



**UNIVERSITY OFTM
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**INYUVESI
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**An exploration of murder cases in Umlazi Township, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province
from the perspective of the South African Police Service**

By

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Degree of Master of Social Science in Criminology and Forensic
Studies in the School of Applied Human Science**

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DECLARATION

I, Nhlanzeko Nonjabulo Sikhakhane, proclaim that this dissertation, entitled *Exploration of murder/homicide in the Umlazi Township, Durban* is my own work except where I have acknowledged other authors. All the sources used and cited have been indicated and acknowledged by a means of complete references.

I further declare that this work has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any university.

Signature: .. 

Date: 07/08/2025

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First of all, I would like to thank GOD for all he has done for me. For being with me and for protecting me throughout the journey of completing this dissertation.

Bringing this dissertation to fruition was not easy. It was stressful to the extent that I wanted to give up; but, with the love, support, guidance, encouragement, and supervision I got from my supervisor, friends, and family I manage to overcome the many struggles I faced.

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my loving parents, **Mrs Lungile Sikhakhane** and **Mr Sibangani Sikhakhane**. The unwavering support and wisdom of my parents have profoundly shaped who I am today. My mother often reminded me, *"Never forget your roots, and above all, remember you can do anything you put your mind to."* Indeed, my parents are the greatest gift bestowed upon me by God, and this achievement is my way of honouring and giving back to them. I also dedicate this study to my siblings, **Ngwele** and **Siwaphiwe Sikhakhane**. May they never doubt themselves because they can be anything they want to be in life.

ABSTRACT

This research explored the causes of murders in KwaZulu-Natal's Umlazi township in Durban. The investigation focused on determining the nature and extent of homicides, identifying contributing factors, examining challenges faced by the South African Police Service in investigating murder cases, and reviewing current homicide prevention measures. Driven by a desire to understand the murder phenomenon in Umlazi, detailed data were gathered from selected participants. The findings will aid stakeholders in understanding the causes and factors that trigger murders, and the recommendations may help the SAPS develop effective preventive measures to reduce murder in Umlazi.

To achieve the goals of this study, a qualitative research approach with an exploratory design was used. Data were collected from fourteen (14) murder detectives at the Umlazi police station, with one participant withdrawing. The remaining participants provided insights into the murder cases in Umlazi through interviews based on their first-hand experiences and understanding of the phenomenon. A purposive sampling method was applied, and in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant, recorded using a voice recorder. The data were then analyzed through thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that the nature of the murders in Umlazi was often brutal and traumatic resulting in psychological breakdowns among detectives. The study also found that murder incidences had significantly increased and were continuing to rise compared to earlier years. The primary contributing factors were alcohol and drug use, with robberies being a lesser factor. Detectives faced numerous challenges, including a lack of witness cooperation, heavy caseloads, personnel shortages, and limited resources which hindered effective investigations and delayed justice. Preventive measures, such as community policing forums, public order policing initiatives, preventative operations, patrols, and community awareness campaigns, were implemented. However, these measures were not effective as the rate of murder was escalating even at the closure of this study.

Key terms: *Crime, Detectives, Murder, South African Police Service, Violence*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- ASPD** - Antisocial Personality Disorder
- BPD** - Borderline Personality Disorder
- CPF** – Community Police Forum
- CSF** – Community Safety Forum
- EHWS** – Employee Health and Wellness Services
- FCS** - Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences
- FBI** - Federal Bureau Investigation
- GST** – General Strain Theory
- ICCS** -International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes
- ICCPR** - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- KZN** – KwaZulu-Natal
- NCPS** – National Crime Prevention Strategy
- POP** - Public Order Policing
- PTSD** - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- UDHR** - Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- SAPS** - South African Police Service
- SLT**- Social Learning Theory
- TRT** - Tactical Response Team
- UNODC** - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- US** – United States (of America)
- WHO** – World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

South Africa is one of many countries that experience high levels of crimes that impact people's lives negatively (Sulemane, 2015), while the impact of crime has a significant effect on the standard of living of society members. Although various heinous crimes impact society, this study focused on murder. Murder in any form is a violent crime and a global phenomenon that is of great concern to societies as it brings fear and unrest to a country and its citizens. Police Commissioner Sehlahle Fannie Masemola stated on 16 February 2023 that murder is a violent crime with the most escalating crime rate compared to other violent crimes in South Africa, making it a priority to adopt preventive strategies to safeguard people from becoming the victims of murder.

It seems impossible to eliminate crime completely, but finding ways to reduce it is possible. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the nature and degree of murder by focusing on its causes, the challenges faced by investigative officers (detectives) when investigating murders, and the safety measures taken by the SAPS to curb this crime in the study area, which was Umlazi, an extensive township located in Durban. Umlazi was chosen as the study field because it is plagued by a high prevalence of murder, which is a fact that calls for public attention and the concern of law enforcement. Moreover, limited research on the factors contributing to the high prevalence of murder in Umlazi had been done before this study was conceptualised as it seemed imperative to address this issue from a scholarly perspective.

The history of violence has shown that violence has become a norm in South African townships. For instance, SAPS statistics show that 6 083 people were murdered in South Africa over three months (January to March) in that year alone. This marked a 22% increase from the same period in the previous year (January to March 2021), when 4 976 murders were recorded. In the fourth quarter of 2022, SAPS crime statistics revealed that three police stations in KwaZulu-Natal had become a hotbed of murders, namely those in Umlazi, Inanda, and Plessislaer. These three stations had recorded the highest number of murders with Umlazi ranked number one. Statistics also revealed an increase of 148 murder cases from 2021 to 2022.

This increase highlights the potential risk to more residents and the fear that such a threat inflicts on society.

1.2 Background to the Study

Throughout history, crime has been a pervasive and dark undercurrent in human civilization. Murder is a significant problem around the world and one of the main causes of mortality in various nations (Hassin & Rahi, 2018). Violence is usually rampant in heavily populated urban and industrial areas where traditional social relationships and ideals have inevitably disintegrated. According to Graham (2021), the ancient murder rates were extremely high in Europe throughout the Middle Ages, as well as in the United States (US) during the early 19th century, before slowly declining until the 1960s. Throughout the years, various communities have frequently been the scene of various forms of conflict.

When the ever-increasing murder rate is considered from an international perspective, it is clear that violent crimes increased significantly in 2020, which was the year that was infamous for the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the US Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Statistics (2019), murder escalated in the country by 30% between 2019 and 2020, which was the largest increase in a single year for this crime in more than a century. Beckett (2021) agrees, stating that the year-over-year increase in the US murder rate in 2020 was the largest since at least 1905, and possibly ever. In the US, an estimated 16 425 people were murdered in 2019, which was a 0.3% increase from the 2018 estimate (FBI Crime Statistics, 2019). Four major American cities, namely Hampton, Fort Lauderdale, Oklahoma City, and Knoxville were listed among the top cities with the highest murder rates globally in 2019. However, Beckett (2021) argues that the overall crime rate was still significantly lower than the apex of the murder crime rate in the United States during the late 1980s and early 1990s, as contact crimes and property crimes continued to decline. This is true even though violent crimes, particularly murder, increased between 2020 and 2021 (Graham, 2019). To illustrate, there were 7.8 killings for every 100 000 people in the US in 2020, which was up from 6 per 100 000 people the previous year. The increase in the murder rate across the country in 2020 considerably outpaced the 20% spike recorded in 2001, which was mostly caused by the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Murder is a worldwide issue and it is also a major predicament in South Africa. SAPS Crime Statistics in 2020 revealed that the murder rate in South Africa was at its highest in 10 years, with an average of 58.4 murders per day in the country between April 2019 and March 2020.

This was a rise of 1.4% from the previous year. According to the SAPS Crime Statistics released for 2019/20 on 31 July 2020, the number of murders in South Africa at that time had increased by 303 from 21 022 in 2018/19 to 21 325 in 2019/20. On average, 58 people were murdered every day. The national murder rate decreased slightly from 36.4 per 100 000 people to 36.3 in 2020.

Table 1: Total number of murders in South Africa recorded per province in 2022

Province	Number of murders	Murder rate (%)
Eastern Cape	4407	49.4
Western Cape	4150	59.5
KwaZulu-Natal	6495	56.0
Free State	992	20.3
Gauteng	5570	53.1
Northern Cape	366	13.5
North West	1029	24.5
Mpumalanga	1201	22.6
Limpopo	1012	15.8

Source: Analysis by Author based on South Africa's Crime Statistics for 2021/2022

As revealed by South Africa Crime Statistics in 2022, the three provinces in South Africa with the highest number of murders were KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, and the Eastern Cape. The KwaZulu-Natal province recorded the highest number of murders at 6 495 which is 56.0% increase, followed by Gauteng (5 570 at 53.1%) and the Eastern Cape (4 407 at 49.4%). Even though the Western Cape province was not in the top three provinces, it had the highest murder rate in 2021/2022 at 59.5%.

KwaZulu-Natal has long been considered a murder hotspot as the murder rate in this province is generally the highest in the country. SAPS Crime Statistics (2020) shows an increase of 10.6% in murders from April 2019 to March 2020. There were 4 825 murders recorded in 2020/21, but the rate increased dramatically to 6 495 in 2021/22, bringing the provincial death rate to 56 per 100 000 residents, and approximately 1 404 people were killed in KwaZulu-Natal during the first quarter of 2022 alone (SAPS Crime Statistics, 2022). Merely 180 of these murders were associated with the extensive riots and turmoil in July 2021, signalling that

other circumstances were responsible for the escalation. According to Bruce (2023), the murder rate in KwaZulu-Natal is anticipated to increase even further, estimated that it will hit 60 per 100 000 people in the near future, thus confirming the general upward shift in the province's murder trends.

According to the Minister of Police, Mr B. Cele, who commented on the crime rate in that year (Cele, 2022), Umlazi township was the murder hotspot in KwaZulu-Natal, while Inanda had the most cases of rape. Crime Statistics in 2022 showed a massive increase in criminal activities in comparison with the same period in 2020, and the Police Minister blamed this on the fact that the country was in hard lockdown at the time (Hoosen, 2021). Nevertheless, it is important to note that even before the pandemic, crime levels in KZN were increasing at an alarming rate.

Umlazi township in KwaZulu-Natal is located southwest of Durban. In terms of organisation and administration, Umlazi.co.za (n.d) states that Umlazi is a constituent of the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. It is also the only township in the country with its own registration plate (NUZ) and it is the fourth largest township in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2022). This township is populated exclusively by members of the Black community. Umlazi is known as a crime hotspot, and high crime rates associated with socio-economic factors, lack of education, and drug addiction have been recorded here. It is a large township that is divided into 26 sections, or wards, and is ranked number four in South Africa in terms of its size (Umlazi.co.za, n.d). Due to the large size of this township and the extent of murders that occurred here, the entire geographical area of the township was deemed the study site. However, data were obtained only from members of the SAPS stationed at the Umlazi police station. The station's local nickname is 'eGG'. It is the largest police station in Umlazi and is situated in section F.

Although Umlazi township is an area where there are many social evils derived from poverty, unemployment, and other issues, its residents have a strong sense of community. However, despite many difficulties and hardships, crime is still a significant problem in this area. In 2022, *News 24* reported that residents lived in fear because of the increasing rate of violent crimes. For instance, 83 people were murdered in this area between April and June 2021, and these statistics made the township the 'murder capital' of the country. Wallace (2023) argues that most of the murders that were committed in this township were drug-related as the majority of

killings had been motivated by criminals attempting to steal a car, a cell phone, a wallet, or just plain robbery. Neighbourhoods in this township are overpopulated and the bulk of the population is unemployed. The influx of people from rural areas and neighbouring countries has occurred over time and new shacks mushroom on small plots of land every week. Reported population numbers are therefore skewed because police and other statistics have not kept up with population growth.

1.3 Problem Statement

For any country to function well, laws are put in place and citizens/residents must abide by them. The law is clear that murder is a crime and that guilty perpetrators will be severely punished. In South Africa, criminal law is clear and has a fundamental legal basis to help to ensure a balanced level of safety for the protection of the rights of citizens against those individuals or organisations who break the rules. The law aims to maintain fairness, order, and peace, but these ideals have not been achieved in Umlazi.

Under international human rights law, the right to life is a significant principle that is protected in documents like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Both these Declarations explicitly state that everyone has the right to life. According to Finegan (2020), international law prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of life, including acts of extrajudicial killing. This right applies to a diverse array of groups, including women, children, individuals with disabilities, members of minority communities, LGBTI individuals, and others (Stuart & Heyns, 2021). This right further urges everyone, including the government and private organisations, to promote respect for the right to life globally.

The US Constitution's 14th Amendment addresses many aspects of citizenship and the rights of citizens at the national level. Section 1 of the Amendment states that all live persons are subject to the jurisdiction of the state they reside in. It further adds: "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the State, nor shall any state or an individual deprive any person of life, and liberty, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws" (Chapman, 2016).

Similarly, Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) enshrines the rights of all individuals in the country and affirms their right to life. This

right to life is regarded as the most fundamental human right and is safeguarded by the South African Constitution. It explicitly states in Section 11 of the Bill of Rights that "Everyone has the right to life". According to South African History Online (2022), this right is significant, especially given South Africa's history of apartheid during which the state often disregarded this basic human right for many of its citizens. The inclusion of the right to life in the post-apartheid Constitution represents a commitment to protecting citizens against arbitrary deprivation of life by individuals, the government, or other organisations (Dugard, 2011). Failure to uphold the right to life means that someone acts in a way that threatens, disregards, or violates an individual's basic right to live safely and with dignity (Currie & de Waal, 2013).

However, the right to life is not effectively upheld in many countries, including South Africa. If it were, the high levels of murder observed at international, national, and regional levels would not have persisted in the manner that they have. According to Sulemane (2015), people all over the world are at risk of becoming murder victims, which is a serious issue that continues to rise rapidly instead of lessening. In fact, many individuals living in South Africa do not respect the law and the rights of others as guaranteed by the South African Constitution. This disregard for human rights is evident in SAPS statistics that record murder cases and attempts. The statistics recorded prove that murder is a severe issue that will remain a problem for a very long time if left unattended, and this predicament causes individuals to live in fear for their safety. Umlazi is a township that experiences high crime rates and particularly murder. Violent crimes that occur regularly include car hijacking, robbery, kidnapping, domestic violence, and murder.

Crime statistics paint a dire picture. For instance, KZN SAPS Crime Statistics (2022) reported that between January and March 2022, 103 murders were reported in Umlazi, which was a 68% increase compared to the same period in 2021. According to Quarterly Crime Statistics released by Police Minister Bheki Cele (2022), the Umlazi police station was third following Kraaifontein and Delft (both in Cape Town) for cases of murder. Minister Cele also revealed that 74 people had been killed in Umlazi between April and July of that year. Unfortunately, as these trends have been escalating for some time, the community has become used to living in fear as many have either observed or been victims of crime, and have therefore become desensitised to acts of violence.

According to a reporter for *Sowetan Live News* (2022), 13 people were killed in two different shootings in Umlazi within a week. *News 24* (2022) also reported that six individuals had been

killed in this township, while two others had been injured in an attack by seven armed men in a house at Sithabathaba informal settlement in the Umlazi N region. In the second incident, three men had broken into a residence in the U-section of Umlazi and shot six people to death. The victims had been discovered with gunshot wounds to their heads, execution style. Another incident was the discovery of a 14-year-old child who had been shot dead in Umlazi. A reporter stated: “Families of the victims killed in Umlazi, south of Durban, are shocked about the shooting incidents which have left them traumatized” (*Sowetan Live News*, 2022).

On 12 August 2023, *News 24* (2023) reported that six people had been shot dead by four armed men in two related incidents in Umlazi township in KwaZulu-Natal. The incident occurred on Friday night 11 August. Police explained that the attackers had stormed into a house in the Q section just before midnight on Friday and shot dead two occupants. Two other victims were shot dead outside the house; one was killed in a back room while the other was killed next to an outside toilet. Immediately after killing the four victims, the suspects proceeded to a nearby informal settlement and shot dead two people in a shack, and one person was left critically wounded. The Police spokesperson, Colonel Robert Netshiunda, stated that three of the attackers had been identified and that the gang leader was wanted for murder. During the police investigation, it was discovered that one of the suspects believed the victims had his identity document, which he had lost at the murder scene.

The high rate of murder revealed by statistics makes it clear that murder in this township is a burning issue that needs to be resolved with immediate effect to ensure that this township is a safe environment for all residents.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Studies that concentrate primarily on how people perceive their living situations, especially concerning crime and violence, have not been sufficiently conducted in the South African context (Noxhaka, 2019). Miss TN Ntombela, Miss LA Khanyile, Miss N Noxhaka, Mr. B Khoza, and many others have conducted studies centred on Umlazi, but none focused on the high rate of murder that is plaguing the community. This study is therefore significant as it will add to the pool of knowledge regarding the crime of murder in Umlazi township. The study is anticipated to enrich academia, the SAPS, and society at large by filling in the gap that has been left by earlier researchers. In addition, the findings will proffer a different perspective on the nature of the murder phenomenon and will expose the possibility for different and possibly

more effective interventions, particularly regarding the relationship between murder and its place of occurrence.

This study is important because it elicited in-depth information on many killings that occurred in Umlazi and provides a scholarly understanding of murder from the perspective of police officers who worked intimately with such cases. This study will also help clarify the nature of township killings as it examined the causes of the murders that had occurred in the Umlazi area. The study report also illuminates the struggles encountered by police officers when addressing murder cases, and this information may inform future prevention and support strategies to safeguard police officers against the trauma they may experience when investigating murders.

It is envisaged that the detailed data and the findings of the study will assist and enable the SAPS to analyse and understand the causes of murder and the conditions in townships that lead to this crime. Although the findings may not be generalised to other townships across South Africa, they may be considered in the development of prevention measures that may be adopted to reduce murder rates in other problematic townships such as Inanda, KwaMashu, and Plessislaer where violent crimes are highly prevalent.

1.5 Research Aims and Objectives

1.5.1 Aim of the study

The study's aim refers to a broad statement that outlines its overall purpose and is defined concisely or states what is to be accomplished rather than how it is to be accomplished (Neuman, 2014). Therefore, broadly speaking, this study aimed to engage in an in-depth exploration of the nature and causes of murders in Umlazi township, Durban.

Given the high rate of murder incidences in Umlazi, this study aimed to contribute information to the pool of knowledge that will assist SAPS by offering an in-depth understanding of the reasons behind the area's elevated murder rate. Identifying factors that contributed to murder incidences and illuminating the challenges that police officers experienced when attempting to solve murder cases are pivotal in the contribution this study will make to the Criminology field.

1.5.2 Objectives

Neuman (2014) states that study objectives outline the goals the project aims to achieve. This means that the formulation of objectives is pivotal in what the study wishes to accomplish. Essentially, objectives guide every step of the research until the goals have been reached.

Below are the objectives of the study:

- To evaluate the nature and extent of murder in Umlazi.
- To explore factors that contribute to murder in Umlazi.
- To identify the challenges faced by the murder detectives/investigation officers who dealt with murder cases.
- To examine the measure of the success of current programs in the effort to curb murders in Umlazi.

1.6 Research Questions

According to Creswell (2013), a research question is a succinct and concise statement of inquiry that serves as the foundation of the research study. A set of research questions delineates the precise subject or problem the researcher aims to investigate and guides the systematic examination, data collection, and data analysis process employed in a study. According to Neuman (2014), a well-formulated research question sets the parameters of the study and pinpoints the variables or ideas to be explored, thus steering the research process effectively.

Below are the questions that this study posed:

- What is the nature and extent of murder in Umlazi?
- What factors contribute to murder in Umlazi?
- Are the murder detectives/investigation officers facing any challenges in dealing with murder cases?
- What preventive measures are implemented to curb murder in Umlazi?

1.7 Conceptualization of Important Concepts

Conceptualization is a process of defining the meaning of the terms used in a study (Sequiera, 2014). To provide a fundamental understanding of the topic, an introduction to some terms is necessary. Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2005) stated that conceptualization aims to safeguard meaningful communication, hence, it is crucial to establish a common understanding among researchers, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

1.7.1 Crime

The terms violence and crime are often closely linked and used interchangeably (Michalowski, 2016). The word crime is used to refer to any illegal action that constitutes an offense that is punishable by law (Michalowski, 2016). According to Clarke and Bernard (2023), crime is the intentional execution of an act typically deemed socially destructive or dangerous and specifically defined, prohibited, and punishable by criminal law. Based on the provided definitions, crime therefore refers to deliberate actions or behaviors that harm society, and it is forbidden and subject to punishment under criminal law. Individuals who commit crimes are usually called criminals, offenders, or perpetrators.

1.7.2 Detectives

Eck and Rossmo (2019) stated that detectives are specialized law enforcement officers responsible for investigating and solving crimes by gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses, analyzing information, and piecing together details to uncover the facts of a case. Eck and Rossmo (2019) further asserted that detectives work primarily on case investigations and focus on solving crimes based on their expertise, unlike uniformed police officers who typically handle initial response and patrol duties.

1.7.3 Murder

Hossain and Rahi (2018:31) define murder as the “unlawful and premeditated killing of another human being”, whereas Smith and Hogan (2021:133) define murder as “the unlawful and deliberate killing or causing the death of another human being”. Taking another person's life is differentiated based on whether it is deemed first-degree murder, or intentional killing, or second-degree murder, which is unintentional killing (Hossain & Rahi, 2018). In this study, murder was deemed the unlawful and intentional killing of another person, regardless of the manner in which it occurred.

1.7.4 South African Police Service

According to Statistics South Africa (2022), the South African Police Service (SAPS) is the national police force and primary law enforcement agency of South Africa that is established to maintain public order, prevent, combat, and investigate crime, and protect the citizens of South Africa, SAPS operates under the oversight of the Ministry of Police. Its duties include enforcing the laws of the country, ensuring the safety and security of the public, and upholding

constitutional rights. The SAPS is structured into various divisions or units, and specialized teams to address different types of crime, including contact crimes, trio crimes, property crimes, police-detected crimes, and other critical issues affecting communities (Lambrechts, 2012).

1.7.5 Township

The Oxford Dictionary (2012:1150) defines a township as “a unit of local government or an administrative division smaller than a city which is a residential area planned and developed for a specific purpose, often with its own infrastructure and services”. Statistics South Africa (2012) stated that the word ‘township’ typically refers to underdeveloped informal settlements and racially divided urban districts that existed in South Africa from the late 19th century. Townships were typically constructed outside of cities and towns under the non-racial land title system of South Africa.

