university researcher. I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. You could also benefit from this study in the sense that your knowledge of the topic will increase.

These individual interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed. I give you my assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous. I cannot tell other people about the personal detail of our discussion and I cannot mention your name. I can however use your information and those of others in a way that is not recognized as information of one particular person.

Interviews with principal, LO teacher and Governors are aimed at obtaining general information on the school's background inclusive of violence, ethos and organisational 'culture' and day-to-day life at school.

Kindly answer the questions as honestly as possible, as your responses will assist this study in obtaining information on school violence and can assist to improve school management and support.

### Questions

34. How would you describe the ethos/ values/ principles of the school?

- Values

- School climate
- Discipline

35. What can you tell me about the culture of this school with regard to the following:

- Late coming
- Meetings – DSSC meetings
- Conflicts / discipline problems

36. How does the school function on a daily basis?

- Curricular programmes
- Application of code of conduct

37. What kind of violence occurs in the school?

38. Where does violence in your school normally occur?

39. How does it affect the learners?

40. What strategies do SGB use to cope with school violence?

41. What else can be done to reduce violence in school?

42. What programs / measures have been taken by the state to reduce violence in your school?

### **Additional Comments**

Do you have additional comments, concerns or suggestions that you would like to make, which are not included in the interview?