1.7.6 Violence

Violence is defined as an act of physical aggression that often results in harm by the Oxford Dictionary (2012) while Jacquin (2023) alludes to violence as an act of physical force that causes or is intended to cause harm or injury to another person or property. The damage inflicted by violence may be physical, psychological, or both, and affects individuals in multifaceted ways. Physical damage includes any harm inflicted on the body that results in open wounds, broken bones, internal injuries, disabilities, and even death. Psychological damage on the other hand leaves lasting psychological scars such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or other mental health issues that impact the mental well-being and emotional stability of the victim or victims. Violence encompasses various actions like assault, rape, domestic abuse, aggravated robbery, and murder. Each of these crimes is characterised by distinct legal elements and definitions, yet they typically entail the exertion of force or the threat of force against another individual (Lamb & Warton, 2016).

1.8 Outline of the Study Report

1.8.1 Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction, offering relevant background information for the study. It outlines the problem statement, summarises the significance of the study, and states the aim as well as the objectives of the research. This chapter serves as an introduction to the study report as it informs the reader of what can be anticipated in the following chapters.

1.8.2 Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter presents descriptions of the key concepts referenced and their significance to the study. The chapter further explores existing literature that was relevant to the purpose of the current study. Thus both primary and secondary sources were reviewed to indicate where the current research fits into the existing body of knowledge. The extensive discussion on the nature and extent of murder, the causes of this crime, the challenges experienced by SAPS officers in investigating and curbing incidences of murder, and strategies to curb murder elucidates why it was pertinent to engage in an investigation of the research problem under study.

1.8.3 Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

This chapter explores criminological theories that offer explanations for the crime of murder. Specifically, theories that apply to the South African context were employed and their relevance to the study was discussed. These theories include the general strain theory, which is linked to the influence of hegemonic masculinity identity, and the social learning theory, which emphasises that criminal behaviour is learned behaviour. These two theories assisted the researcher in discovering how and understanding why individuals end up committing murder, which is an ungodly offense.

1.8.4 Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology that was employed in this study to achieve its objectives and to address the research questions. The study was essentially qualitative in nature. The research process is described through a phenomenological design that is both exploratory and descriptive. The chapter further outlines the research approach and design, the sample population for the study, the data collection methods, and the research instruments utilized.

1.8.5 Chapter Five: Data Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion

In this chapter, the data are presented and the findings are discussed. The in-depth discussion is based on the data that were gathered during the interviews that had been conducted with the study participants, who were SAPS officials. Using thematic analysis processes, the data are analysed and commonalities and discrepancies in the participants' responses are explored.

1.8.6 Chapter Six: Summary of the Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This chapter provides reflections on the findings elicited by the study. The researcher acknowledges the limitations of the study and provides recommendations based on the findings for future research and practice.

1.9 Summary

It was explained that Chapter One was intended to introduce the study. Key concepts were conceptualised and the author provided a comprehensive overview of the study by discussing its background, outlining the problem being investigated, and highlighting the significance of the study as a scholarly endeavor. The discourse also included the study's aim, the study's objectives, and the study's key questions. The research methodology was briefly referred to and the structure of the dissertation was summarised. The next chapter provides a review of the literature with a specific focus on the murder phenomenon and the extent and nature of this crime in Umlazi township. The review explores the causes and the factors that contribute to murder, the challenges faced by SAPS police officers when dealing with murder cases, and also includes a review of preventive measures to curb incidences of murder in spaces such as Umlazi.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

South Africa continues to experience exceptionally high levels of both violent and non-violent crimes, with the murder rate being the highest globally. The persistent rise of murder has led to widespread concern, highlighting the urgent need for effective law enforcement and community-based interventions to promote public safety, as envisioned in the Constitution. This chapter reviews the existing literature on murder both globally and within the South African context. It aims to explore the nature and extent of murder, identify its underlying causes, examine the challenges faced by the South African Police Service (SAPS) in investigating and preventing murder, and evaluate current strategies used to address this issue.

2.2 Types of murder

Murder is regarded as the most serious form of criminal conduct as it takes away human life. According to Burchell (2013:562), “Human life and physical integrity [are] legal interests protected by criminal law”; hence, in this country, as in all other countries, it is illegal to take the life of another person. Smith and Hogan (2021) state that there are four types of murder and describe them as follows:

Homicide: This refers to an act where one person causes the death of another either through direct action or omission. Bowden and Topping (2015) state that homicide can be lawful or unlawful depending on the circumstances surrounding the killing. A homicide occurs when a volitional act or omission leads to the death of another person. It can either result from accidental, reckless, or negligent conduct, even in the absence of any intent to cause harm.

First-degree murder: This murder involves premeditation, meaning the killer deliberately planned and intended to take the victim’s life. Clarkson (2014) stated that the planning can range from detailed schemes carried out over time to decisions made shortly before the act, as long as there is clear evidence that the killing was not spontaneous. Because of its calculated nature, first-degree murder is considered one of the most heinous crimes within the legal system and is often met with the harshest penalties, including life imprisonment or, in some jurisdictions, the death penalty (Smith & Hogan, 2021). Usually, in this situation, the courts generally require a high burden of proof to establish premeditation, often relying on evidence

such as planning activities, motive, or statements made by the perpetrator before the crime occurred.

Second-degree murder: Unlike first-degree murder, this is an intentional murder, but it is not premeditated. It usually occurs spontaneously, often as a result of strong emotional provocation or during a sudden altercation (Clarkson, 2014). Although the offender may act impulsively, without prior intent, the act is considered committed to cause death or serious bodily harm, which results in the victim's death (Smith & Hogan, 2021). Despite the absence of premeditation, second-degree murder is a serious offence and generally carries a lengthy prison sentence. According to Ashworth and Horder (2013), when determining the sentence, the courts consider the context, emotional state, and degree of recklessness involved.

Manslaughter: This murder refers to the unintentional killing of another person. It can occur either voluntarily or involuntarily. Voluntary manslaughter occurs when the offender intends to harm the victim but not to cause death, whereas involuntary manslaughter arises when there is no intent to harm or kill the victim (Clarkson, 2014). The majority of manslaughter cases can happen due to recklessness or during a sudden quarrel or intense emotional state and its charges are generally less severe than those for murder, but they still come with substantial penalties.

Justifiable murder: Justifiable murder occurs when a person kills another person in self defense or to protect others. In such cases, the individual uses reasonable and necessary force to prevent imminent harm, serious injury, or death. Unlike other forms of unlawful killing, justifiable murder is not treated as a criminal offence, as it is considered an act of legal necessity rather than malice or intent to cause unlawful harm (Ashworth & Horder, 2013). Hence, it is not treated as a crime and is often not subjected to prosecution. For a killing to be deemed justifiable, the threat must be immediate, and the response must be proportionate to the threat faced (Clarkson, 2014).

All the types of murder described share the fundamental element of one person causing the death of another. Regardless of whether the act was intentional, reckless, negligent, or legally justified, each involves a human death resulting from the actions or omissions of another individual. These classifications all fall under the broader legal category of homicide, which includes both lawful and unlawful killings. These types of murder require legal and moral evaluation to determine the presence or absence of intent, the circumstances surrounding the act, and the level of culpability of the offender.

2.3 Intentional/Premeditated Murder

Intentional murder is the most severe crime, with far-reaching consequences beyond the loss of human life. United National Office of Drug and Crime (2013) states that murder not only deprives the victim of the right to live but also deeply impacts the victim's family and community, who may be regarded as 'secondary victims'. Murder creates a violent environment that poses a threat to society, the economy, and government institutions. Burchell (2013) states that murder is not confined to society's margins; it affects individuals of all ages, genders, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Therefore, as the act of murder has an impact on people from all spheres of life, all its facets need to be explored and analysed to better understand and possibly curb this phenomenon.

Wallace (2023) emphasises that murder is significant not only due to the severity of the crime but also because it serves as one of the most measurable and comparable indicators for tracking violent deaths. The latter author argues that, due to its lethal outcome, murder is defined more precisely than many other crimes across different historical and national contexts and warrants universal condemnation. To determine the extent of murder in any given context, statistics that are recorded at both national and regional levels are relatively reliable and valid for comparison over time and across countries (UNODC, 2019). As a readily measurable indicator, murder serves as a reasonable proxy for violent crime and a strong indicator of the overall levels of violence within a country. To accurately assess the scale of murder, it is essential to have a clear definition that specifies which acts of killing are classified as murder.

According to Beckett (2021), contextual challenges emerge when distinguishing intentional killings from other forms of homicide during collective violence, such as armed conflicts or civil unrest. The International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), offers a framework for defining and categorizing unlawful killings in both conflict and non-conflict contexts. Murder is defined by UNODC (2019:13) as the “unlawful death inflicted upon a person with the intent to cause death or serious injury”. This definition contains three elements that classify the killing of a person as murder, as will be discussed below. This definition comprises three components that categorize the act of killing someone as murder, as will be discussed below.

2.3.1 The intentional killing of a person by another

This category emphasises that an individual may kill another individual voluntarily, or premeditatively. South African law does not necessarily identify the unlawful method by which human life may be ended, but it emphasises the voluntary and even involuntarily act of the killing of a person by another, which is prohibited. The unlawful method of killing a person is an aggravating factor if the perpetrator is found guilty of this offense. Burchell (2013) argues that murder is causing the death of a person by the direct administration of force to the victim's body such as stabbing, shooting, beating, or poisoning, but death can also be caused indirectly, which may be intentional or unintentional. Such a death may be caused by reckless driving, for instance.

2.3.2 The intent of the perpetrator to kill the victim

A person is criminally culpable if he/she possesses the mental ability to distinguish between what is right and wrong. Swanepoel et al. (2014) allude that criminal capacity is present when distinguishing between right and wrong and acting under such insight. Snyman (2018:181) adds that "a person acts intentionally when they aim to commit an act or cause a result, knowing and understanding that it is unlawful". Snyman (2018) further explains that determining culpability in a murder requires two elements: the *intention* to commit the act and the *mental state* of the accused. Swanepoel et al. (2014) identify two types of intention: direct intention (*dolus directus*) and indirect intention (*dolus eventualis*). Burchell (2013) defines *dolus directus* as an act when a person commits an offense with the purpose of using an object or substance (such as poison) to kill another person, while in *dolus eventualis*, a person foresees the risk of the death of another person occurring but nevertheless continues with the act, appreciating the fact that death might occur if the act is committed.

2.3.3 The unlawfulness of an act that leads to the death of a person

Unlawfulness refers to human conduct that is prohibited by law, and such acts are globally defined and described. Snyman (2018:333) defines unlawfulness as "conduct that contradicts the community's perception of justice or legal convictions". Swanepoel et al. (2014) assert that there are specific requirements to consider in determining the lawfulness of a particular conduct that may have led to the death of another. These requirements are as follows:

- The attack against which the accused defended himself or herself must be unlawful;
- The attack must be against a legal interest (legal interest includes the accused's own life and physical integrity, a third person's life, the accused's property, and a threat against personal freedom).

Swanepoel et al. (2014) further assert that the core element of murder is the complete liability of the perpetrator, which differentiates his action from killings related to armed conflicts and war, suicides, killings due to legal interventions, and justifiable murder (such as self-defense), and from deaths caused by reckless or negligent actions which were not intended to take human life (non-intentional murder).

2.4 The Nature and Extent of Murder

It is undeniable that violence has become a reality that is experienced by many South Africans and by people in the rest of the world. In South Africa, various sources recorded and described the extent of murder in national, regional, and community contexts. This is a country that has to deal with unique and complex dynamics surrounding violence and crime (Stein, 2017), and the murders that occur daily are rarely solved. The country has a reputation as one of the most dangerous countries in the world, and Hoosen (2021) affirms that the murder rate in South Africa is one of the highest globally.

To understand South Africa's high levels of crime and violence, these phenomena must be analysed within the context in which these crimes occur. McCafferty and Action (2021) assert that murder is a prevalent phenomenon and that it is likely to stay this way as long as such cases remain unsolved and unattended and the perpetrators walk away scot-free. Gillespie (2014) asserts that murder understandably gives rise to fear and anxiety, arguing that issues surrounding the government's response to violence have become highly charged politically. It is an unfortunate fact that murder is regarded as the most common violent crime in South Africa. People from all spheres of life and in both rural and urban areas are exposed to the risk of falling victim to murder. Generally, people perceive murder as the extreme outcome of an assault or as an unfortunate circumstance due to an argument of some kind. It is also committed during robberies and burglaries and is often the outcome of rape (Stein, 2017).

The extent of murder, with specific reference to the rate of murder in South Africa, has become so overwhelming that employing special safety measures to avoid falling victim to perpetrators has become a necessity if the safety of this country’s citizens is to be ensured. Previously reviewed literature has demonstrated that murder is a universal and frequently occurring type of crime that affects the entire South African population, and murder cases trigger negative emotions such as fear and anxiety.

De Kock, Kriegler, and Shaw (2015) indicated that the national murder statistics showed that South Africa’s murder rate had decreased by more than 50% from 1995 to 2011. According to UNODC (2013:33), “the murder rate dropped significantly from 64.9 per 100 000 to 30.0 per 100 000 people between the period 1995 and 2011”. However, in 2012 murder counts and murder rates started rising steadily. This increase is evident in the Annual Crime Statistics Report (2022/2023), where 17032 murders were recorded in South Africa in 2013/14. Then, in 2014/15, the total number of murders increased by 782 to 17,804. The following year, 2015/16, saw an additional 868 murders, bringing the total to 18,673. In 2016/17, the murder count rose by 343 to reach 19,016, and in 2017/18, the upward trend continued with an increase of 1,320, resulting in 20,366 murders. Over these past years, murder has increased consistently.

Table 2: Five countries with the highest per capita rates of murder in 2022

Country	Year	Number of Murders	Population (estimated)
South Africa	2022	25 181	60 604 994
Venezuela	2022	12 107	28 199 867
Jamaica	2022	1 498	2 827 700
St Vincent & the Grenadines	2022	42	104 332

Source: ISS analysis of available homicide data

According to the Annual Crime Statistics Report (2022), the number of murders reported in 2022 was 74% higher than what had been recorded in the 2011/2012 financial year, when 15 554 murders were recorded. In 2022, South Africa’s murder rate was 44.7 per 100 000 of

the population. At the time, it had last been that high 20 years before, in 2002. According to international data of that time, South Africa had a higher per capita murder rate than the US (FBI, 2022). This escalating trend in the murder rate in South Africa affirms that murder in this country is a momentous issue that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

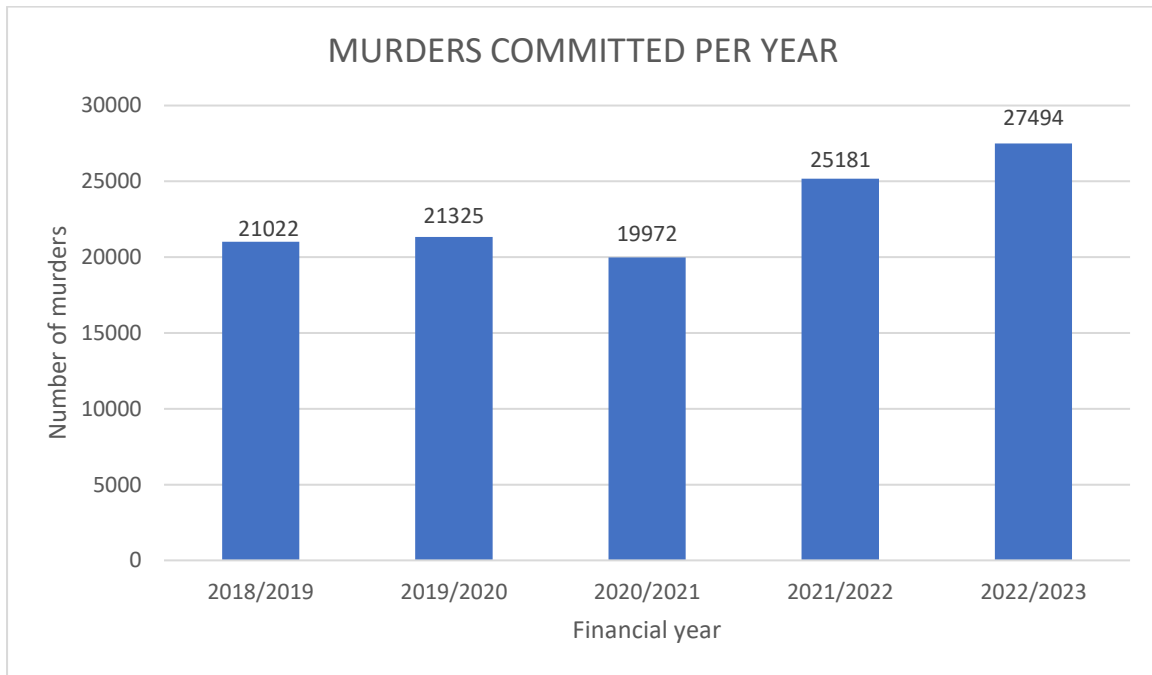


Figure 1: Bar graph illustrating the rates of murder committed from 2018 to 2023

Source: Analysis based on SAPS Annual Crime Statistics, 2023

The data depicted in Figure 1 above show that, from 2018 to 2023, incidences of murder increased consistently each year, except for a drop in the 2020/2021 period when there was a 6.3% decrease in the murder rate. This can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic during which the country was in lockdown and people spent most of their time indoors with their families. However, in 2021 the murder rate rose rapidly after the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic was over. The number of murders increased from 19 972 in 2020/2021 to 25 181 in 2021/2022, which means that, on average, 88 people were murdered every day in the latter period in South Africa (*The Citizen*, 2021). This was an increase of 5 209 murder cases from the previous survey period. When South Africa’s statistics for the end of the 2022/2023 financial year were released, an increase of 2 313 murder cases was noted as there were 27 494

murder cases in 2023. It is noteworthy that, after South Africa’s recovery from COVID-19, there has been a noticeable increase in murder cases.

According to SAPS crime statistics (2023) presented by the Minister of Police, it was revealed that South Africa’s murder rate had increased by 11.5% in the first quarter of 2023 compared with the same period of the previous year. The first quarter statistics of 2022/2023 showed that as many as 6 424 people had been murdered, which translated into an increase of 664 more being murdered in 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. Crime statistics for the second quarter of 2023 (1 July to 30 September) showed that 7 004 people had been killed in South Africa. This was an increase of 841 people who had been murdered compared to the same period in 2022. This was also an increase of 540 murders compared to the previous quarter. Presenting the third quarter crime statistics for the period October to December in 2023, Minister Bheki Cele revealed that 7 710 murders had been committed in these three months, which translated into 1 285 more killings than in the first quarter. Compared to the same period the previous year (October to December 2022), murder had increased by 2.1% as 155 more people had been murdered. It is undeniable that this increase in murder cases is a disturbing phenomenon that should be explored in all spheres and disciplines, which this study set out to do.

Table 3: Comparative murder rate per province between 2021/2022 and 2022/2023

Province	2021/2022	2022/2023	Difference in Total Number of Murders	Percentage Increase or Decrease (%)
Eastern Cape	4 407	5 150	743	+6,9%
Free State	992	979	-13	-1,3%
Gauteng	5570	6 411	841	+15,1%
KwaZulu-Natal	6 495	6 947	452	+7,0%
Limpopo	1 012	1 013	1	+0,1%
Mpumalanga	1 201	1 344	143	+11,9%
North West	1 029	1 108	79	+7,7%
Northern Cape	366	392	26	+7,1%
Western Cape	4 109	4 150	41	+1,0%
South Africa	25 181	27 494	2 313	+9,2%

Source: SAPS Annual Crime Report, 2022/2023

These statistics show that, in the surveyed period, eight provinces recorded an increase in murders. The highest increase occurred in Gauteng (15,1% or 841 more), Mpumalanga (11,9% or 143 more), KwaZulu-Natal (7% or 452 more), and Eastern Cape (6,9% or 743 more). Free State province was the only province to record a decline in murder cases, as it recorded 13 murders fewer than in the previous period. Murders in KwaZulu-Natal in the same period (25,3% or 6 947), Gauteng (23,3% or 6 411), Eastern Cape (18,7% or 5 150), and Western Cape (15,1% or 4 150) contributed to a combined 82,4% or a total of 22 658 murders in South Africa, with KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng together contributing nearly half (48,6% or 13 358) of the murder incidences. The Free State province can be singled out and commended for being able to register a reduction in the number of people murdered during this period.

When comparing SAPS crime reports from 2020 to 2023, KwaZulu-Natal had more murders than any other province. During the three years from 2019/2020 to 2022/2023, murders in the province increased by 57% from 4 859 to 6 947. In 2021/2022, KZN recorded 1 670 more murders than in 2020/2021. This dramatic increase of 1 670 murders in 2021/2022 was believed to be linked to the unrest in KwaZulu-Natal in July 2021, but no more than 300 murders related to the unrest were recorded in the province during that event. The 2021/2022 trend also continued in 2022/2023, with a further increase to 6 947 murders. Therefore, the major surge can be linked to factors other than the July unrest. The above-mentioned statistics show that instead of decreasing, the murder rate has been increasing at a rapid rate in eight provinces. These data indicate that the murder rate in South Africa has reached extreme levels, which is a dire issue that causes grave concern.

The murder phenomenon impacts all residential and business communities as it is rife, escalating, and pervasive. Umlazi Township in particular faces a horrific pandemic of murder. The Umlazi and Plessislaer police stations in KwaZulu-Natal and Mthatha respectively have recorded the highest numbers of murder cases during the first quarter of 2022 as they accounted for 221 such cases. Umlazi Township in Durban has a large population and the murder rate is therefore significantly higher here than in other areas. The extent of murder in Umlazi is a matter of serious concern as it continues to rise rapidly and alarmingly. According to SAPS Quarterly Crime Statistics (2021) released by Police Minister Bheki Cele, the Umlazi police station was on the list of police stations recording some of the highest murder statistics in the country. Only Kraaifontein and Delft (both in the Western Cape) had higher counts of murder.

The minister also revealed that 74 people in Umlazi had been killed between April and July 2021. In brief, murder trends have substantially increased over the last few years, to the extent that communities are numbed and many have normalised this crime as they have become accustomed to living in fear as they have witnessed many deaths and/or have been the victims of crimes themselves.

Makhaye and Mkhize (2021) state that Umlazi is one of the capitals of murder and other violent crimes in the KwaZulu-Natal province. As a case in point, 11 people were killed in two different hits in Zamani informal settlement in one foul sweep. Incidents like this have caused unease and terror in this township and people are fearful to talk about it. SAPS Crime Statistics that were released in June 2022 showed that, in KwaZulu-Natal, the highest numbers of murders were reported in the areas surrounding the Umlazi, Inanda, and Plessislaer police stations. Between January and March 2022, 103 murders were reported in Umlazi, which was a 68% increase compared to the same period the previous year (2021). SAPS crime statistics (2022) also revealed that from April 2021 to March 2022, Umlazi took first place in terms of murder rates with a total number of 201 murders recorded in 2021 compared to the 349 murders recorded in 2022. Community Policing Forum Chairperson, Mandlenkosi Ngcobo, said on 31 March 2022 that the police were concerned about the high number of murders committed in Umlazi. Disturbingly, murders were reported every week. SAPS statistics also showed that the number of murders increased each quarter in Umlazi.

More recently, an SAPS Media Statement (2024) revealed that police in KwaZulu-Natal had launched a massive manhunt for the suspects who had shot and killed four people in the Uganda informal settlement in Umlazi on Thursday night, 28 March 2024. A group of friends were drinking alcohol inside a shack when at least six suspects stormed in and demanded cell phones. The victims reportedly refused to hand over their cellphones and one of the suspects drew a firearm and shot three people. As the perpetrators were leaving the crime scene, the suspects allegedly met another man who was walking to the shack from a pit latrine and they shot him dead after he had refused to surrender his cellphone. All the victims were declared deceased at the scene. The suspects are unknown at this stage but the motive for the killings is yet to be established, although robbery could not be ruled out.

The above information affirms that murder is indeed rife in Umlazi. The blasé attitude of perpetrators leads to escalating rates of murder as they commit this crime with impunity, which

is a matter of deep concern that calls for attention because numerous residents are at risk of falling victim to murder if the situation is not brought under control.

2.4.1 Weapons that are most commonly used to commit murder

As mentioned above, South Africa has shown a significant increase in murder rates in 2022. Murder and the threat of being murdered remain grim realities. Currently, murder ranks as the third leading cause of death in this country (Centers for Disease Control, 2019). This is a sobering reminder that violent crime continues to pose a significant threat to public safety. Therefore, it is crucial to inform South African citizens about the most common murder weapons in the country. This is done not to incite fear, but rather to empower individuals to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and their loved ones. The researcher contends that being aware of these statistics is a way forward to creating a safer and more secure society for all.

According to South African Crime Statistics 2022/2023, different types of weapons have been used to murder in South Africa. Of the 27 494 murders that were committed in 2023, supplementary data were collected for 24 922 of these incidents to determine the type of weapon that was used. These included different firearms and non-firearms such as knives and machete-like weapons. Parts of the body were also used as weapons, such as people's hands, fists, and booted feet. Different types of firearms were used such as handguns, rifles, and shotguns.

According to Alpha and Glaze (2021), a firearm is a weapon that employs gunpowder to launch a bullet. According to Zimring (2018), a handgun refers to a firearm that has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired by the use of a single hand, while a rifle is a firearm designed to be fired from the shoulder, utilizing explosive energy to discharge a single projectile through a rifled bore with each pull of the trigger. In contrast, a shotgun is also fired from the shoulder but is engineered to use explosive energy to fire either multiple pellets or a single projectile through a smooth bore for each trigger pull (Zimring, 2018).

South African Crime Statistics (2021) collected data on the types of weapons used in 24 922 murders across Africa in 2023, and it was revealed that 20 258 of the homicides committed in this period had been committed using firearms. Although so many firearms were used, only

594 of these murders were committed using rifles, including assault rifles (Zawitz, 2016). Below is a pie chart that illustrates the types of weapons that were used in these murders.

Percentages of weapons used to commit murder

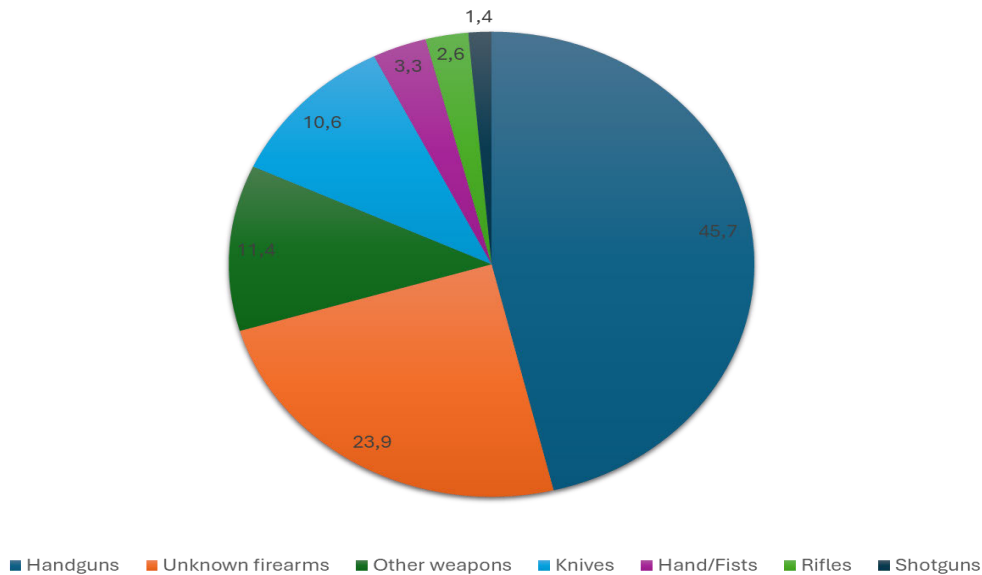


Figure 2: Percentages of weapons used to commit murder

Source: Analysis by researcher based on Statista Research (2023) on Homicide

The pie chart indicates that handguns (45.7%) were the most preferred weapon used in the murder of victims nationwide. As nearly a quarter of the murderers used an unknown type of firearm, the latter percentage is likely to be even higher. The next category on the list is non-firearms, or the ‘other weapons’ category. Such weapons included blunt objects, poison, explosives, fire, and narcotics which were used in 11.4% of the murders. Next on the list of weapon types are knives and other cutting instruments that were used in 10.6% of all murders. However, firearms were used in three-quarters (75%) of all murders, but in this category, very few murders were committed using assault-type rifles.

2.4.2 Handguns

According to Smith (2023), most people were killed when a handgun was used whereas, in incidents involving a rifle, people were mostly shot and wounded. About 26% of those shot with a handgun had more than one fatal wound, while only 2% were shot with a rifle and killed. Handguns were also associated with brain and heart injuries. These findings suggest that handguns are the most lethal of all firearms when murder is committed.

According to Statista Research Department (2023), handguns accounted for 6 012 murders in 2023, and this rate was 2 000 more than the homicide rate for undetermined gun deaths. The next category is firearms of an unknown type that were used in 4 740 cases that year.

According to Zawitz (2016), handguns can be categorised into two types:

- Revolvers: These weapons are commonly referred to as ‘wheel guns’. Revolvers typically hold about six rounds of ammunition.
- Semi-automatics guns: These handguns come in varying sizes and use different caliber bullets. Smaller guns can hold 7 to 10 rounds while larger ones can hold upwards of 15 rounds in their magazines.

Two of the reasons for the popularity of handguns are their ease of concealment and their accessibility in homes that are targeted for robbery. A survey of prison inmates that was conducted by Alpha and Glaze (2019) revealed that handguns were the most frequently used firearms and many had been smuggled into prisons for use by inmates. In fact, in their survey, approximately 18% of the inmates reported possessing or having possessed a handgun, while only 2% or fewer reported possessing a rifle or shotgun.

2.4.3 Knives and other cutting instruments as the second most used weapons

Knives and other cutting instruments are among the most common murder weapons in South Africa for several reasons. Important factors associated with knives and machetes-type weapons are that they are easily accessible, as most households have such items. This wide accessibility of bladed weapons makes them an attractive option for those seeking to threaten and even harm their victims physically. In fact, on average, over 1 500 people are murdered with a knife each year in South Africa, making it the second most-used weapon to commit a murder (Gillespie, 2014). However, when the focus of the literature is considered, much focus is on gun violence while little attention is focused on knife violence.

Research has shown that victims and offenders of homicides in South Africa significantly differ from groups that are involved in firearm homicides. Pelletier and Pizarro (2019) state that victims and offenders of knife violence are more likely to be female, less likely to be minorities, and significantly older than those involved in firearm violence. In addition, victims and

offenders in cases of knife homicides are more likely to be closely related to one another, indicating that the problem of knife violence in South Africa is associated with domestic violence rather than with typical street crimes that involve firearms (Pelletier & Pizarro, 2019).

In light of the discussion above, the researcher contends that a better and more nuanced understanding of the factors that contribute to knife violence may lead to effective strategies for the prevention of and reduction of incidents that result in murder. Hence, enhanced knowledge of the murder phenomenon in this country may ultimately help to save lives and ensure the safety of communities.

2.4.4 Gender and Murder

Both genders have been cited in murder statistics. However, South African women are six times more likely than the global average to be slain, and men are much more likely than women to be both the victim and offender of homicides. A Global study by UNODC (2019) on homicide found that intentional murder victims were males who constituted about 97% of all murder perpetrators worldwide. In South Africa, the Victim of Crime Survey (2019) revealed that 79% of all murder victims were males. Historically, female victims of murder were given less attention than their male counterparts as this gender accounted for a lower percentage of homicides than men (Center, 2014).

According to UNODC (2019), rising homicide rates almost always go hand in hand with a widening gender gap. This argument suggests that the larger the number of killings becomes, the higher the proportion of male victims and perpetrators becomes. This 'rule' means that a change in murder rates can usually be explained as a change in rates of male offending. Men are not only more likely to fall victim to murder, but they are also more likely to be the perpetrators of murder than women. Josephine, Andrew, and Stephen (2019) state that the highest rate of male homicide occurs among those aged between fifteen (15) and forty-five (45), arguing that this is because men are the ones who pursue masculine ideals. Center (2014) further adds that men generally became the victims of murder in entertainment contexts where alcohol was consumed.

In South Africa alone, the murders that were committed at a rapidly increasing rate between 2021 and 2022 involved mostly men and boys (80%). The strongest driver of this escalating

rate could be attributed to gang conflicts in which both perpetrators and victims were highly likely to be male (UNODC, 2019). This notion highlights the importance of considering the differences between male-on-male murders and those involving women. Josephine et al. (2019) state that murders involving men tend to be instigated to a large extent by socio-political developments, drug markets, and other volatile factors that cause spikes in killings.

2.4.5 Women as victims of murder

Women and girls generally fall victim to murder as a result of gendered norms. Female homicides are committed in a variety of contexts and through different mechanisms. In broad terms, the killing of women and girls can be divided into two categories: those that are perpetrated within the family and those that are perpetrated outside the family sphere. Dobash (2017) found that the vast majority of murder cases involving women fell under the first category, as family members or partners were the core perpetrators of these killings. Sadly, the culprits were generally people whom these women had trusted and even loved. Family killings frequently result from severe experiences of domestic violence which is a phenomenon that includes psychological, sexual, and physical abuse (UNODC, 2019).

Even though the majority of murdered victims were male, as was stated earlier, the majority of the victims of intimate partner and family-related murders were women (Center, 2014). According to UNODC (2020), in a global study about gender-related killings, approximately 47 000 women and girls were killed worldwide by their intimate partners or other family members in the UNODC survey conducted in 2020. This means that, on average, a woman or girl was killed by someone in her own family every 11 minutes. According to UNODC (2020), among the total of 47 000 females who were the victims of homicide in 2020, Asia accounted for the largest number of female intimate partner and family-related killings at an estimated 18 600 victims. This was followed by Africa at 18 100 and the Americas at 7 300 victims. Europe accounted for 2 600 female intimate partner/family-related killings in 2020, while Oceania recorded the lowest rate at 300 victims (UNODC, 2020). This overall number was of course based on the numbers of victims in different populations of different sizes across the world.

Globally, an estimated 81 100 women and girls were killed intentionally in 2021, and around 45 000 women and girls were killed by their intimate partners or other family members

worldwide (UNODC, 2022). Meaning, on average, more than five women or girls are killed every hour by someone in their own families (Center, 2014).

While the overwhelming majority of male murders occurred outside the private sphere, for women and girls the most dangerous place was the home. In 2021, 81% of males and 19% of females were victims of murder (UNODC, 2020). It is also important to note that 11% of males were killed by intimate partners or family members while 56% of females were killed in the family or friend context. It is therefore pertinent to argue that females are less likely to fall victim to murder than males, although a significant percentage of female homicides occurred as a result of domestic violence (SAPS Crime Statistics, 2022). This suggests that murders involving women tend to be determined by long-term issues such as gender roles, social norms, the status of women in society, discrimination, and gender (in)equality. It is noteworthy that these factors point to less volatile murders than those that men were exposed to, and that the rate at which women were killed tended to be more humane and stable (Center, 2014).

Unfortunately, the rate at which women are abused, violated, and killed in South Africa remains worrying and unacceptable. SAPS Crime Statistics (2023) have shown that many women were killed by people they knew and people they loved and trusted. The SAPS First Quarter Crime Statistics for 2022/2023 reported a total of 6,424 murders, with 897 female victims, representing 13.96% of all murders. In the second quarter, murders increased to 7,004, with 989 female victims, accounting for 14.12% of the total. However, in the third quarter, while murders rose further to 7,710, the number of female victims dropped to 706, which amounts to only 9.16% of the total. While the total number of murders increased steadily from the first to the third quarter, the percentage of female victims dropped significantly in the third quarter. In the first and second quarters, there is a consistent trend of female victimization which indicates that women were more frequently targeted in domestic or gender-based violence incidents. However, the sharp decline to 9.16% in the third quarter, despite an increase in total murders, signals a rise in other forms of violence, possibly disproportionately affecting male victims.

2.5 Factors that contribute to murder

For most people, murder is an inconceivable act, however, its origins lie in human emotions. This issue has garnered significant attention both domestically and internationally, raising concerns about the safety and security of its citizens. Most murders take place in a public place, such as on a street, in an open field, in a parking area, or at the residence of the victim and places known to the victim and perpetrator. This part of the study will look into the intricate

and multifaceted factors contributing to the prevalence of murder globally. Identifying a single motivation for murder is extremely challenging, as the behavior of a murderer can develop through several interactions with the victim(s) over an extended period. Understanding why murder occurs is of critical importance as it has significant implications for both the prevention and management of this crime. By determining what leads to the act of committing a murder, society can help authorities to devise strategies to prevent or mediate this behaviour.

Murder is influenced by multiple factors at individual, relational, community, and societal levels. The demographic structure is a well-recognized risk factor for murder and societies with a higher proportion of young people, especially young males, generally experience higher murder rates compared to those with a larger female population. Murders are frequently committed during arguments, in public, and between strangers. The causative factors of these deaths include socio-economic factors, environmental factors, psychological factors, relationship factors, and motivational factors, which will all be briefly discussed below.

2.5.1 Socio-economic factors as drivers of murder

A major factor behind high global murder rates is deep-rooted in socio-economic disparity. Despite having enjoyed thirty years of democracy, this nation is still notorious as one of the most unequal worldwide. This inequality is marked by significant gaps in wealth and income, education levels, and the inability to deliver essential services (Josiphine et al., 2019). Widespread unemployment, especially among young people, fuels social discontent and unlawful behaviour and even encourages murder. According to Langa and Bowman (2017), the absence of economic prospects sustains cycles of poverty and despair, prompting certain individuals to resort to crime for survival or social dominance.

2.5.1.1 Income inequality

A study of income inequality in the United States and panel data from the States provided evidence that income inequality increases murder rates. The study was a cross-sectional analysis and it found that income inequality was a very strong and significant predictor of murder rates. Kazeem (2020) states that the impacts of income inequality on social integration, efficient social control, and the social learning perspective provide valuable insights into how income inequality influences violence. In an unequal society where class and status hinder equal participation, social integration diminishes (Langa & Bowman, 2017). As a result, there

is a heightened prevalence of persistent frustration and stress as individuals strive to attain and uphold a socially esteemed way of life. These feelings of frustration and stress contribute to the erosion of communal standards and individual ethics, frequently culminating in antisocial conduct.

Langa and Bowman (2017) asserted that excessive income inequality weakens effective social control by limiting resources in economically disadvantaged areas, which in turn reduces the capacity for robust law enforcement or proactive measures to address underlying structural issues. Elevated crime rates further erode public safety and necessitate increased investment in policing and prevention, yet the persistent effects of crime are challenging and expensive to mitigate. As per Josephine et al. (2019), the learning perspective effectively links income inequality and violent behaviour as individuals across societies tend to strive for material goods possession which symbolizes success, yet individuals in an unequal society feel deprived in relative terms because the prospects of upward mobility are minimal for those at the bottom. Overall, income inequality seems to have a strong and significant effect on violence and should not be ruled out as a public health concern.

2.5.1.2 High unemployment rate

South Africa has a large percentage of unemployed people. Some of these people have been well-trained for specific jobs but cannot find employment. Mazorodze and Nsiah (2020) state that the inability of individuals to obtain legitimate employment fosters immense frustration, particularly when marginalized groups are situated amidst more successful individuals. It then becomes hard for unemployed people to maintain a satisfactory lifestyle and to support their families if they have no income. Nordin and Almén (2017) add that being unemployed leads to financial difficulties, which can create stress and desperation. So, individuals who face severe economic strain may resort to criminal activities, and some may be inclined to engage in violent crimes resulting in murder. They may be complicit either as they adopt criminal activities as a means of survival or because when conflict arises due to a financial dispute.

The link between unemployment and poverty is the loss of income due to unemployment. Not having a job while living in poverty exposes people to criminal opportunities as they spend a lot of their time doing nothing while living in an environment where crime is prevalent and such acts are often executed with impunity. This exposure has turned many unemployed individuals into criminals because they fail to achieve material success which is frustrating due

to economic deprivation. This condition consequently fosters retaliatory criminal tendencies (Mazorodze & Nsiah, 2020). Many poor people have therefore developed ways of obtaining money illegally to alleviate their financial problems and support their families. Many do this simply because they wish to and can live ‘the good life’.

2.5.2 Environmental factors

Environmental factors encompass the external elements and circumstances encircling individuals, communities, and populations, and they have the potential to affect people’s behaviour, health, welfare, and development (World Health Organisation, 2010). In the context of murder and aggressive behaviour, these factors are pivotal in molding individuals' mindsets, beliefs, and actions, frequently intertwining with personal traits and situational cues to impact the probability of violent results. Below are some environmental factors that have been identified as potential contributors to murder.

2.5.2.1 Mob justice or vigilantism

Mob justice is a traditional way for communities to deal with criminals and the high level of crime in the country (Lancaster, 2017). According to Botha (2015), some people are unwilling to report crime and therefore resort to taking the law into their own hands as a form of mob justice, community retaliation, or vigilantism. Such acts have an impact on the murder rate in South Africa because suspected offenders are often killed in these incidences. Justice does not always prevail. Sometimes the bad guy wins, especially in situations that closely reflect the real world. According to Lancaster (2017), the collapse of effective policing in townships and informal settlements has seen a rise in vigilante ‘justice’.

Currently, the number of people suspected of crimes who are killed arbitrarily and brutally is growing. Thus, it is a growing concern that law enforcement and the Criminal Justice System (CJS) are failing to bring justice to the victims of crime. This failure angers the community and often results in a vigilante-type execution which occurs when someone who committed (or is accused of committing) a crime gets off with light or no punishment (Botha, 2015). That person is then targeted in acts of extrajudicial payback or punishment for that crime. Most mob justice perpetrators were the victims or family members of the victims of crime, and because they are not satisfied with the justice system, they target offenders who were released due to lack of evidence. Botha (2015) states that the failure of the formal justice system to prosecute and

convict perpetrators of crime is the core reason why people take matters into their own hands. These people believe that their response, although illegal, will bring justice to the victims of crime, and some of their acts result in murder.

2.5.2.2 Substance misuse and access to firearms

Corrigall (2012) states that another driver of murders is excessive alcohol consumption. Alcohol has been linked to homicides as intoxication impairs judgment, reduces inhibitions, and exacerbates underlying psychological issues, leading to an increased risk of aggressive or violent behaviour (World Health Organisation, 2018). Alcohol Rehab Guide (2010) states that 40% of violent crimes are due to alcohol consumption and offers four reasons for alcohol-associated murder. First, behavioural experiments have demonstrated that alcohol increases aggression in the consumer. Secondly, heavy drinkers are more likely to commit alcohol-related violent offenses than light drinkers or non-drinkers. Kiama (2022) further adds that murder suspects admitted to committing murder when they were under the influence of alcohol. Thirdly, criminal assaults and murders tend to occur around licensed and unlicensed premises where individuals consume alcohol and drugs freely. Hence, areas where high rates of alcohol consumption occur tend to have high rates of violence.

Corrigall (2012) also found a strong relationship between alcohol stores and gun assaults. The increase in statistics on gun violence associated with alcohol consumption is one of the most significant reasons why possessing a gun while drunk is illegal. This is simply because alcohol and firearms, especially together, have been shown to drive both fatal and non-fatal acts of violence. According to Alcohol Rehab Guide (2010), over 50% of murder victims tested positive for alcohol, and studies of femicide have shown that the bulk of both victims and perpetrators had alcohol in their systems at the time of the crime. Moreover, the presence of firearms has been identified as the leading cause of death among youth in South Africa, while the rate of women killed in firearm-related incidents is the highest in the world (Langa & Bowman, 2017).

Alcohol remains widely consumed in social settings. Hence, high unemployment rates, coupled with dense populations, have been linked to an increased demand for alcohol. Additionally, the prevalence of informal trading and criminal supply networks complicates the regulation of alcohol production and distribution in the country (Kiama, 2022). In South Africa's patriarchal

context, the interplay of alcohol, firearms, and idealised notions of masculinity significantly elevates the risk of murder (Zimring, 2018).

2.5.2.3 Gang violence and drug trade

Gang-related murders are a significant problem in many countries worldwide, and South Africa is no exception. Gangs frequently participate in drug trafficking, acts of revenge killings, and territorial conflict (Wallace, 2023). Drug markets are linked to violent crimes, especially murder. This is because drug traders often resort to violence as a means of competing for customers and drug markets, as well as to resolve disputes (Howell, 2015). The only solution to territorial possession is to spill the blood of those who stand in their way. Ward (2022) states that the strong association between drugs and murder has been well documented through the presentation of a comprehensive model that identifies three potential causal mechanisms that have been adapted to explain the connection between drugs and murder.

According to UNODC (2019:29), the three mechanisms that link drugs to murder are:

- The psychopharmacological mechanism refers to the heightened propensity for individuals to engage in violent crimes while affected by psychoactive substances.
- The economic-compulsive mechanism occurs when individuals dependent on substances commit acquisitive crimes, such as robbery, to support their habits. The relationship between drug use and both acquisitive and violent crimes partially reflects the known effects of drugs on the brain and their potential for inducing dependence. Overall, there is substantial evidence supporting a connection between drug use and acquisitive crime.
- The systemic mechanism primarily pertains to drugs, directly connecting homicides to the activities of drug traffickers. This mechanism is complex, as it encompasses changes that disrupt the status quo, including alterations to established routes and shifts in the balance of power among different players in the criminal landscape (Knox, Etter & Smith, 2018).

According to Howell and Decker (2016), the influence of illicit drugs on murder attracts less attention and accounts for a smaller percentage of murders than the influence of alcohol, but it is more complex. Many people who commit violent acts consume illicit drugs. Unlike alcohol, “there is little evidence that drugs such as heroin, cocaine, mandrax, and marijuana exert any

direct pharmacological effect on an individual's propensity to engage in crime" (Knox et al., 2018). In any event, the initiation of criminal involvement often occurs before engaging in illicit drug use. This has led some to suggest that illicit drug use and murder are merely different expressions of deviant behavior, rather than being directly causally linked.

However, illicit drug use almost certainly contributes to violent crimes, but it does not compel a significant number of otherwise law-abiding individuals to turn to crime. Weatherburn (2022) identifies two primary sources of influence from illicit drug consumption. Firstly, many individuals already engaged in criminal activities tend to commit more serious offenses after developing a drug dependency. This is often because offenders addicted to costly illicit substances usually resort to higher rates of property crime to support their habit. Secondly, evidence indicates that competition among drug suppliers for dominance in illegal drug markets sometimes leads suppliers to resort to violence to achieve their objectives. In other cases, violence normally escalates to murder.

2.5.3 Psychological factors

Psychological factors refer to various aspects of an individual's mental and emotional state that influence their behaviour, thoughts, and emotions (Teicher & Samson, 2016). These psychological issues cover a broad spectrum of components including cognitive processes, narcissism, attitudes, perception, and personality traits, which exacerbate these emotions and increase the likelihood of violent behaviour (Kazeem, 2020). Understanding the intricate web of psychological factors contributing to murder is crucial for prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation efforts. Therefore, this section scrutinises the multifaceted nature of murder by exploring various psychological factors that underpin violent behaviours.

2.5.3.1 Childhood trauma

Childhood experiences of abuse, neglect, witnessing violence, or growing up in a dysfunctional family environment have profound and long-lasting effects on a person's mental health and behaviour (Kazeem, 2020). These experiences lead to the development of psychological disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety disorders, or personality disorders. Teicher and Samson (2016) argue that individuals who have experienced childhood trauma struggle with emotional regulation, impulse control, and interpersonal relationships. They may internalise feelings of anger, resentment, powerlessness, shame,

and/or inadequacy, which can manifest in violent or aggressive behaviour later in life under certain circumstances.

2.5.3.2 Personality Disorders

Individuals with certain personality disorders, such as antisocial personality disorder (ASPD) or borderline personality disorder (BPD), exhibit traits such as impulsivity, lack of empathy, difficulty controlling anger, and disregard for societal norms. The combination of such traits increases the likelihood of acting violently in certain situations, including those that escalate to murder, as individuals may lack remorse or empathy for their victims (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

2.5.3.3 Psychotic disorders

Psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia or delusional disorder, can distort an individual's perception of reality, leading to hallucinations, paranoid ideation, or delusions of persecution. In severe cases, individuals experiencing psychotic symptoms may act on their delusions, resulting in violent acts such as homicide (National Institute of Mental Health, 2020).

2.5.3.4 Anger

Anger is also mentioned as a driver that contributes to the murder. Everyone feels angry from time to time, but people express their anger in different ways. Scott (2017) asserts that anger is usually evoked from being harmed or having a goal blocked. He also argues that persons who experience severe, chronic challenges and trauma tend to experience more intense anger than others. Moreover, anger makes people more sensitive and confrontational to potential threats which then create unnecessary conflicts. According to Lindergaard (2017), the majority of people commit crimes on impulse or out of fear or rage. Therefore, many murders occurred on impulse at the spur of the moment when emotions ran high or when the perpetrator had the desire for control and power. Lindergaard (2017) further argues that frustration can also yield anger that leads to murder. A root cause of murder is also frustration which produces anger, anxiety, conflict, and the eruption of violence.

2.5.4 Motivational factors

Motivational factors are forces that initiate, sustain and direct human behaviour towards achieving certain goals or fulfilling specific needs. These factors vary greatly among individuals and can be influenced by various internal and external factors such as personal values, beliefs, desires, the social environment, and cultural norms. Some common motivational factors include the desire for achievement, recognition, autonomy, affiliation, power, and personal growth (Rauthmann, 2016). Understanding these factors is crucial as they play a significant role in shaping behaviour and decision-making. Motivational factors are explored in more detail below.

2.5.4.1 Arguments and Misunderstandings

Smith (2020) indicated that misunderstandings, arguments, or disputes in domestic and recreational environments are the primary causes of murder. In the majority of murder cases in which the police had enough information to establish possible motives or causes, it was found that 42% could be attributed to arguments and misunderstandings that often occurred between acquaintances or relatives (Lindegaard, 2017). Argument-related killings are far more prevalent in South Africa than they are in other countries, according to Cohen (2018). This notion is not merely supported by the number of argument-related killings that have been recorded, but also by the outcomes of various cultural beliefs. According to Cohen (2018), people tend to react more aggressively when insulted or provoked. What makes this type of behaviour more prevalent is the belief that reacting violently when being disrespected can result in gaining respect in the community and stop people from insulting the targeted individual. People who observe that such actions are condoned not only by the public but also by the laws think that it is acceptable to exude such behaviour.

2.5.4.2 Revenge or Retaliation

Revenge, as it is understood in this dissertation, refers to the complete range of vindictive thoughts, feelings, and behaviours one may experience as a consequence of a perceived transgression (Lindergaard, 2017). The desire to take revenge is a common human response to being hurt by others. Some murders occurred as a result of negative social behaviour generated by circumstances that led to a violent reaction by the perpetrator/s. Many individuals have either lost the skills to resolve conflicts peacefully or have never developed these skills due to the violent environment in which they were raised. Misunderstandings and disputes arising

from social interactions continue to be a significant direct contributor to the murder rate as people opt to take revenge on individuals who have maltreated them in any way as a way of feeling better (Kramer & Ratele, 2012). Therefore, the perpetrator planned an attack against the victim just to avenge themselves for a particular incident in which they felt harmed and betrayed.

2.5.4.3 Financial greed

Greed makes a person feel needy and driven to achieve whatever they desire, even if it leads to the death of another. However, it takes a special kind of greed to kill another person for money. According to Hickey (2003), the most obvious motive behind murders is inheritance. The seduction of a higher standard of living and earning a quick buck or having access to a large inheritance imposes on people the intention to commit murder for financial gain (Gravina, 2020). Greed and poverty are somewhat interrelated because a high rate of murder has been noted in poor economic situations. When some ruthless people are unable to contain their greed, they murder for financial benefit and to fulfil their unceasing hunger for power and status. These people tend to plan everything in advance to increase personal gain and decrease risk (Gravina, 2020). For instance, an individual can carefully plan to execute a family relative to inherit the victim's fortune, property, or something else of value. Hickey (2003) argues that money often makes everything messy, as perpetrators go as far as planning to murder their own blood to gain access to a life insurance fund. In short, some murders were committed due to excessive greed for power, material gain, and status.

2.5.5 Relationship factors

Finkel and Eckhardt (2013) state that relationship factors encompass a broad range of elements that contribute to the dynamics and quality of interpersonal connections. These factors can include communication patterns, emotional intimacy, trust, shared values, and mutual respect. Additionally, factors like compatibility, commitment, and individual personalities play significant roles in shaping relationships. The relationship factors that contribute to murder are examined below.

2.5.5.1 Domestic violence

According to Wallace (2023), domestic violence is a leading cause of homicide, particularly by women. Such murders were committed when a partner or family member had used physical, emotional, or sexual abuse to control and dominate these women. In a society where powerful patriarchy are valued but inequality restricts access to resources, frustrated masculinity can enable violence in multiple ways. One of them is gender-based violence (GBV), which involves the assertion of power and control by a person of one gender over the other. Intimate partner violence is a form of GBV. Lamb and Warton (2016) assert that the vast majority of intimate partner homicide victims have been women, stating that the term ‘uxoricide’ has been coined to refer to the entire category of domestic killings. According to UNODC (2019), females run a greater risk than men of falling victim to intimate partner homicide. According to UNODC (2013), the first global study on homicide showed that, in certain countries and particularly in South Africa, between 40 and 70% of female victims of homicide were killed by an intimate partner.

Intimate partner violence against women and girls is rooted in widely accepted gender norms about men’s authority within society, in families, and also from the use of violence by men to exert control over women (UNODC, 2013). South Africans have recently been exposed to various stories about women falling victim to murder in relationships. According to UNODC (2019), 67% of women in South Africa were killed by their spouses. These women had been in abusive relationships during which their husbands or partners tended to physically assault them. This abuse was not only physical but also emotional and sexual. In most cases, the physical abuse resulted in murder as the woman was beaten to death after making a mistake or during an argument. Alpha and Glaze (2019) state that access to firearms, an inferiority complex, infidelity, cheating, and the inability to deal with conflict in relationships can be the drivers of why intimate partners kill each other. UNODC (2019) argues that assaults by spouses or partners may lead to murder because the abused partner might have tried to defend herself, and was killed in the process. Shootings and stabbings are associated with such murders. In some cases, the spouse hired a hitman to get rid of the abusive partner because they had had enough of the abuse.

2.5.5.2 Cheating

Cheating has been a motive for murder for a long time. Lindegaard (2017) states that finding out that your partner is cheating triggers violent behaviour that quickly escalates out of control and may result in murder. Some people feel deeply betrayed by their partners when they catch them cheating. In cases of murder, anger was provoked at such a level that one partner lost control and either beat, stabbed or shot the other. Lancaster (2017) states that such responses are normally triggered by a sense of betrayal. In some murder cases, the situation had escalated to the extent that the offender shot and killed both her partner and his girlfriend, or vice versa. Cheating has undeniably played a significant role in the escalating murder rates in South Africa.

2.5.6 Situational factors

Situational factors are immediate circumstances, conditions, or events that influence behaviour, decision-making, and outcomes in a specific situation or environment (Rauthmann, 2020). These factors play a significant role in shaping human behaviour and responses to various situations as they can affect how individuals perceive, interpret, and react to stimuli, ultimately influencing their choices and actions in a given context.

2.5.6.1 Burglary and House Robbery

According to Langa and Bowman (2017), a significant number of people are murdered during robberies and burglaries. Kramer and Ratele (2012) state that some murders occurred as a result of attempted armed robberies that went wrong. The perpetrators carried guns or knives and these were used to commit murder, especially when residents were home or caught the robbers red-handed. The robbers murdered as they wanted to protect themselves at the scenes where they encountered opposition. However, such murders are considered accidental as they are not preconceived as the intention was not to kill but to rob. According to Lamb and Warton (2016), offenders target businesses and residential premises that have the valuables they want to take illegally and often by force. Lamb and Warton (2016) further add that such offenders are often informed by employees where valuables and money are kept. In such criminal acts, employees collaborate with criminals by providing them with important information to carry out the mission successfully and for them to receive some financial reward.

2.5.6.2 Carjacking

Carjacking is the theft of a motor vehicle when it is taken from the owner/driver by force. Jacobs and Cherbonneau (2023) agree, stating that carjacking is usually in the presence and with the knowledge of the victim while car theft is when the vehicle is taken without the owner's permission or presence. Therefore, according to Altbeker (2016), a factor that contributes to a high level of murder is car hijacking where a carjacker forcefully steals or robs an occupied car from its driver. The motive of a carjacker is not to commit murder, to hijack the vehicle, but these carjackers are usually ruthless and armed and will not hesitate to kill if their orders are not obeyed or if the owner of the car is a known person to avoid incriminating themselves and leaving evidence at the scene of the crime (Jacobs and Cherbonneau, 2023).

In all of the aforementioned, income inequality, vigilantism, arguments, revenge, domestic violence, house robberies, cheating or infidelity, carjacking, financial greed, substance misuse, firearms, drug trade, childhood trauma, and anger affect the murder rate in one way or another. People's decision to take justice into their own hands only pushes them to be violent. Moreover, being quick to retaliate in arguments clouds one's good judgment and prevents one from thinking about the consequences of one's actions. The loss of control over anger agitates people into doing things they could never comprehend. Being under the influence of alcohol and in possession of a firearm also pushes people to react in a violent or often fatal manner.

2.6 Challenges that murder detectives face when addressing murder

According to Rogers (2019), murder detectives experience considerable challenges when they set out to solve murder cases. According to Sibisi (2019), murder detectives experience two categories of challenges: general challenges and work challenges. Work challenges include a tight work schedule, departmental politics, dealing with family members, locating witnesses, gathering information from witnesses, locating evidence, locating suspects, interrogating suspects, and handling the media, while personal challenges include distrust, racism, coping with death, and dealing with severe danger. Rogers (2019) corroborates these experiences by detectives.

2.6.1 General challenges

Murder detectives hold the highest status among people with the rank of detective because their work is so challenging and exposed to the public (Reasons, Francis and Kim, 2010). Due to this esteemed status, being assigned to the murder unit typically requires prior experience as a

detective in another unit such as the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FSC) unit. As a result, most murder detectives have previously served in other detective roles before transferring to the murder unit (Reasons et al., 2010). Thus, the South African Police Service, like its counterparts globally, encounters a range of challenges when addressing murder in South Africa.

2.6.1.1 Safety and Wellbeing

One challenge that detectives experience when responding to a murder case is the concern for their safety and well-being (SAPS Annual Report, 2019). The SAPS Portfolio Committee on Police (2016) found that, in terms of safety, officers are at times forced to make decisions under pressure, which might compromise their safety. This is evidenced by the fact that the number of police officers killed on and off duty has been escalating to an extreme level and many police officers who work in the field fear for their lives. Moreover, the safety of police officers is not only jeopardized by the criminals they confront but also when they respond to crime scenes. SAPS Annual Report (2019) reveals that police officers who feel under threat find have become less willing to take on difficult, risky situations, while mistrust among their ranks breaks down essential community relations.

2.6.1.2 Lack of trust in the police

Another challenge that police officers encounter is the distrust of society (Skogan & Maxfield, 2014). The public has lost faith in the police as they have failed to ensure justice for the victims of crime in too many instances. The distrust between the public and the police is a severe obstacle because the police cannot do their jobs well without the cooperation and trust of the population. However, community members often resist working with police by providing information that can help them solve murder cases. This is because they fear retaliation and what the suspects will do to their families if they find out that they have ratted them out to the police. Skogan and Maxfield (2014) state that a lack of witness protection opportunities in South Africa and witnesses' distrust in the police are the main reasons why witnesses withdraw from cases at an alarming rate.

2.6.1.3 Mental health

Another challenge that SAPS officers face is the effect of their job on their mental health as murder scenes are traumatising. Sibisi (2019) argues that SAPS employees experience mental health challenges such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, general stress disorders,

the effects of substance abuse, and suicide ideation. The constant strain of being exposed to people in their most desperate emotional state may strain perceptions of the broader world and cause officers and detectives to fall into depression. Boshoff et al. (2015) state that police officers usually develop remarkable stress reactions right after being exposed to dead bodies and dangerous incidents. This means that being exposed to such situations manifests in sleep deprivation, flashbacks, bad nightmares, and anger issues. Such stress reactions eventually result in emotional and psychological problems that affect the ability of SAPS officers to perform optimally. “Exposure to trauma may result in distress and anxiety which can progress to a wide range of psychological problems in the future that may be difficult to diagnose when not treated in time” (Eck & Rossmo, 2019:606).

2.6.1.4 Mental strain

Another challenge encountered by police officials is the mental strain that is caused by operating in a very difficult policing environment that does not lend itself to easy quantification (McTeer, 2017). Hence, the police are often particularly vulnerable to various lifestyle conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, hypertension, and fatigue because of the unique strain they experience in the workplace. These conditions emerge from long hours with irregular breaks that result in poor dietary options. This specific cluster of healthcare issues points to concerns about the lifestyle of police officers. McTeer (2017) additionally states that patrol officers, investigation officers, as well as detectives often have limited access to healthy food, time for physical training, and assistance with health care considerations due to their respective tight work schedules. Eck and Rossmo (2019) also asserted that work-related stress and strain exacerbate underlying issues, leading officers to adopt coping mechanisms such as dangerous habits like alcoholism. These intersecting feedback loops can make challenges harder to manage and can trigger more serious problems, resulting in a downward spiral.

2.6.1.5 Pressure to Solve Cases

Detectives operating in the realm of murder investigations often face intense pressure to solve cases swiftly and effectively. This pressure stems from various sources, including the family, the media, the public, and departmental expectations. Surette (2007) asserts that media coverage of high-profile cases influences public perceptions and expectations that shape the narrative surrounding investigations. Sometimes it attracts significant attention, amplifying the

urgency to deliver results. Detectives end up facing heightened scrutiny and criticism from the media and the public, particularly in cases where progress is perceived to be lacking. Hence, the relentless pursuit of justice amidst mounting pressure leads to heightened stress levels and impacts decision-making processes (Houck & Siegel, 2010). For this reason, managing external pressures while maintaining focus on investigative priorities becomes a challenge that detectives must navigate.

2.6.1.6 Lack of witness cooperation

Securing witness cooperation is often a daunting task for detectives working on murder cases. Witnesses may be reluctant to come forward due to fear of retaliation, a lack of trust in law enforcement, or other personal reasons. Overcoming these barriers requires building trust and rapport with witnesses as well as implementing strategies to address their concerns and alleviate their fears. However, the success of witness cooperation efforts can vary significantly depending on the circumstances of each case (Skogan & Maxfield, 2014).

2.6.1.7 False leads

Navigating through a maze of false leads is a common challenge faced by detectives in murder investigations. Misinformation, unreliable witness accounts, and misleading evidence can divert investigative efforts away from genuine leads and can consume valuable time and resources. Distinguishing between credible information and deceptive trials requires astute investigative skills and critical thinking abilities (Krauss et al., 2015).

2.6.1.8 Limited resources

Resource constraints pose a significant challenge for detectives tasked with investigating murder cases. Police departments may face limitations in terms of manpower, funding, and technological resources. Inadequate staffing levels can stretch investigative capacities thin, delay progress, and hinder the pursuit of justice. Limited access to cutting-edge technology and forensic equipment further exacerbates the challenges faced by detectives and hampers their ability to effectively investigate and solve cases (Davis & Henderson, 2019).

2.6.2 Workplace challenges

Murder detectives are the unsung heroes of law enforcement as they are tasked with the formidable responsibility of unraveling the mysteries surrounding the most heinous of crimes (Oliva, 2018). Their work demands a unique blend of analytical prowess, empathy, and resilience as they navigate through the complex landscape of murder investigations. In the relentless pursuit of justice, murder detectives encounter a myriad of challenges within the workplace, ranging from the emotional toll of dealing with victims' families to the daunting task of gathering evidence to secure convictions (Territo & Swanson 2016). They face complex challenges in their daily work environment and the strategies they employ to overcome these obstacles rely on their creativity and resilience.

2.6.2.1 Workload/caseload

The SAPS Annual Report (2016) states that challenges such as persistently high levels of violence, the need to respond to new forms of criminality almost daily, and ever-changing criminal behaviours have long pervaded South African society. McTeer (2017) further states that police organisations around the world are overburdened with heavy caseloads and suffer from insufficient financial and human resources. Experiencing heavy caseloads means that detectives have to juggle multiple cases at once, which leads to unusual work schedules and long hours on the job (Hawk & Dabney, 2014). Wasserman (2016) adds that the major cause of a heavy workload is the shortage of manpower which creates a ripple effect that increases the pressure on current employees and often leads to burnout and diminished efficiency.

Wasserman (2016) further explains that with fewer SAPS detectives to share the responsibilities, each detective is forced to take on additional cases, which results in longer working hours and greater stress levels. This heightened workload negatively impacts the quality of work, as detectives may struggle to meet deadlines and maintain high standards. Therefore, the heavy workload placed on detectives results in several dysfunctions within the justice system, such as delays in administering justice, elevated levels of impunity, excessive reliance on pre-trial detention for extended periods, inadequate use of alternative sentencing options, overcrowded prisons that fail to serve their rehabilitative purpose and high rates of reoffending (SAPS Annual Report, 2016). While balancing all of these challenges, homicide detectives have to handle scrutiny from external sources, particularly the media (Brookman & Maguire 2019). Coupled with the external scrutiny, murder detectives are forced to cooperate

with the media, yet manage information to prevent the release of sensitive details that could prove detrimental to the investigation. Murder detectives have to overcome all these challenges to clear a case regardless of the contextual factors that impede their ability to act efficiently and decisively.

2.6.2.2 Emotional toll

One of the most significant challenges faced by murder detectives is the emotional toll exacted by their work. Detectives have to handle levels of stress, responsibility, scrutiny, fatigue, and urgency that other jobs within the policing sphere do not demand (Videtic, 2018). Homicide cases are always a tragedy, not only for the victims but also for the loved ones left behind (Kwong & Van Gelder 2017). Murder detectives often find themselves thrust into the midst of raw grief and anguish as they interact with bereaved families struggling to come to terms with their loss. The burden of delivering devastating news to loved ones and witnessing their profound sorrow can take a significant toll on the mental and emotional well-being of detectives, leading to compassion fatigue, burnout, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (Houle & Fyfe 2019).

Moreover, relentless exposure to violence and death can desensitize detectives over time, eroding their sense of empathy and compassion (Miletich & Connors 2020). The constant immersion in the darker aspects of human nature can lead to cynicism and disillusionment, challenging detectives' ability to maintain a balanced perspective and to approach each case with the sensitivity and humanity it deserves. Hence, the weight of responsibility to bring closure and justice to the victims of murder adds a layer of strain on detectives' mental and emotional wellbeing.

2.6.2.3 The complexity of investigations

In addition to the emotional strain, murder detectives grapple with a myriad of logistical and investigative challenges in their quest for justice (Berdiansky 2019). Murder cases are often complex and multifaceted as they require meticulous attention to detail and a methodical approach to gathering evidence and comprehensive analysis (Territo & Swanson 2016). From processing crime scenes to gathering evidence, detectives navigate through a maze of forensic evidence, witness testimonies, and circumstantial clues to piece together the puzzle of what transpired through evidence analysis. According to Eck and Rossmo (2019), if there is a murder

case, it is mandatory that detectives have to wait for the medical examiner to rule on a cause of death and, if the case involves forensic evidence, they wait for results from forensic scientists before moving forward in the investigation. This is because the advent of forensic science has revolutionized investigative techniques, offering valuable tools for solving crimes. However, the integration of forensic evidence with investigations adds a layer of complexity that causes setbacks that require specialized knowledge and close collaboration with forensic experts (Smyth 2021), which is often time-consuming and traumatic.

2.6.2.4 The nature of evidence

Sutton, Cherney, and White (2020) assert that another primary challenge faced by murder detectives is the elusive nature of evidence. Unlike in fictional portrayals where clues neatly fall into place, real-life investigations are fraught with uncertainties and inconsistencies. Detectives contend with incomplete or unreliable evidence, red herrings, and false leads that obscure the truth and prolong the investigation. The pressure to solve cases quickly also leads to tunnel vision, where detectives fixate on a single suspect or theory to the exclusion of alternative possibilities, jeopardizing the integrity of the investigation (Carter 2018).

In addition, murder investigations often require collaboration with multiple agencies and departments, each with its protocols and procedures (Sutton et al., 2020). Coordinating efforts among law enforcement agents, forensic experts, coroners, and prosecutors is a logistical nightmare that exacerbates delays and causes communication breakdowns that hinder progress. Additionally, resource constraints, budgetary limitations, and staffing shortages strain detectives' ability to effectively investigate cases, forcing them to prioritize certain cases over others and potentially compromising the pursuit of justice in some (Territo & Swanson 2016).

2.6.2.5 Legal and ethical dilemmas

Murder detectives must adhere to strict legal procedures and protocols when conducting murder investigations (Stephens, 2019). As agents of the state, obtaining search warrants, conducting interviews, and gathering evidence are bound by legal standards to ensure that investigations withstand scrutiny in court (Oliva, 2018). However, the quest for justice sometimes clashes with individual rights and liberties, raising thorny ethical questions about the use of investigative techniques such as surveillance, interrogation, and evidence collection (Berdiansky, 2019).

Detectives walk a fine line between obtaining evidence through lawful means and respecting the constitutional rights of suspects and witnesses (Stephens, 2019). The pressure to secure convictions sometimes leads to ethical compromises, such as coercive interrogation tactics and the manipulation of evidence which jeopardize the integrity of investigations and compromise the prosecution's case (Kwong & Van Gelder, 2017). Therefore, navigating through legal hurdles while balancing the imperatives of justice and due process represents a formidable challenge for detectives (Samaha, 2013).

Moreover, murder detectives are confronted with moral quandaries that test their principles and values (Houle & Fyfe 2019). They grapple with the inherent brutality evident in cases and the profound moral ambiguity of the criminal justice system. Decisions about when to use lethal force, when to pursue charges, and when to offer leniency require detectives to weigh the competing demands of justice, compassion, and public safety, often in the absence of clear-cut answers.

2.6.2.6 Cold cases

Investigating cold cases presents unique challenges for detectives, as these cases involve outdated evidence, faded memories, and elusive suspects. Revisiting old leads and reexamining evidence requires a meticulous and systematic approach as well as innovative investigative techniques. The passage of time can pose significant obstacles to solving cold cases but advances in forensic technology and investigative methodologies have offered new opportunities for resolution (Keppel & Weis, 2014).

The aforementioned challenges have demonstrated that detectives tasked with investigating murder cases confront a myriad of challenges that test their skills, resilience, and dedication to justice. From the emotional toll of confronting violence and loss to the complexities of forensic analysis and legal procedures, the obstacles faced by detectives are diverse and demanding. Overcoming these challenges requires a combination of expertise, resourcefulness, and teamwork. By navigating through these obstacles with diligence and determination, detectives strive to bring closure and justice to victims and their families and to uphold the principles of law and order for a safe society.

2.6.3 Mechanisms used by murder detectives to address challenges

As mentioned above, exposure to trauma may result in distress, which can progress to a wide range of psychological problems over time, as “violent murder crime scenes and constant exposure to dead bodies may result in primary post-incident stress behaviours” (Eck & Rossmo, 2019:56). Exposure to violent and traumatic incidents increases the likelihood of police officers experiencing mental health problems, such as anxiety, substance addiction, depression, and suicidal thoughts. The effects of stress include flashbacks, anger management issues, and sleep deprivation which can ultimately result in emotional and psychological disorders among SAPS officers. To cope with this challenge, the SAPS provides various support services to officers, such as social work and spiritual and psychological guidance (Sibisi, 2022). Psychotherapy, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention are programs that were implemented under the Employee Health and Wellness Services (EHWS). The most frequently employed strategies by police officers to cope with trauma include proactive problem-solving, constructive self-assessment, and confrontational coping (Wassermann et al. 2019:92).

According to Skogan and Maxfield (2014), community distrust has played an important role in many unsolved murder cases as it makes it hard for police officers to identify cooperative witnesses to solve murders. People are unlikely to cooperate with the police when they feel unprotected by the law, and the police are less able to protect people without cooperation. Potential witnesses who are reluctant to come forward fear retaliation and many distrust law enforcement agents. Collectively, these challenges had led to few arrests. Reisig and Lloyd (2021) state that building trust with the community through the community policing initiative significantly increases the public’s willingness to cooperate with law enforcement. By being visible and approachable, officers can create an environment where witnesses feel safe and comfortable to come forward.

The United States Marshals Service (2023) asserts that witness protection programs are a vital tool in securing witness cooperation in high-risk cases, with significant improvements in relocation processes and support services occurring in the US. In South Africa, offering protection to witnesses who might be in danger if they testify is a critical measure that was implemented by SAPS to overcome the challenge of witness cooperation. This program provides new identities, relocation, and other forms of support to ensure witnesses' safety. Jones and Taylor (2023) state that offering financial rewards for information leading to an

arrest or conviction motivates witnesses to come forward with useful information. These rewards can sometimes outweigh the perceived risks. Monetary rewards are believed to increase the likelihood of witness cooperation.

Detectives face significant challenges when dealing with insufficient resources to solve murder cases and some have developed methods to address this issue effectively. According to Keppel and Weis (2014), detectives often collaborate and form partnerships with other law enforcement agencies to solve murder cases. Working closely with other law enforcement agencies, such as interstate police and local departments, has provided additional manpower and resources that promoted the sharing of information and availability to resources across jurisdictions.

Teamwork makes it easier for detectives to investigate and solve a case because more heads are better than one. The National Justice Institute (2024) emphasises that collaboration between active and retired detectives also brings fresh perspectives and specialised expertise to difficult cases. Involving experts from various forensic and investigative fields ensures invaluable support to local police officers and detectives. These people work anonymously with detectives to solve cases as they ensure that a diverse range of insights and vast experience are applied. The National Justice Institute (2024) states that murder detectives go above and beyond securing additional resources to solve such cases. Law enforcement agencies often convince decision-makers and lawmakers of the importance of dedicating sufficient resources to cold murder cases. Embracing the potential for solving these cases not only provides justice for victims but also serves as a deterrent for future crimes. Detectives travel long distances to obtain forensic evidence and have it analysed because there are insufficient analysis laboratories in the country.

2.7 Preventive Measures to Curb Murder Cases

High levels of murder pose a serious threat to South Africa as an emergent democracy. Violent crime often leads to severe injuries and the tragic loss of life as well as the loss of possessions and livelihoods. The devastation these crimes cause is incalculable (Lindegaard, 2017). The severity of earlier and recent murder cases, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, has been so overwhelming over time that employing safety and security measures has become a pivotal need to promote safety for the general public. Therefore, the government regards the prevention of murder as a national priority. However, the solutions that this and other governments devise

are never fully implemented due to corruption and the lack of enough resources. Various strategies to combat and prevent murder are discussed next.

2.7.1 Effective visible policing

South Africa's Police Minister, Bheki Cele, and the National Commissioner of Police announced in August 2022 that a new high-density stabilisation intervention would be implemented to tackle crime. This intervention is commonly referred to as 'visible policing', which is a strategy that focuses on car hijackings, murder, house robberies, and taxi violence. In this study, the main focus was placed on murder, and visible policing was scrutinised to determine its effectiveness as a measure to eradicate murder (McManus, 2020). Visible policing is the deployment of previously desk-based police officials to the streets, particularly in identified murder hotspots, while dedicated detectives track and arrest suspects wanted for both organised and violent crimes (Braga & Wesburd, 2018).

To significantly reduce violence and crime in South Africa, the police expanded this strategy to focus on murder hotspots in the quest to improve public safety. Murder is the most dependable crime statistic and serves as the best indicator of violence across a wide range. Where murder is common, so are other acts of violence. Murder and associated types of violence affect far more people and cause far more harm compared to other violent crimes. Hence, it is envisaged that criminals will be defeated effectively if active visible policing is improved by officials patrolling specific hotspots to prevent any criminal behaviour.

Bloch-Wehba (2021) states that the South African government aims to ensure that there is access to more police personnel, vehicles, and other resources to effectively implement visible policing. The state should therefore make sure that there is enough transport for police officers to fulfil their duties in their respective precincts. The visibility of police vehicles and personnel in the streets has been shown to reduce escalating crime levels because perpetrators are visible and will be apprehended. According to Whowell and Cook (2019), the community feels much safer when they see police personnel on the beat, visiting crime hotspots, and walking around in communities to engage with residents on the streets in a friendly yet authoritative manner to gather information that is useful in creating a safe environment for all. Through such engagements, a sense of unity, community confidence, and bonding occurs, and these outcomes enable police officials to obtain information that is of value in combating crime before it even

happens. This means that gathering crime intelligence goes a long way toward preventing criminal activities and keeping citizens safe.

According to the Department of Justice (2018), the visible policing program ensures cooperation among Crime Prevention, Border Security, and other specialised units. It also ensures that police, defence, and intelligence units in South Africa, which are managed and coordinated by the Visible Policing and the Operational Response Services Divisions, work collaboratively. Bloch-Wehba (2021) adds that visible policing programs provide direction regarding the effective combating of crime through the provisioning of a visible policing service. The purpose of this division is to discourage all manners of crime by providing a proactive and responsive policing service that strives towards the reduction of all crime levels to ensure community confidence in the SAPS (Corsaro & Weisburd, 2018).

2.7.2 Community policing

Community policing is a law enforcement philosophy that aims to achieve more effective crime control, reduce fears of crime, and improve police services through proactive partnerships and programs in collaboration with communities and all other role-players (Cordner, 2014). In short, community policing entails partnerships between the police and the Community to solve safety problems. Therefore, Cano and Rojido (2022) assert that community policing forums (CPFs) are implemented as a prevention strategy to tackle crimes and murder. The aim is for the police and community to collaborate to reduce crime, prevent and resolve disorder, and reduce fear by intensively cooperating with each other.

It is envisaged that investing in community policing will help build trust between law enforcement and the community and prevent murder-related actions and gang violence (UNODC, 2010). A Community Police Forum (CPF) is a platform where community members, police representatives, organisations such as NGOs, youth organisations, and women organisations meet to discuss safety issues in their neighborhoods (Cordner, 2014). This type of intervention is usually effective in reporting suspicious activities in a neighborhood and has been successful in ensuring that violators are punished (Cano & Rojido, 2022). This program promotes police accountability and the co-operation of the community with the local police. It also monitors the effectiveness and efficiency of the police service in terms of serving the community, while its members also examine and advise them on local policing priorities such as patrolling residential and business areas (Department of Justice, 2018). Furthermore,

members of CPFs are tasked to propose recommendations to Station Commissioners, Provincial Commissioners, and the MEC in each area about the best prevention initiatives to employ.

2.7.3 Community Safety Forums (CSFs)

Another crime preventive strategy is Community Safety Forums (CSFs). According to the UNODC (2010), CSFs operate under the principle that enhanced cooperation and interaction can lead to improved effectiveness of the Community Justice System (CJS) at the local level. Cordner (2014) stated that CSFs are designed to provide a foundation for integrating, monitoring, and assessing the implementation of multi-sectoral crime prevention and community safety initiatives that align with national and provincial priorities. Corsaro and Weisburd (2018) further state that Community Safety Forums (CSFs) are meant to facilitate the delivery of a multi-sectoral governmental approach to safety in the community and the concept is closely related to the community policing philosophy. Its approach, however, is broader than that of the Community Police Forum (CPF) in that it includes the responses from all the departments in the Justice, Crime Prevention, and Security (JCPS) cluster. The CSF is essentially distinguished from the CPF through its tasks (National Research Council, 2014).

There are some differences between CPFs and CSFs. The CPF, according to the South African Police Service Act (1994), is meant to provide a partnership between the SAPS and the community in fighting crime. While the CPF is confined to a police station precinct and focuses very narrowly on policing and associated matters, a CSF will have a more inclusive jurisdiction area as it is intended to fulfil a very different and broader role (Kitchen & Schneider 2007). A CSF is meant to bridge safety issues affecting a particular community and harnesses the energies of most, if not all, the departments in the JCPS cluster. It includes any safety matters within a community that make people feel unsafe in their streets, homes, and places of work (Department of Social Development, 2016).

2.7.4 National Crime Prevention Strategy

The National Crime Prevention Strategy is based on the development of a wide range of responsibilities for crime prevention and a shift in emphasis from reactive ‘crime control’ (which generally occurs after the commission of a crime) to ‘crime prevention’ (UNODC, 2010). This strategy is based on a comprehensive analysis of the present crime situation and

pays attention to the particular South African factors that underpin high crime levels (Ward, 2022). In particular, the NCPS strategy focuses on the root causes of crime to implement preventive measures. According to the National Research Council (2014), different types of crime have different root causes and therefore require different approaches for their prevention. This means that crime needs to be tackled in a comprehensive way that goes beyond an exclusive focus on policing and the CJS. In essence, it entails problem-solving to address the causal factors that provide opportunities for crime and limit the likelihood of detection. Below is a discussion of the strategies implemented to tackle murder using its causative factors.

2.7.4.1 Addressing/Combating Domestic Violence

Some strategies need to focus on domestic violence. Although most acts of violence are perpetrated by men against men, addressing violence in the home, particularly against women and children, is key to breaking its cycle. According to the World Health Organization (2019), witnessing violence in childhood makes the child 3.8 times more likely to be a victim of domestic violence later in life, while living in a high-crime neighbourhood makes one 5.6 times more likely to experience crime. Policing domestic violence is not easy as it occurs behind walls and closed doors and often requires vulnerable victims to risk additional abuse by seeking police help (UNODC, 2011). The truth is, not so many people who experience such situations are brave enough to speak out about their abuse to the police. However, police officials are mandated to promptly investigate domestic violence reports, especially in murder hotspots, and to work with social workers to fast-track interventions such as counselling and find support for victims to prevent murder related to domestic violence (Department of Social Development, 2016). The literature has demonstrated decisively that the majority of murders that are reported result from domestic violence; hence, addressing domestic violence through education, awareness campaigns, and support from the community as a whole will reduce the number of murders committed each year.

2.7.4.2 Enactment of the South African Firearm Control Act

Guns are commonly used in the commission of murders. Strengthening gun control laws, such as implementing background checks and limiting access to guns for people with a history of violence or mental illness, is pivotal as it will aid in reducing the number of homicides in this country. The South African Firearm Control Act (FCA) No. 60 of 2000 and its subsidiary legislation impose strict substantive and procedural requirements for obtaining a gun

competency certificate, license, permit, or authorisation to possess a firearm, to deal in firearms, or to carry out other firearm-related activities, such as running a firearms-training enterprise or a hunting business (Department of Justice, 2018). Some of these requirements are of universal application. For instance, a separate license is issued for every firearm and applicants must obtain a competency certificate. Braga (2022) states that this process is required to ensure that an applicant is, among other things, a fit and proper person with no recent conviction for certain crimes and does not have a proclivity for violence. Braga (2022) further adds that other requirements vary depending on the type and purpose of the specific license sought. For instance, a person wishing to obtain a license to possess a firearm for self-defense is required to justify the need for the weapon and the inability to obtain protection by other means. In addition, an eligible individual may obtain only one license of this class, which must be renewed every five years.

2.7.4.3 The implementation of strict policies on alcohol

There is a clear link between alcohol and violence, as stated by Corrigan (2012), who argues that murders may be committed due to the excessive consumption of alcohol. The latter study found that being in possession of a gun while under the influence was highly associated with murder. The Department of Social Development (2016) proposed the implementation of strict policies on alcohol, such as increasing alcohol tax and minimising the number of alcohol outlets to restrict access to alcohol. This strategy is intended to prevent people from getting too intoxicated to the point of losing self-control, misbehaving, and engaging in fights with other customers, which might result in murder. However, as the murder rate is escalating and shebeens, pubs, and other liquor outlets are flourishing, its success is questionable. Nevertheless, the strategy involves the following measures:

a) High taxes on alcohol

A 2018 review that appeared in the *American Journal of Public Health* stated that doubling the tax on alcohol products was quite successful as this measure "...reduced alcohol-related mortality by an average of 35%, traffic crash deaths by 11%, sexually transmitted diseases by 6%, violence by 2%, and crime by 1.4%". Thus, doubling the tax rate was implemented for all products containing alcohol in some countries. However, South Africa has not implemented a doubling of the alcohol tax rate. Instead, the South African government increases alcohol rates regularly as part of its national budget. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO)

continues to advocate for increased alcohol taxes globally, indicating that many countries are not fully utilizing the proposed strategy despite its proven effectiveness in reducing alcohol-related harms and raising public revenue (WHO, 2023).

b) Minimizing the number of alcohol outlets

A review published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* by Corsaro and Weisburd (2018) revealed that limiting the number of alcohol outlets through stricter licensing limited problematic drinking and the dangers associated with it. But it also found that going too far can have negative results, as more car crashes resulted when people took long drives to liquor outlets and were intoxicated when drinking even before returning home. In South Africa, liquor outlets that are not licensed are shut down following the Liquor Act No. 27 of 1989 because they operate illegally.

2.7.4.4 Deployment of focused deterrence policing

A proper understanding of community policing and executing it is essential in curbing murders and other crimes. Community policing is based on the ‘focused deterrence policing’ strategy, which is impactful. Schnobrich-Davis, Swatt, and Wagner (2021) assert that focused deterrence stems from the deterrence theory of crime, which asserts that individuals are discouraged from committing crimes if they believe they are likely to be caught and punished certainly, severely, and swiftly. Therefore, deterrence policing is the type of policing that discourages people from engaging in criminal behaviour. Braga and Weisburd (2018) assert that focused deterrence policing focuses on a community’s specific problems such as gun violence and rampant murders. It further follows the trail of individuals and groups involved in such acts and focuses on bringing them to book. The term ‘deterrence’ in this policing initiative suggests that arrests and subsequent punishments will deter criminals from re-offending.

Schnobrich-Davis et al. (2021) established two types of deterrence, which are specific deterrence and general deterrence. Specific deterrence is the punishment delivered to stop an offender from re-offending in the form of fines or prison time, depending on the type of offense, while general deterrence entails punishment that is meant to discourage the public from breaking the law (Schnobrich-Davis et al., 2021). Punishment is intended to educate the population and hopefully inspire habits that reduce a person's risk of committing a certain crime for again. Therefore, the community is strongly responsible for adopting strict and transparent

standards against violence. According to Kennedy, Kleiman, and Braga (2017), the police role in deterring crime lies with the ‘certainty’ element because police are not intended to have much influence on the severity of punishment, nor do they have much say in the swiftness of the punishment. However, this police work is designed to increase the likelihood that those engaged in criminal activities are caught and brought to court for justice.

Kennedy et al. (2017) assert that focused deterrence focuses official, and community attention and resources on individuals who commit a disproportionate number of violent crimes and it removes any sense of anonymity offenders might believe they enjoy. Scott (2017) adds that focused deterrence initiatives work through situational crime prevention as it reduces crime opportunities by making it harder for people to commit a crime, increases the risk of getting caught, makes crime less rewarding, and removes provocations and excuses that encourage people to commit violent crimes.

2.7.4.5 Raising the school drop-out age

According to the National Research Council (2014), raising the age or grade at which a learner will be allowed to drop out of school will curb the escalating crime rate. The idea is that students should be compelled to stay in school for longer as the further they continue in their studies, the less likelihood there is of them committing a crime. The argument is that when learners have completed their studies, they have the opportunity to land good, well-paying jobs, and staying in school will reduce their tendency to participate in criminal activities for money.

2.8 Summary of the chapter

Murder is the most severe form of violence and has a significant impact on individuals, families, and communities. It is a complex and pervasive issue that transcends borders and cultures. Murder has claimed countless lives and devastated communities worldwide. In this chapter, statistical data were provided to illuminate the rates of murder prevalence and trends and to better understand its extent. The discourse also explored the three important elements of homicide and further presented a discussion on the weapons that have commonly been used in the commission of murders. Moreover, the root causes of murder were analysed and a multifaceted approach to curb incidences of murder that encompasses social, economic, psychological, and situational factors were discussed in detail. These factors are crucial in

developing effective prevention strategies that can promote safer communities. The chapter also evaluated the challenges that hinder detectives in addressing murder cases effectively. These challenges are not limited only to the workplace but also affect police officers personally as they struggle with trauma and anxiety due to their compromised security and safety, limited resources, and pressure to solve cases. The last aspect that the chapter examined was the issue of safety measures to curb or eliminate murder. These strategies, if well implemented, may foster inclusive societies, promote justice and accountability, and prioritise conflict resolution so that communities and nations can work together to reduce incidences of murder and build resilient societies for the success of future generations.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

When conducting research, a solid and pertinent theoretical framework must be constructed to describe the topic under investigation. Umlazi has been recognised as the leading precinct with the highest murder rate in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Murder is a horrific crime that is perpetrated by people of various ages, socioeconomic statuses, as well as racial and ethnic backgrounds. It is also committed by people of both genders. Some theories can be used to identify commonalities between people who commit crimes and the factors that drive them toward violent behavior. For the study, the Social Learning Theory (SLT) and the General Strain Theory (GST) were adopted. The general strain theory is closely linked to the significance of hegemonic masculine identity and was selected to explain the causes of the high murder rate in the Umlazi area, while the social learning theory was utilised to explain murder as an act that occurs due to the learned behaviours that people adopt from the social environment where they live. These two theories were effectively applied to explain why murder is committed and to further elucidate various factors that contribute to the murder phenomenon.

3.2 The General Strain Theory

The general strain theory (GST) is a criminology theory that was originally conceptualised by Robert Agnew in 1992. This theory explains how stressors or strains in individuals' lives can lead to criminal behaviour. General Strain Theory explains that when people experience stress or pressure, they may resort to crime as a means of relieving the associated emotional distress and strain. According to Moon and Hays (2017), GST has drawn much academic interest since its inception and is regarded as a reliable theory because it has amassed a substantial amount of empirical data and has provided explanations for phenomena other than criminal behaviour. Agnew (2001) acknowledges that Robert King Merton's strain theory has certain limitations, arguing that it fails to fully conceptualise the variety of potential social stressors in society, particularly those that occur among the youth. Merton (1968) argues that innovation occurs when society highlights socially desirable goals while simultaneously providing inadequate opportunities to achieve these goals through legitimate means. In other words, individuals facing financial difficulties who aspire to succeed financially may resort to crime to attain their

socially valued objectives. Agnew (1992) concurs with this idea but asserts that additional factors, particularly those affecting young people, also play a significant role in influencing criminal behavior.

Agnew (1992) argues that men and women react to social stressors in very different ways, claiming that men are more concerned with material success than women. Men are also more prone to commit violent crimes and property crimes as a result of fear and are also more likely to disagree with their peers, which increases their vulnerability to criminality compared to women. Because of these risks, men are more likely to fail, which can lead them to commit violent crimes. Agnew (1992) describes three categories of strain that are most likely to lead to crime: (1) Failure to achieve positively valued goals; (2) Removal of positive stimuli; and (3) Introduction of negative stimuli. Utilizing General Strain Theory (GST) to demonstrate how specific strains can lead to criminal behavior was appropriate for the current study, as it assisted in achieving what was outlined by Agnew. Agnew (2001:319) stated that “The general strain theory highlights the significance of stressors in determining the rise in unpleasant emotions like frustration and rage”. Individuals who encounter these feelings somewhat feel pressured to act and as a result may resort to inappropriate acts, such as committing a crime, as a way to release their stress.

The general strain theory delineates three major types of strain to which people tend to respond with anger often moral outrage. Atchison and Heide (2011:781) describe the first strain category as “the outcome of failing to accomplish goals that have a positive value in one's life, especially financial goals”. Atchison and Heide (2011) further state that a person's perception of their overall well-being may deteriorate if they feel that the outcome of a situation is unjust or if they believe their circumstances are worse than those of another person facing the same situation. According to GST, people have identical goals but some are unable to fulfil them due to unequal opportunities or skills. Thus, hindrances to achieving goals can be a major source of strain or frustration which results in people turning to violence to succeed because they tend to be unable to meet society's standards through legal methods.

The second strain category is marked by the presence of negative stimuli. This type of strain involves circumstances where an individual encounters difficult situations or faces negative treatment from others, including peer harassment and bullying, verbal and physical abuse, troubled relationships with parents, peers, and teachers, or becoming the victim of crime.

The third primary strain category is a strain that is experienced when positive stimuli have been removed. It results in painful experiences such as the loss of a loved one, the theft of valuable goods, or the withdrawal of parental love. Such experiences often result in feelings of emptiness and bitterness which serve as a significant determinant in leading an individual to execute murder through an intermediary (Atchison & Heide, 2011). The stresses and strains individuals face are often linked to the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which pertains to males who perceive themselves as superior and dominant. Hence, they may attempt to uphold this identity by managing these pressures through violent actions that reinforce their sense of control, such as physical attacks and even murder. In this context, the GST was quite successful in assisting the researcher in describing how certain strains influenced people to commit the violent act of murder.

According to Kennedy-Kollar and Charles (2012), a crucial aspect to take into account when trying to understand crime is the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Connell and Messerschmidt (2018:841) state that “hegemonic masculinity is a form of masculinity that displays dominance and validates the role of the male as an authoritative person, which further establishes the foundation for uneven gender practices”. Kennedy and Charles (2012) argue that several stressors contribute to murder, including financial strain. Maintaining a lucrative job to support a family and loved ones is a crucial component of the hegemonic masculine identity. This means that a person who struggles to support himself and/or his family financially may likely become agitated and turn to criminal means to survive, even to the point of murder.

Some social stressors, such as bullying and social rejection, weaken men's hegemonic social identities. “Social stressors make it difficult for men to exert social dominance, achieve high social status, display authority, and demand respect” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2018:844). Regular peer bullying creates the kind of stress that has a substantial correlation with murder. For instance, the stress associated with bullying is quite poisonous as it threatens the hegemonic social identity of men and generates anger followed by moral rage and the desire for revenge. Thirdly, romantic stressors can also result in murder. Experiencing a divorce or the end of a relationship and women's rejection of romantic or sexual advances by males may also trigger them to commit acts of violence.

Kennedy-Kollar and Charles (2012) demonstrate how murderers' hegemonic masculinity identities can be threatened by interrelated stressors that trigger the impulse to commit cruel acts to defend themselves and to retain their identities. They also highlight the significance of comprehending hegemonic masculinity and how murder is affected by it.

3.2.1 Applicability of GST to the Study

Within the framework of the study, it is argued that the strains and stressors that individuals residing in Umlazi experience play a significant role in the increasing rate of murder that has been witnessed here. Agnew (2001) stated that the strains people experience are mostly related to violence and murder as they heighten the likelihood of experiencing negative emotions such as anger, resentment, anxiety, and depression. These emotions usually create pressure to take corrective action, with criminal behavior being one potential response. As per Agnew (2001), individuals under strain may turn to murder as a way to eliminate the source of their distress and alleviate the negative emotions that often accompany such strain, even though engaging in criminal behavior may lead to greater issues in the long term.

A high percentage of the youth living in Umlazi, especially males under 35 years of age, fail to achieve or sustain the goals of society due to limited opportunities, abilities, and financial means. Their strain is exacerbated when they are poor and unemployed and they witness their peers becoming successful. Social inequality in the Umlazi society leads to high pressure on disadvantaged residents and consequently to an increase in the likelihood of them becoming criminals. Atchison and Heide (2011) asserted that many disadvantaged youths find illegal alternatives to 'earn' an income and alleviate their poverty. These alternative ways include robbery, car hijacking, and burglary which, in many instances, result in murder when things do not go according to plan. This argument is supported by a report on conditions in Umlazi (n.d) which states that many murder cases in Umlazi were committed due to the outcome of unsuccessful robberies or carjackings. Therefore, certain individuals in Umlazi kill others for money, and many others are likely to kill also to maximise financial profit.

The prevalence of negative stimuli also plays a significant role in the high murder rate in Umlazi. Being constantly at the receiving end of violence, such as physical abuse and bullying, is a plausible cause of the high level of murder in Umlazi. As per Kazeem (2020), constantly experiencing bullying and physical abuse contributes to the development of depression, social

anxiety, anger, hatred, and low self-esteem, particularly when one is young, poor, and unemployed. Many such individuals in Umlazi are constantly barraged with emotional distress due to maltreatment. These individuals attempt to satisfy their anger and desire for retaliation by striking back at the source of strain or through violent acts aimed at anyone who stands in their (Teicher & Samson, 2016). Abused individuals' desire to take revenge often manifests in acts that cause bodily harm to others, and even murder. Therefore, for them, murdering the source of their strain is an act of healing because they will feel better knowing the threat is not there anymore. According to Agnew (1992), although murder can stem from various negative emotions, anger is particularly distinct because it often arises when individuals attribute their strain to others. Therefore, that is how the murder rate in Umlazi keeps increasing.

The removal of positive stimuli, such as the death of a loved one, withdrawal of parental love, or the end of a relationship, contributes significantly to murder in the Umlazi area. When a treasured relationship is lost, it creates anger, bitterness, frustration, and loneliness in the one who stays behind. These emotions, when unprocessed, are believed to significantly contribute to crime and violence. (Agnew, 2001). To escape these feelings and pain, some people tend to move away from the environment that is the source of their strain, and many youths end up in the streets and start engaging in criminal behaviours as a way of coping with their stress and sense of rejection. Moreover, the death of a loved one and/or the absence of parental love often manifest in rage that causes aggressive and violent behaviours that result in violent crimes, such as armed robbery, to relieve their anger and frustration. However, in the process of making themselves feel better, other people get hurt or killed. Experiencing rage often diminishes one's tolerance for injury and insult, decreases inhibitions, motivates a person to take action, and fosters a desire for criminal behavior (Agnew, 1992). This explains to some extent why the murder rate is escalating in Umlazi.

Although General Strain Theory (GST) focuses on how negative emotions affect individuals, experiencing strain can also lead to other criminogenic effects. In particular, the chronic or recurring strain may weaken relationships with conventional individuals, resulting in reduced social control. Additionally, it can promote beliefs that are conducive to crime, such as the idea that violence is justified, and foster certain traits associated with criminal behavior, including negative emotionality and low self-control (Agnew & Brezina, 2010).

3.2.2 Limitations of the General Strain Theory

According to Burke (2019), the biggest critique of the GST is its succinct justification for why some people are more likely to engage in criminal or delinquent behaviours than others. Burke (2019) asserted that the strain theory lacks strong empirical evidence and is unable to predict correlations between crime and dissatisfaction at an individual level as it is not required to correlate social structure-related traits to crime to understand it at an individual level. In light of this argument, Brenzina (2017) claims that the theory only partially accounts for crime and delinquency. Another criticism of GST is that it overemphasises the importance of social class. This is because the GST is commonly applied to lower-class societies. After all, they have fewer resources and unequal opportunities, which is a condition that prevents them from reaching their goals, which in turn encourages crime and deviance (Brym & Lie, 2007).

3.3 The Social Learning Theory of Crime

Understanding murder also requires an exploration of the Social Learning Theory (SLT) of crime, which was developed by an American criminologist, Dr. Ronald Akers, in 2012. This is one of the most prevalent and often utilised theories in Criminology. According to Bernard and Akers (2023), the work of Dr. Edwin Sutherland on the differential association that saw the light in the 1940s is the foundation of the social learning theory as it states that close relationships with other criminals help people learn how to commit crimes. According to Akers (2012), the social learning theory explains why people develop the abilities and motivation to commit crimes by observing the people they associate themselves with. This simply means that people learn new behaviours, values, and attitudes from society through direct experience as well as through observing the conduct of others in response to stimuli that generate either positive or negative behaviours. Akers (2010) argues that criminal behavior is a result of normal learning processes, developed through social and nonsocial reinforcements acquired from interactions with others regarding criminal behavior. In brief, the SLT of crime posits that “social learning occurs through observation, imitation, and reinforcement in a person's environment” (Simons & Burt, 2011: 554).

The social learning theory examines how people learn, develop their identities, and interact with others in society. According to this theory, persons develop aggressive behaviors by observing others engaging in similar actions and witnessing the reinforcement of those behaviors over time (Bandura, 1973). It argues that people engage in crime because of their association with others who engage in crime as well as being surrounded by individuals

involved in criminal behaviours. The argument is that individuals who are in contact with others who may not hesitate to commit murder will imitate that behaviour. As a result, these individuals start viewing murder as either desirable or at the very least occasionally justified and become murderers themselves. So, learning criminal behaviour occurs through exposure to people who embrace that particular behaviour.

According to Gabarino (2015), many individuals raised in violent neighbourhoods often come to believe that resorting to violence for self-protection or to command respect is essential and that opting for death over dishonour is better than being deemed a coward. Gabarino (2015) further states that criminals commit immoral acts to attain a sense of justice. The majority of murderers, according to Singer and Hensley (2004:473), “experienced extraordinarily catastrophic levels of humiliation and parental rejection throughout their early years and turned to act violently as a way to vent their anger”. With that in mind, killers resort to murder as a permanent solution to their childhood humiliation and to restore their sense of worth (Singer & Hensley, 2004). The aforementioned demonstrates how a person's experiences as a child may influence their proclivity to violence later in life; thus, childhood experiences and environmental factors can lead individuals to become future criminals, including potential murderers.

3.3.1 Applicability of SLT to the Study

The social learning theory of crime was well-suited to this study as it helped the researcher to understand and explain the elevated murder rate in Umlazi Township. It was utilised to explain how males in Umlazi learned to be perpetrators of the murder. As Umlazi is the capital hotspot of murder, youths residing here become accustomed to violent crimes as they observe such incidents in the area, especially if those crimes are committed by people they know personally and spend much time with (their peers) and people who they look up to (their role models). If the violent behaviour by these people continues, they learn and imitate the behaviour thinking that the behaviour is justified because the individuals committing these crimes often do so with impunity and are their role models (Akers, 2012).

Being exposed to the violent environment of townships also encourages criminality. Some individuals residing in Umlazi witness incidents of crime and even murder on a regular basis. It is therefore easy for them to imitate this kind of behaviour and to emulate it. So, as murder

continues to escalate, the young generation pays attention to this kind of behaviour and begins to model it. When retention occurs, a person internalises a memory of a violent incident, particularly when they observe such behaviour firsthand or are constantly in the presence of people who have criminal tendencies (Simons & Burt, 2011). These steps that individuals follow to develop social learning develop over time during and after observing certain behaviours. When an individual remembers an incident, that is when reproduction is stimulated. Feeling motivated to behave in the same manner then emerges as the person develops the ability, supported by other factors, to imitate observed crimes. Many murder offenders in Umlazi go scot-free due to a lack of evidence to apprehend them, and this serves as a vicarious reinforcement for others of the desire to do the same. Failure to apprehend murder offenders in Umlazi is one of the main reasons why this crime is escalating.

3.3.2 Limitations of Social Learning Theory

Akers' Social Learning Theory (SLT) has been influential in explaining criminal behavior, but it faces several limitations. Hollin (2013) asserted that the first limitation of the theory is its overemphasis on the social environment and learned behaviour, while neglecting the influence of individual psychological factors, including personality traits, mental health, and genetic predispositions, that also play a role in criminal behavior. The second limitation of the theory is its difficulty in operationalising concepts such as differential reinforcement and imitation which make it difficult to measure consistency in empirical research (Akers and Sellers, 2013). Another limitation is the ambiguity surrounding causal direction. The third limitation as per Lilly, Cullen, and Ball (2019) is that many studies supporting SLT demonstrate only short-term effects. As a result, it is challenging to determine whether observing aggressive role models leads to sustained aggressive behavior over time, raising concerns about the long-term applicability of these findings to real-life situations. Lastly, the theory is more effective at explaining socially influenced crimes but has limited applicability to crimes that are impulsive, opportunistic, or committed by isolated individuals (Tibbetts, 2019). The provided limitations of this theory indicate that while SLT provides valuable insights into the learning processes behind crime, it also needs to be integrated with other theories to offer a more comprehensive understanding of criminal behavior.

3.4 Summary of the Chapter

In summary, two criminological theories were determined to explain clearly what motivates people to commit murder. The general strain theory effectively illustrates how specific strains and stressors, such as failing to achieve personal goals, encountering negative stimuli, and losing positive stimuli can lead individuals to channel their anger into violent actions. This concept aligns with hegemonic masculinity identity theory, which suggests that when men face certain strains, such as financial, romantic, social, or psychological pressures, they may perceive their identity as being threatened. As a result, some may resort to extreme behaviors, including murder, to defend it. Additionally, social learning theory was also shown to play a crucial role in the commitment of murder, emphasizing that a person's background and environment somewhat significantly increase the likelihood of developing criminal tendencies, potentially culminating in murder.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology and design, outlining the methods used to collect the empirical data necessary to answer the primary research questions introduced in Chapter One. This includes the various steps and procedures that the researcher undertook to gather and analyse the data that were obtained from participants drawn from the Umlazi police station, generally referred to as the GG police station. As mentioned earlier, the study aimed to garner deep insight into the murder phenomenon in Umlazi township located in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal from the perspectives of SAPS murder detectives. The research achieved this goal by engaging in an extensive literature review and obtaining empirical information by generating thick data from the study participants. This chapter focuses on the methods that were used to obtain these data. It is divided into sections to logically explain and justify the utilisation of various methods and techniques. The discourse elucidates the location of the study, the research approach, the research design, the research paradigm, the sample population and sampling method, the data collection process and instrument, and the data analysis procedures. This section also addresses the ethical considerations upheld throughout the study to ensure trustworthiness.

4.2 Study Location

This research took place in Umlazi, which is a township that forms part of the Durban Metropolitan Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa (2022), this township is the fourth largest township in South Africa following Soweto, Tembisa, and Kahlehong, and is the only township in South Africa with its own vehicle registration plate number, NUZ. Umlazi is surrounded by Chatsworth to the north, the city of Durban to the west, the former Durban International Airport and Isipingo to the east, and Makhutha to the south (Staff Writer, 2018). Umlazi has a total population of 404 811 (8 500/km). It is notorious for high rates of crime, particularly violent crimes. As the community is growing, the number of various crime cases has increased. Umlazi is divided into 26 sections. There are only two police stations in this area, which makes it hard for residents to report every case because they cannot afford to travel to the police stations as transport costs are high. The study location was the main police station which is located in

section F in Umlazi. It is commonly known as GG police station. This police station was selected because it is the largest police station in the area where serious cases are reported.

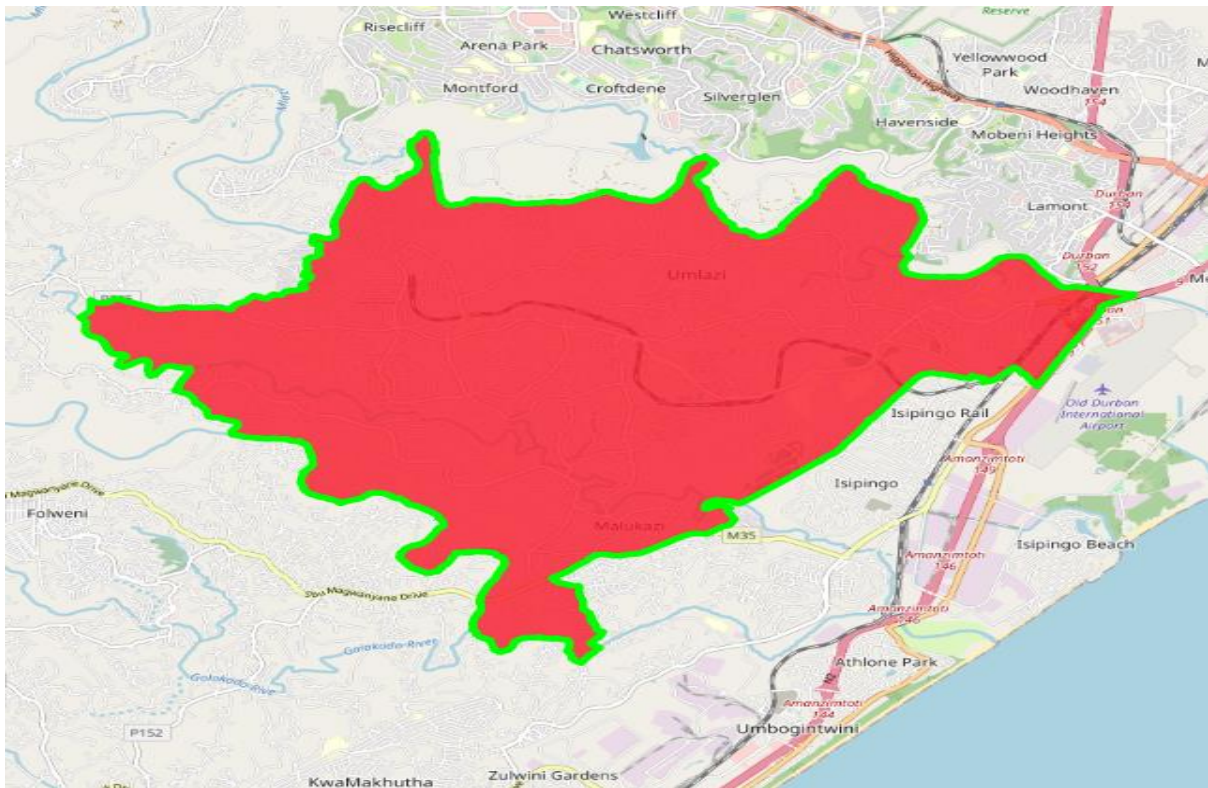


Figure 3: Map of Umlazi

Source: Google Image, 2017

4.3 Research Approach

A research approach refers to the process chosen by the researcher to gather, analyze, and interpret data. It provides a framework for addressing the research questions by guiding the overall methodology for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2014). According to Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2020), there are three primary approaches used in social research: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research approaches. As the aim of the study was to gain knowledge, insight, and alternative perspectives on murder cases in Umlazi, SAPS detectives from the GG police station were sampled. The study used a qualitative approach to achieve its objectives. The qualitative approach was suitable for the study because it facilitated the exploration of the societal problem of murder through people's expressions, thoughts, and experiences. The qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to view the world from the point of view of the participants, hence information that was rich and descriptive was generated. People's perspectives of their surroundings and physical environment, as well as

their insight into and experiences of murder cases, were elicited. The participants were SAPS detectives, also referred to as investigative officers, who assisted in explaining the high rate of killings in Umlazi, thus assisting the researcher in gaining an in-depth understanding of the murder phenomenon in Umlazi from their points of view.

4.4 Research Design

A researcher needs to establish a design for the proposed study to devise a comprehensive plan for the procedures that will be used to investigate the research topic. According to Babbie (2014:73), a research design is “the actual plan in terms of which you obtain research participants or subjects and collect data from them”. There are various types of research designs, but this study adopted a phenomenological study, which was suitable for this research project because it facilitated the interpretation of participants’ perceptions, perspectives, and beliefs to comprehend the particular phenomenon under study (in this case murder) while suspending the researchers’ prior convictions regarding the phenomenon (Wilson, 2015). This phenomenological study relied on the participants’ perspectives to provide insightful perspectives on murder. Utilising this technique allowed the researcher to fully understand and evaluate their lived experiences and to gain deep insight into the murder phenomenon. The researcher thus engaged in fieldwork by conducting interviews with the purposively selected participants, and their insights provided a deeper understanding of their perceptions and experiences, which helped address the research objectives and goals. In this process, an exploratory research design was utilised.

4.5 Research Paradigm: An Interpretive Approach

A research paradigm is a strategy, model, or pattern for conducting research. It entails the ideas, beliefs, and understandings that allow the exploration of the phenomenon under study. Neuman (2014) states that a research paradigm is a conceptual framework the researcher uses to examine various elements of the methodologies that are used to execute a study. The research paradigm is an important component of the research as it offers direction and guidance to the researcher (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This study adopted an interpretive research paradigm as it offered the researcher a clear guide on how murders occurring in Umlazi should be studied and analysed. The interpretive paradigm was used because it is based on comprehending a social reality as experienced by those who inhabit it (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). An interpretive paradigm is highly beneficial for researchers seeking detailed and insightful data from a particular demographic area, as opposed to relying on statistical analysis. This paradigm

was ideal for the study, providing the researcher with a platform to gather comprehensive knowledge about the nature, causes, and intervention programs designed to reduce murder. Hence, the subjective world of murder detectives who engaged with the murder phenomenon in Umlazi township was explored.

4.6 Sampling Method and Procedures

4.6.1 Sampling

To eliminate unwanted participants from the research study, sampling was applied because including the entire SAPS detective population in the study was impossible. Neuman (2014) alludes to sampling as the process a researcher employs to select a group of individuals, organisations, or units from the target population and to include them in the study. Sampling in qualitative research aims to create a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Gill, 2020). In qualitative research, sampling may adopt one of two techniques, which are probability and non-probability sampling. This study adopted the non-probability sampling technique to circumvent a random participant selection process which could have resulted in the study including participants with irrelevant knowledge and experience. The study participants were therefore selected using purposive sampling. According to Hennink et al. (2020), the major objective of purposive sampling is to concentrate on the specific demographic characteristics of the sample that are of interest as such participants can effectively assist the researcher in answering the study questions. This type of sampling was advantageous to the study as it permitted the researcher to select participants with the most valuable and rich data whose views would be relevant to the aim and objectives of the study. Gill (2020) further states that purposive sampling may be used to gather data in the form of spoken language.

There are different strategies of purposive sampling that a researcher may employ, but the most appropriate purposive sampling technique for this study was homogenous sampling. This means that the researcher selected participants based on their similar characteristics and traits that would be of specific interest to the researcher (Gill, 2020). As this study was interested in obtaining the views of Umlazi SAPS detectives, participants of the same occupation were identified and recruited.

4.6.2 Sampling population

Fifteen (15) participants were selected from the pool of SAPS detectives specialising in the murder component and working at the Umlazi GG police station, but one withdrew due to illness. These participants are sometimes referred to as investigative officers. Umlazi police station is mandated to investigate all crimes committed in all sections of Umlazi and it is in charge of the second, smaller station in Umlazi known as Bhekithemba SAPS. The researcher visited the GG station to set up meetings with relevant officials and was granted authorisation to work with detectives dealing with murder cases in the township. After receiving the gatekeeper's letter of permission, the researcher was routed to the satellite station from where these detectives operate. During the selection of the participants, priority was given to detectives investigating murder cases. The selection of the participants was executed with the assistance of their commander, Lt Col Nkwanyana. In total, 15 murder detectives were recruited to participate in the study.

The sample needed to meet the following inclusion criteria:

- They had to be official SAPS detectives working with murder cases in Umlazi.
- They had to be fluent in speaking both IsiZulu and English.
- They had to have policing experience in investigating murder-related cases.

No police officers or detectives were excluded as participants on the grounds of ethnicity, race, gender, age, unit of operation, or rank.

4.7 Data Collection

Flick (2017) explains that data collection involves systematically gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in a way that allows researchers to answer predefined research questions. Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008) characterise data collection methods as techniques and procedures used to gather information for research purposes. Primary data were gathered directly from the study participants, particularly from 15 murder detectives working at the Umlazi police station. The participants were chosen because they specialise in and had experience with murder incidents occurring in the area. Hence, they were required to provide information that would explain and describe murder in the Umlazi region.

4.7.1 Interviews

Data were collected using semi-structured in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted one-on-one with the participants in both isiZulu and English, depending on the participants' ability to express themselves clearly and unambiguously. The data could be accurately transcribed as the researcher is proficient in both languages. Gill et al. (2008) define semi-structured interviews as a type of qualitative interviewing technique that enables the researcher to obtain a deep understanding of the topic under investigation. This type of interview utilises a pre-determined set of open-ended questions that prompts discussion and offers the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular responses in more depth by asking probing questions (Brinkmann, 2014).

The procedure to conduct the semi-structured interviews required planning. During the planning stage, SAPS management and administrators at the GG police station assisted in identifying the potential participants for the study. A list of prospective interviewees was compiled and the researcher made sure that the participants who were recruited would form a representative sample that would be familiar with murder investigations. When conducting the semi-structured interviews, the researcher had a list of predetermined questions in an interview schedule. However, the interviews were directed rather than controlled by the schedule (Flick, 2017). In this scenario, the researcher served as an observer and facilitator while the participants were viewed as subject matter experts. Another phase of the preparation was the formulation of the interview instruments, such as drafting the interview protocol and interview schedule. The interview schedules (Annexure E1 and E2) were created with reference to the questions that the researcher intended to ask to ensure that the interviews would be consistently in line with the objectives of the study. The interview protocol covered procedures that were followed for the administration and implementation of the interview.

4.7.2 Data collection instrument

An interview schedule was utilised to collect the data, meaning that the questions that were asked during the interview had been created in advance. Becker (2019:74) defines an interview schedule as “a plan for an interviewer or a researcher that contains a set of structured questions that have been prepared beforehand [and] that serves as a guide during the interview for collecting data about a specific issue”. As the interview questions were prepared in advance, they were well thought out and allowed the interviewer to obtain rich information as she asked

follow-up questions to clarify responses to the prepared ones (Gill et al., 2008). The data that were gathered were therefore relevant and useful and affirmed the reliability and credibility of the study. The use of an interview schedule contributed positively to the study as it provided a guide and direction for the researcher during the interviews. Furthermore, employing this type of instrument also avoided any deviation from the study goals and objectives.

The researcher arranged for an audio recorder and a notepad and kept records of the interviews to prevent potential data loss. With the participants' consent, audio recordings were made of 12 (twelve) participants, whereas 2 (two) participants refused to be recorded and 1 (one) participant withdrew from the study. The questions posed were employed to achieve the research objectives and the aim of the study. Also, each interview included a reminder to each participant that their participation was entirely voluntary. The research tools were used in a manner that allowed the participants to fully express their perceptions of the murders that had occurred in the Umlazi region.

4.7.3 Time frame and place

The interviews were conducted in English and IsiZulu to accommodate the language preferences of the participants. The interviews were conducted from the 1st of April to the 30th of May 2024 and were conducted at the Umlazi police station (eGG). It was not easy for the researcher to conduct these interviews during the day as police officials worked either a day or a night shift of at least 12 hours and she was not allowed to interview them while on duty. Due to their tight work schedules, the only option was to interview the participants early in the morning before they started or after they had ended their shifts. This was around 07h00 to 08h00. An alternative strategy was to make an appointment to interview them when they were off duty. Even if they were interviewed when off duty, the venue for the interview was the police station because it was forbidden to interview them outside this facility. Each interview took about 30-45 minutes because the researcher didn't want the participants to lose interest during the proceedings. The researcher informed each participant that participation would be anonymous and confidential. Consent forms were generated and distributed to the participants to sign only after they had voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

4.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is a crucial part of every research project. The data collected for this study were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that identifies, analyses, and interprets themes that emerge from interview data (Neuman, 2014). This approach was adopted because it was suitable to effectively utilise and derive meaning from the police officials' responses in accordance with the study's aims.

Thematic analysis is suitable for a qualitative study like the one at hand. It allowed the researcher to analyse data that could not be interpreted using quantifiable techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2017). Thus, the purpose of using thematic analysis was that it allowed the classification and description of the selected participants' views, opinions, knowledge, and experiences. Generally, the goal of thematic analysis is to identify and analyse themes and patterns in the collected data that are important or interesting, and to explore these themes to address the research questions and objectives (Armborst, 2017). The themes were labelled for the logical analysis of the data. The procedure involved a collection of recordings to review the discussions and content in the participants' interviews. To determine a suitable analysis unit, the researcher transcribed all the audio recordings verbatim and the transcripts were then cross-referenced with the original recordings. After examining the quality of the data, the unit of analysis was identified which established the context during the analysis stage.

Six steps were followed for thematic analysis: (i) becoming familiar with the data; (ii) generating initial codes; (iii) searching for themes; (iv) reviewing the themes; (v) defining and naming the themes; (vi) producing a report (Braun & Clarke, 2020). Each step is discussed below.

(a) Becoming familiar with the data

According to Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, and Braun (2017), this stage is crucial as the researcher immerses themselves in the data while paying close attention to field notes and interview transcripts. The initial step in the analysis process is to become familiar with the topic and to immerse oneself in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2020). In this step, the researcher familiarised herself with the data collected from each police officer. An audio recorder and written notes were used during the interviews, and the researcher listened repeatedly to the audio recordings so that she could transcribe the data. This ensured that all the responses were scrutinised and that a clear understanding was obtained of the data set. The researcher brainstormed ideas as

she perused the transcripts and notes and made notes of the codes that emerged to categorise them at a later stage as themes for the presentation of the findings. Relevant information thus emerged and was processed quickly and efficiently as she knew what to find and where to find it.

a) Generating initial codes

Once the researcher had familiarised herself with the data, she began to take notes on potential data items of interest, questions, connections between data items, and other preliminary ideas. This was the beginning of the coding process where data were translated into codes which were recorded in the form of keywords, key ideas, and/or statements related to one another. The data were organised into meaningful segments and each segment of data that was relevant to the research questions was coded.

b) Searching for themes

When gathering data through codes had been completed, the third step involved the examination of the coded data extracts to look for potential themes of broader significance. A theme is a “patterned response or meaning derived from the data that informs the research questions” (Braun & Clarke 2017:82). For example, the participants were consistent in stating that most of the murders were the result of gang violence, substance abuse, and robberies. All the codes that highlighted this statement were grouped to create a theme based on the meaning they conveyed. Therefore, all the identified codes were translated into themes.

c) Reviewing themes

After the process of recording the emerging themes, step four was to refine these themes. This was intended to check whether the initial themes were meaningful and relevant to achieving the objectives of the study. The themes were reviewed by revisiting the data gathered from the interviews, which were then organized into coherent groupings. Relevant data for each theme were subsequently collected.

d) Defining and naming themes

Once the themes had been established, step five was to create a definition and narrative description of each theme and state why it was important in addressing one of the broader study questions (Braun & Clarke 2017). Therefore, at this stage, the researcher refined the established themes in detail to offer a clear and comprehensive understanding of the data captured under

each theme. Additionally, the researcher named the themes and explained their coherence and relationships with one another.

e) Producing a report

This step involved writing up the final analysis and discussing the findings. Conclusions were reached based on the findings and the researcher produced a report based on the collated and fully developed data. A concise, comprehensible, coherent, and non-repetitive final report was written of the findings. This process ensured that details of all the information pertaining to the study objectives were written concisely and in a structured and logical way.

4.8.1 Advantages of thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was relatively simple to apply because it did not require the use of theory to inform the analysis (Armborst, 2017). Thus, a rich, detailed, yet complex account of the data could be provided (Alphonse, 2017). Thematic analysis offered theoretical freedom as the process was highly flexible and the researcher could modify interpretations depending on what the study required. The thematic content analysis did not need the detailed theoretical and technological expertise required by the other qualitative approaches, which made it a highly accessible form of analysis (Alvaro, 2017). Using this form of analysis, the researcher readily identified patterns in the responses by simply reading them and tabulating the key themes in the responses. Alvaro (2017) further argues that thematic analysis is also useful in understanding the key features of large data sets as it forces the researcher to take a well-structured approach to handling data which, in this case, assisted in producing a clear and organised final report (Walters, 2016).

4.9 Trustworthiness of the Research

According to Wassenaar and Mamotte (2012), one of the areas of difference between quantitative and qualitative research is in the use of and the importance given to the concepts of validity and reliability. The terms validity and reliability in qualitative research indicate that the research is credible and trustworthy. There are some ways to define and establish validity and reliability in qualitative research which, collectively, is known as ‘trustworthiness’. Ensuring the trustworthiness of the research should occur at all stages of the research process, particularly in the literature review, the use of methodology, and the analysis of the findings (Norman & King, 2020).

In the literature review phase, the researcher meticulously evaluated existing studies and ensured that the credibility and relevance of the sources cited were affirmed. Wassenaar and Mamotte (2012) state that this critical examination sets the foundation for the entire research endeavour as it establishes a framework of affirmed knowledge upon which new insights can be built. Subsequently, during the methodology development, researchers implement rigorous methodologies and transparent procedures to uphold the integrity of the study. This includes employing appropriate data collection techniques and addressing potential biases and limitations. Finally, in the interpretation of the findings, researchers exercise diligence in analysing the data, reaching conclusions, and presenting the results accurately. Through these concerted efforts at every stage, the researcher ensured the trustworthiness of the work and fostered confidence in the reliability and validity of the reported findings.

Hence, in conducting the study, the researcher ensured trustworthiness to yield reliable findings and conclusions by adhering to the recommendations of Guba and Lincoln's (1999) advice. They emphasise that trustworthiness is defined by four essential components, namely: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability, and these four components are interlinked to reflect validity and reliability. The researcher thus applied these requirements as follows:

4.9.1 Credibility

According to Wassenaar and Mamotte (2012:185), "credibility involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants in the research". Since qualitative research studies investigate people's perceptions, experiences, feelings, and beliefs, it is believed that respondents are the most qualified to assess whether the research findings accurately represent their opinions and emotions. According to Norman and King (2020), this involves utilising multiple sources of data or methods within a particular field to consistently identify and compare recognisable patterns. The researcher was committed to using information that was provided by the participants during one-on-one semi-structured interviews. In presenting the data, the researcher incorporated verbatim quotes from participants along with interpretations of their meanings. The findings aligned with the participants' experiences and the insights they shared during the data collection process. In the discussion section, these data are integrated with additional secondary data provided in earlier chapters of the study, such as the literature review chapter. Previously conducted research

projects were utilised to confirm the validity of the participants' data, demonstrating their credibility.

4.9.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which qualitative research findings can be generalized, transferred, or applied to other settings or contexts (Norman & King, 2020). Qualitative researchers acknowledge that knowledge gained in one context may not necessarily be relevant in another or even in the same context at a different time. To enhance transferability, researchers employ strategies such as purposive sampling and thick descriptions (Wassenaar & Mamotte, 2012). These approaches allow readers to assess whether the findings may apply to other contexts of interest. In this study, the researcher utilized purposive sampling, deliberately selecting participants based on their ability to provide meaningful insights related to the research topic.

In addition to achieving transferability, the researcher recorded and described the data and observations using rich, detailed information reflecting the participants' perspectives, which were deemed relevant for exploring murder cases in Umlazi near Durban, KwaZulu-Natal although not generalisable, the findings may inform other settings facing similar situations, and this will ensure that the study is transferable in future explorations of the murder phenomenon in other areas in KwaZulu-Natal.

4.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is indeed closely intertwined with trustworthiness. Dependability in qualitative research closely aligns with the concept of reliability. As Norman and King (2020) explain, it focuses on whether the same results would be obtained if the same phenomenon were observed twice. The researcher ensured that appropriate research methods were employed to generate reliable data aligned with the study's objectives. To enhance the consistency of findings, participants were encouraged to share their honest perceptions regarding the rising murder rate in their community. The interpretations of these perceptions could vary among different researchers conducting similar studies. However, the data concerning the murder issue in Umlazi were gathered using reliable methods, thus the findings may be considered trustworthy. This was accomplished by employing thematic analysis to obtain and interpret the responses offered by the participants. The researcher guaranteed the consistent application of all the

procedures involved in this form of data analysis. Consequently, the outcomes obtained aligned with findings from prior studies.

4.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is like maintaining objectivity in a qualitative study (Norman & King, 2020). However, objectivity is not always essential in qualitative studies, provided that personal biases are acknowledged and addressed in the write-up. This can be achieved through practices such as bracketing interviews or reflexivity. Confirmability of qualitative data is ensured by continuously reviewing and validating the data throughout the collection and analysis process, aiming to produce findings that others could reasonably replicate. A transparent coding schema that outlines the codes and patterns identified during analysis helps document confirmability. (Robson & McCartan, 2016). To ensure confirmability and dependability, the researcher maintained an audit trail. In addition to audio recordings and ethical documents, this trail included observation notes, a reflexive diary, member checks, peer reviews, and verbatim transcripts. The reflexive diary was used throughout the study to document personal feelings and biases, allowing the researcher to capture insights or information that could not be recorded through audio alone.

The data was thoroughly and consistently interpreted to ensure that both the raw data and the meanings participants attributed to their experiences of police killings were reliable and coherent. To validate the findings and audit the research process, the researcher sought guidance from her supervisor. Additionally, an external audit was conducted by employing an editor to review the entire study, ensuring that the interpretations were unbiased and that any limitations were properly acknowledged.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

4.10.1 Ethical considerations pertaining to the South African Police Service (SAPS)

Ethical considerations are a fundamental aspect of any research project. For this study, the researcher applied for and received a gatekeeper's letter (Annexure B) from the Head Office of the South African Police Service situated in Pretoria to access the Umlazi police station. According to Arthur (2019), gatekeepers are individuals within organizations who have the authority to grant or restrict access to research settings and participants. Gatekeepers represent any individuals or groups whose knowledge, connections, or membership within a research

population make them essential for gaining access to that population. The researcher adhered to all the ethical requirements as stipulated by the SAPS National Instructions 4 of 2022 and was granted full approval to conduct research involving members of the SAPS.

The researcher was aware that some trauma might arise during the interviews when the detectives revisited some details. Hence, the researcher applied for and obtained a letter of support from the South African Police Service Employee Health and Wellness Psychological Services (EHW), stating that they would provide the necessary psychological support to SAPS members who were willing to participate in the study (Annexure C).

4.10.2 Ethical Guidelines of the Social Research Association (2003)

Adhering to ethical standards ensures that research is conducted responsibly and that researchers meet established guidelines. Thus, a Research Proposal outlining the study and its methodology was presented at a University of KwaZulu-Natal colloquium in May 2023, and the Proposal was approved.

Any research involving human subjects that is conducted under the auspices of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) requires the approval of the UKZN Research Ethics Committee. The committee in charge of the Discipline of Criminology and Forensic Studies is the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC). An ethical clearance application was forwarded to this committee it granted full approval (Annexure A). Data collection did not commence until ethical clearance had been provided by this committee. Moreover, the moral principles of autonomy and respect, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice as proposed by Wassenaar (2006) were taken into consideration before and during the research process. The researcher and participants needed to forge a strong foundation of understanding and collaboration, therefore the researcher needed to be transparent about the study's goals and objectives right from the outset. Before data collection commenced, the researcher clarified the dynamics of the data collection method to the participants and outlined their roles in the process.

4.10.2.1 Informed consent

Researchers are responsible for ensuring that individuals participating in a study provide their consent voluntarily and that their participation does not subject them to unnecessary harm. (Wassenaar & Mamotte, 2012). The study participants were briefed about the study before they gave their consent to take part in the research. The researcher thus explained the nature, purpose, and objectives of the study in detail to the participants and assured them that their names would be kept confidential. The researcher then obtained the participants' permission to participate in the research project as they signed the consent form which clearly stated that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time should they decide not to continue. One participant did in fact withdraw from the study due to work commitments. All these conditions were laid out in the attached consent forms (Annexure D1 and Annexure D2) provided in English and IsiZulu respectively. Each participant's full consent to participate in the study was obtained.

4.10.2.2 Autonomy

The autonomy of all individuals involved in a study, as well as the researcher's respect for their dignity, must never be compromised (Bhattacharjee, 2012). To uphold the autonomy of the participants and demonstrate the researcher's respect for their dignity, informed consent forms were signed and all the participants were treated as self-sufficient beings. All participants were informed about the purpose and objectives of the research, as well as the voluntary nature of their participation, which included their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any compensation. They were also asked to consent to being audio recorded. Two participants chose the latter option.

4.10.2.3 Confidentiality

The researcher emphasised the principle of confidentiality by incorporating a confidentiality clause in the informed consent form. Additionally, this point was reiterated verbally during the interviews. In this dissertation, the confidentiality of research participants is upheld through the use of pseudonyms (in the form of codes) and by ensuring that participants' identities are not included in the recorded data. The detectives' names are not used in the study report. Instead, the letter D (referring to Detective) and a number next to it are used when they are quoted. For example, D-1 asserted: "*One of the challenges that we face is...*".

4.10.2.4 Non-maleficence

Bhattacharjee (2012) contends that no harm should befall research participants either as a direct or indirect consequence of the research. The researcher had the obligation to ensure that no harm befell any study participant and they were therefore not exposed to any harm. As the study explored the sensitive issue of murder from the perspective of SAPS officials, it could raise unpleasant events or cause distress to the participants. Hence, the researcher informed the participants that if any question asked during the interview left them feeling emotionally upset or anxious, a psychologist or a social worker from EHW would be ready to offer a counselling service.

4.10.2.5 Beneficence

According to Bhattacharjee (2012), the principle of beneficence emphasises that researchers should act in the best interest of the participants. This principle guided the researcher in safeguarding the participants' well-being and ensuring ethical treatment. This was accomplished by avoiding any harm to the participants and ensuring they received maximum benefits from their involvement in the study, beyond just financial compensation. The benefits that this research offers are the solutions that are proposed to help address the issue of murder efficiently and effectively in their area of operation. This study also benefits other researchers by contributing to the broader body of knowledge on the phenomenon of murder within the township context. By adding to the existing literature on murder, it potentially offers insights and strategies that other researchers can build upon, ultimately advancing collective understanding and the ability to address this significant issue.

4.10.2.6 Justice

Bhattacharjee (2012:139) also contends that “justice requires that researchers treat research participants with fairness and equity during all stages of research”. This includes a balanced selection of participants, offering support to those who may experience distress during the study, and providing meaningful benefits to the community. Participants were selected equitably through purposive sampling. No participant was excluded from the study based on their race, gender, age, or religious affiliation. The researcher also ensured that all participants were treated fairly and equitably during the interviews.

4.11 Summary of the Chapter

In modern times, research has been increasingly used to explore social realities. It is therefore applied in many methodological contexts with each having a specified purpose. This chapter details the research methodology for a study on murder cases, focusing on SAPS detectives. A qualitative approach was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of murder through the detectives' perspectives, generating rich descriptive data on their experiences and insights. The study interpreted the detectives' beliefs and lived experiences, particularly regarding the high murder rate, employing a phenomenological design. The interpretive research paradigm guided the study, facilitating an exploration of social realities and subjective insights into the nature, causes, and potential interventions for the murder phenomenon. The study participants were selected using purposive sampling, which was homogenous sampling where participants were chosen based on their similar characteristics and traits. The study consisted of 15 murder detectives with one detective withdrawing due to personal reasons. The data was collected using semi-structured in-depth interviews and interviews were audio recorded to avoid data loss. Furthermore, thematic analysis was used to analyse the collected data. Additionally, the study ensured trustworthiness by adhering to ethical considerations. Autonomy, confidentiality, beneficence, and non-maleficence were maintained throughout the study. In the next chapter, the data are presented and discussed and the findings are analysed with reference to the findings of similar but earlier studies.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the heart of the study as it represents an analysis of the data obtained during the study and the findings are analysed and discussed. The findings emerged following a logical and ethical qualitative research approach that allowed the data to be collected by means of semi-structured one-on-one interviews involving SAPS detectives based at the Umlazi police station. The purpose of the investigation was to explore the complexities and causes of the unacceptable number of murders that had been committed in Umlazi Township and the researcher obtained data based on the experiences of selected SAPS murder detectives stationed at Umlazi police station. All the data obtained from the interviews were analysed using the thematic analysis process (Chapter Four). In this chapter, verbatim quotes from the transcriptions are presented in italics and analysed and discussed. In keeping with the policy of anonymity, the participants are not identified by name each participant is allocated a code. These codes range from D-1 to D-14, with the acronym D referring to Detective.

5.2 Primary themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data

Table 4: Summary of emerging themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories of Sub-themes
Nature and extent of murder cases in Umlazi	<p>The meaning SAPS murder detectives attached to the murder phenomenon</p> <p>Number of murder cases reported per month.</p> <p>The notable increase in murder cases reported at Umlazi police station: killings in the last five years.</p> <p>Common types of weapon used to commit murder</p> <p>The gender and age groups most likely to fall victim to murder</p>	

Factors contributing to murder in Umlazi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alcohol - Robbery (armed and house robbery) - Drug and substance abuse - Unemployment and poverty 	
Challenges experienced by SAPS murder detectives to solve murder cases	<p>Challenges experienced inside and outside the workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heavy workload - Mental strain and stress resulting in trauma (the impact of murder crime scenes) - Limited resources - Lack of witness cooperation 	<p>Coping mechanisms applied by murder detectives to address challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Witness protection - Manpower - EHW services
Preventive strategies implemented to curb murder	<p>Intervention programs implemented to curb murder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police visibility (patrols) - Community Policing Forum (CPFs) - Awareness campaigns - Conducting operations such as searches 	Effectiveness of these programs

5.2.1 Theme 1: The nature and extent of murder in Umlazi Township

The first theme that was identified responded to the first objective of this study which was to explore the nature and extent of murder in Umlazi Township. As a consequence of addressing this objective comprehensively, subthemes were further identified which were: the meaning detectives attached to murder, the number of murder cases reported per month, the notable increase in murder cases reported at Umlazi police station (i.e., killings in the last five years), common types of weapons used to commit murder, and the gender and age groups most likely to fall victim to murder.

5.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1: The meaning of murder

The key focus of this study was to explore the murder phenomenon in Umlazi Township from the perspective of SAPS murder detectives, and it was therefore important to understand their respective definitions of murder. The majority of the participants held very similar views regarding the concept of murder as their responses showed that they understood that murder was associated with the intentional and unlawful killing of a person by another. The reader should note that the participants' responses were unedited and are therefore offered verbatim in the interest of authenticity.

Participants responses to the question of their understanding of murder are provided below:

“Murder is explained as the unlawful and intentional killing of a person” (D-1).

“Murder is the intentional killing of a person. The reason I say it is intentional is because no person in his right mind would permit you to kill him or her. So, it is intentional killing” (D-5).

“Murder is the intentional taking of someone's life unlawfully” (D-6).

“Murder is an unlawful death of a person where a person was killed intentionally” (D-9).

“Murder refers to the killing of a person intentionally. To be considered a murder, there has to be deliberation and intent to kill that particular person” (D-10).

“Murder is the unlawful killing of another human being with malice aforethought. The two important elements are the intent and the unlawfulness of the act” (D-12).

Other participants had similar views to the responses provided above as they stated the following:

“To conclude that someone was killed, there must be a person who was killed on purpose by another person. Sometimes it happens that a person dies unintentionally as long as he dies at the hand of another person that is considered murder” (D-4).

“Murder can be or is an incident where a person is killed intentionally and unlawfully but it depends on how it is being committed. For example, it can either be where a person was stabbed, assaulted with an instrument, or by hands, and where a person was shot with a firearm. These incidents must result in the death of a person to be called murder” (D-7).

“Personally, I have attended murder scenes firsthand. I can say that murder is the brutal killing of a person by another person which is unlawful and intentional. The things I

have witnessed in murder scenes show cruelty. I once attended a murder scene in section F, here at Umlazi where an 18-year-old boy was stabbed in his stomach and intestines were all outside” (D-8).

In the literature review section, the first objective was based on the nature and extent of murder. The participants were asked about their understanding of the concept of murder and their responses were in line with the definition of murder offered by Kemp (2015), which is that murder is the unlawful and deliberate killing or causing the death of another human being. This is in line with the comments provided by the participants below:

“Murder refers to the intentional and premeditated act of causing the death of another person” (D-13).

“Murder is the deliberate act of taking another person's life which is viewed as the most severe form of deviance against societal norms and values” (D-14).

All the interviewed participants mentioned two critical elements, namely intention and unlawfulness. The intention aspect implies that the perpetrator had a conscious objective to end the victim's life, which differentiates murder from accidental or negligent killing, while the unlawful element means that the act violates legal statutes and is not justified by any legal defenses such as self-defence. Thus, murder is characterised by both the perpetrator's deliberate intent to kill and the lack of any lawful justification for the act. This means that the detectives viewed the nature of murder as an act of violence that it causes another person's death.

The next question required information on the participants' knowledge and perceptions about the number of cases reported at the Umlazi police station per month.

5.2.1.2 Sub-theme2: Number of murder cases reported per month

To understand the extent of murder in Umlazi, it was essential to get an overview of the number of cases reported and the number of crime scenes that detectives had to respond to per month. As revealed by South Africa's crime statistics for 2021/2022, the three provinces in South Africa that recorded the highest numbers of murders in 2022 were KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, and Eastern Cape. The KwaZulu-Natal Province took first place with 6 495 murders in the year 2022. This underscores the nickname attached to KwaZulu-Natal as the murder hotspot of South Africa. Of the three townships that recorded the highest number of murders, Umlazi was

at the top as the region with the highest murder. When asked about the number of murders reported at Umlazi police station per month, the respondent replied as follows:

“Oh, that is hard to say, but on average I can say that twenty murder cases are reported at this station per month. Sometimes it can happen to have less or more than twenty. This past weekend we had 4 murders reported and it is the first weekend of the month. There are others reported for this month before these four came in. So, you can count for yourself to see how many cases are reported in just one month” (D-1).

“Okay, Let me calculate. In this station, there are eleven murder detectives. Each person is allocated two murder dockets to investigate. So, 2 murder dockers multiplied by 11 murder detectives is 22 murder dockets. It is safe to say plus or minus twenty-five cases are reported monthly because sometimes it happens that some detectives get more than two dockets to investigate” (D-2).

“Ever since I joined this station we have never had murder cases of less than twenty and they have never exceeded 30. So, plus or minus 25 cases are reported per month. Imagine after your last visit three days ago, three murder dockets were opened. I think you can see that not even 3 days goes by without a murder report” (D-4).

“The number of murders reported per month depends on that particular month. But here at Umlazi it happens that murder cases reached 20. It can be 20 and even more because sometimes it happens that six people were killed in one incident which makes it a six counts murder because there are six victims” (D-6).

“I am not too sure of the exact number but plus or minus 30 murder dockets are opened in one month. The reason I am saying plus, or minus is because sometimes there are less than 30 cases reported and sometimes there are over 30 cases reported. Thus, I can't provide you with a correct figure” (D-10).

“In Umlazi township, we have plus or minus 25 murders a month. It depends on how busy that month was. In months where there are holidays, a high number of murders are reported even reaching 35 in one month” (D-11).

“Mmmh, That is hard to say but minus or plus 25 murder cases are opened here at Umlazi police station. The reason I emphasise on the plus or minus is because it happens that less than or more than 25 cases are reported in one month” (D-14).

The above responses did not reflect the number of dockets that were assigned to each detective per month, but the number of murder dockets received by the station. The majority of participants provided almost similar figures that ranged above twenty (+20) and less than (-30) murders. These figures, although based on estimates, affirmed the high prevalence of murder incidences in Umlazi, thus emphasising that Umlazi is a township where violent crimes are rife. Some participants stated that it could happen that murder cases reported in a month reached about thirty, depending on factors they did not provide at that stage. These participants stated:

“I can say between twenty to thirty murder dockets are opened monthly. I am saying this because it happens that during the months when there are holidays, the number of people killed increases to 30 or more. For instance, during Easter and December Holidays the number of murders reported increased at an alarming rate compared to months without any holidays. On normal months 20 or fewer murders are reported but on months with Holidays, 30 or more murder cases are opened” (D-3).

“Let me see. It would be better if I rate out of 10 because to estimate the exact number is impossible but all I can say is that the murder rate is high here in Umlazi. Too high that on some days it even reaches 30. It gets hectic especially around payday, like the 15th and the 30th or 1st, it hectic around those days” (D-5).

“I don't want to lie there are a lot of murder cases reported my girl, especially during holidays. I can't exactly provide you with a figure but in one month murders can reach 30 here in Umlazi. It depends on how busy that month was” (D-8).

The above responses distinguished between ‘slower’ and ‘busy’ months and affirmed that the number of murder cases reported per month increased ‘during busy months’. They argued that holidays were associated with heightened stress due to family conflicts and increased alcohol consumption which escalated tensions and led to violent confrontations. Also, the detectives averred that social gatherings and celebrations sometimes turned hostile, particularly when alcohol was involved as it impairs the judgment and self-control of drinkers, which potentially

results in deadly outcomes. These reasons were attributed to escalating monthly murder figures of up to 30 deaths.

5.2.1.3 Sub-theme3: Increase in murder cases in Umlazi in the three years prior to the study

South African Police Service Annual Crime Statistics (2022) revealed a notable and disconcerting escalation of murders in KwaZulu-Natal in recent years. In 2021, KwaZulu-Natal recorded 4 825 murders which increased significantly to 6 495 in 2022, bringing the provincial death rate to 56 per 100 000 of the population. The number of murders reported continued to rise rapidly in 2023 when 6 947 murders were recorded. SAPS Crime Statistics (2023) also revealed a significant increase in murders in Umlazi Township. In 2021, Umlazi recorded 103 murders, but this number increased significantly to 221 in 2022 and continued to rise, reaching 233 in 2023. The majority of the participants agreed that murder had increased in Umlazi township and that this had a significant impact on the increased murder rate in KZN Province. The participants responded as follows:

“Yes. Murder has increased in the last three years. According to our book SAP13 in which we recode murder cases, in the last years, murder cases recorded in SAP13 did not exceed 20 cases per month but looking at the recent SAP13 for the financial year we reached and far exceeded 20 cases reported each month. This is where I get to see whether murder has increased or decreased. For now, it has increased and is still increasing” (D-3).

“Murder has increased compared to the last three years because when I see our station's contact crime statistics, murder is the crime that caught my attention. From the year 2020 until today murder is still increasing in Umlazi. The latest statistics released showed an increase of 100% in murder cases at Umlazi which is double the number we got last year” (D-4).

“Compared to the last period, which is 3 years, the total number of murders committed has increased in Umlazi because there are many cases opened or reported compared to the past years. To prove that murder is increasing, there is a book murder detectives use to keep a record of the murders reported each year. In the past years that book was not

used to the end but now it has become full to the extent that a new one is opened before the year ends” (D-5).

“Ever since I arrived to work in this station, murder has been increasing. In fact, it is escalating because each month we are receiving new cases. In the latest statistics, between January and March of 2024, Umlazi recorded the highest number of 83 cases in three months. From 62 cases between October and December of 2023” (D-9).

“Compared to the past years, Yes. Murder is increasing. Each year when the year ends the crime analysis office usually does a comparison sheet for each crime. Looking at that sheet, it is observed that murder is continuously increasing as the numbers keep on rising on the comparison sheet” (D-11).

“As a murder detective with experience in the murder unit at Umlazi, I can affirm that there has been a noticeable increase in murder cases over the past years. This is based on the observation noted in the Annual Crime Report from the South African Police Services. The crime statistics show an upward trend in the murder rate in Umlazi from 2021 till now” (D-13.)

“I have been a murder detective for almost ten years now in Umlazi police station and I can say without being doubtful that murder is indeed increasing in Umlazi. The detailed analysis of crime reports released by SAPS reveals an increase in both the numbers of reported cases and the severity of these incidents” (D-14).

“Based on my experience as a murder detective, murder is increasing. During lockdown, murder decreased as people were restricted from interacting with each other, they spent most of their time indoors. But after the covid-19 restrictions were withdrawn murder cases started increasing once again at an alarming rate as people were exposed to each other. As they are exposed to others arguments take place leading to murder” (D-12).

Statistics corroborated the detectives' view that Umlazi was consistently an area in KwaZulu-Natal where murder incidences were on the rise. All the interviewed participants agreed that murder incidences had increased in the three years prior to the investigation, and they further stated that the numbers were still rising at an alarming rate. These findings suggest that urgent preventive measures should be devised to curb the rate of murder in this township and not only in Umlazi but also in the whole of KwaZulu-Natal as statistics affirm.

5.2.1.4 Sub-theme 4: Type of weapons used to commit murder.

The participants understood that suspects used various weapons to commit murder, but it was pertinent to determine the types of weapons accessible to Umlazi residents. The responses corresponded with Alpha and Glaze's (2021) view about the different types of weapons used in murders in South Africa, with particular reference to various firearms and other weapons such as knives or cutting instruments as well as parts of the body (hands, fists, and booted feet). According to Zawitz (2016), of the 24 922 homicides that were committed across Africa in 2022, 20 258 were committed using firearms. It was therefore important to obtain the views of SAPS detectives on the types of weapons used to commit murder in Umlazi Township, and they offered the following information:

“Most of the time firearms and knives are used to carry out murder. The majority of these firearms are illegal and unlicensed. I don't want to say 100% of murders committed here in Umlazi are firearms-related murders but 90% of these murders firearms were used” (D-2).

“That is non-discussable. Firearms are used to kill people here in Umlazi. Out of twenty murder cases reported per month, 15 of those cases victims were killed using different kinds of firearms. So, firearms are the most used tool” (D-3).

“The majority of murder cases that investigate people were killed by firearms. 96% of these firearms are unlicensed because when taken to ballistic analysis they came back with negative feedback that there is no visible serial number” (D-4).

“Most of the time when we are called to murder scenes, the victims are usually shot dead. From my experience as a first-hand responder to murder scenes, Firearms are

the common weapons used. Even though it happens that a victim was stabbed, it doesn't compare to the rate firearms are used" (D-8).

"The most common tools used to commit murders in Umlazi are firearms and sharp-edged weapons such as knives. Although some of the victims are killed using knives, this is unlikely to be the case. I can say 80% of the murders are firearms-related and 20% of those murders are where sharp instruments were used. Firearms play a significant role in killing" (D-9).

"That's obvious. Firearms. The majority of murder cases reported in this station are Firearms related" (D-12).

"Most murder cases here in Umlazi emanate from firearms and knives. If I can estimate, I can say in 90% of murder cases, firearms were used" (D-11).

"The most common type of tool used to kill other people is a Firearm which is later found to be unlicensed. Sometimes knives are used but they are not used as firearms" (D-5).

The participants were generally in agreement as they mentioned that the most common weapons used were firearms. Some participants stated that firearms were used as they were readily accessible in the township. As purchasing a firearm and obtaining a license constitute a difficult process, it may be assumed that these weapons had mostly been stolen during burglaries. One participant's views corresponded with the information provided by Statista Research Department (2023) which asserts that one of the reasons why firearms are so popular is their ease of concealment and accessibility in homes.

The participant stated:

"My sister is Firearm. Firearms are a leading cause of most murders in Umlazi. The accessibility and prevalence of illegal guns make them a common tool for committing murders in townships, mostly here in Umlazi" (D-13).

"Firearms are the most used in murders. Stabbings with knives or other sharp objects are also frequent. Both these two tools are easily accessible and commonly used in interpersonal disputes" (D-14).

The information provided by the participants under this subtheme provided a clear and consistent picture of the predominant role that firearms played in the murder cases they had dealt with in Umlazi. Each participant highlighted the use of firearms when murders were committed, which affirmed their preference for acts of violence. The consistency across the participants' observations highlighted a troubling trend as firearms should be legally controlled and restricted, which seemed to overshadow all other methods, even stabbings. The illegal possession of firearms should therefore be investigated and rooted out in Umlazi.

Knives and other bladed instruments were revealed as the second most common weapons, indicating the use of such dangerous weapons was also rife and should not be overlooked in violence prevention strategies.

5.2.1.5 Sub-theme 5: The gender and age group that are likely to fall victim to murder

UNODC (2019) found that murder victims were mostly males as this gender accounted for about 97% of all the perpetrators of murders worldwide. UNODC (2019) further emphasises that even though South African women are six times more likely than the global average to be slain, men are much more vulnerable as they are generally more likely to be both the victims and offenders of homicides than women. Similarly, Josephine et al. (2019) assert that, in South Africa, 79% of the murder victims are males. Additionally, Josephine et al. (2019) emphasise that the highest rate of male murders occurs among those aged between fifteen (15) and forty-five (45), which is the period when men are most likely to pursue masculine ideals. The participants were asked about the gender and age group that were most likely to fall victim to murder in Umlazi Township. The majority of the responses were in line with UNODC (2019) findings and the views expressed by Josephine et al. (2019). The participants stated:

“The number of years I have worked as a murder detective, males between the ages of 18 and 40 are more prone to be the victims of murder” (D-1).

“As much as men are the ones who perpetrate the commitment of murder, they are also the ones who are the victims of murder. The ages of the victims are between 18 and 35 years of age. Basically, male youth are the ones who become victims of murder” (D-4).

“I could say that victims are males between the ages of 25 and 40. This is the age where males become desperate to succeed and are at the highest risk of being involved in violent crimes as a means to achieve their goals” (D-10).

“Males are significantly more likely to be murder victims than women. Young Adults between 18 to 34 years have shown the highest murder victimization rates. This is linked to higher participation in violent activities, gang-related violence, and other prevalent risk factors” (D-12).

“The gender that is more likely to be murder victims is males. Particularly young men with an age range of 18 to 35 years. This is because of their higher involvement in violent crimes and their likelihood of being involved in confrontations” (D-14).

“It is hard to say because anyone can become a victim of murder, but most persons involved in murder-related cases are males at a young age, it can be 18 to 40 years. Young stars like things that they cannot afford hence they find themselves involved in deadly situations” (D-7).

“The gender that is more likely to be murder victims are males, mostly between 17 to 25 years. This age group is often more exposed to environments and situations where violence is more likely to occur, such as in gang activities, or social settings that may involve alcohol and drug use” (D-5).

“Most of the victims in my dockets are between the ages of 25 to 40 years and are males. It has happened fewer times that a victim is a female but most of the time it happens that a female is killed it is usually a domestic-related murder” (D-2).

Some participants noted that both genders tended to fall victim to murder. However, they also agreed that men were significantly more likely to be murdered than women. The participants offered the following insights:

“Both males and females become murder victims here in Umlazi. But in most cases, victims are males who are in their young adulthood stage between the ages of 21 and 35. This is the sensitive stage of their lives whereby all means they want to succeed and have their things resulting in engaging in criminality to achieve them” (D-6).

“Young adults, both females and males between the ages of 15 and 29, are the most common victims of murder. But males are significantly more likely to be murder victims than women overall because they are often linked to gang violence and drug trafficking. In contrast, women are more frequently the victims in the context of domestic violence” (D-9).

“Both males and females become the victims of murder. However, males are more likely to be victims of murder compared to women. Women only become victims when killed in domestic violence situations. The group that shows a high rate of victimization is males between the ages of 21 to 35 years of age” (D-13).

These and the former responses highlighted a consistent pattern in murder victimisation as they emphasised that males, particularly those in the age range of 18 to 40, were significantly more likely to be murder victims. This suggests the vulnerability of young adult males to violent crime. The repetition of similar age ranges and gender specifications across multiple responses indicates a robust pattern that was observed by the detectives based on their experience. The participants’ statements also raised the point that the specified age group (about 18 – 40) would be at higher risk of murder due to several factors: a propensity for violence, involvement in gang-related violence, and high alcohol consumption. It may be argued that these risk factors create a perilous environment in which young men are disproportionately exposed to situations that may result in murder. Collectively, the insights provided by the participants underscore the complex interplay between gender, age, societal expectations, and violent crime and provide a nuanced understanding of why young men are disproportionately exposed and vulnerable to murder.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Factors contributing to murder

Identifying a single motivation for or cause of murder is exceedingly challenging due to the complex interplay of factors that influence the behaviour of a murderer. The interactions between the perpetrator and the victim(s) can evolve over an extended period before a murder is or murders are committed. Several participants revealed that different factors resulted in the occurrence of murder. This theme responded to the second objective of the study which sought to explore the factors that contributed to the high murder rate in Umlazi. When understanding the powerful drivers of murder, both society and the SAPS can develop strategies for the

prevention and management of this crime and its perpetrators. The participants referred to factors such as house robberies, armed robberies, alcohol abuse, drug abuse and the drug trade, inequality, unemployment, gang violence, arguments, and access to firearms.

5.2.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Alcohol abuse

According to the World Health Organisation (2018), alcohol consumption may be linked to murder as intoxication impairs judgment, reduces inhibitions, and exacerbates underlying psychological issues, leading to an increased risk of aggressive or violent behaviour. Additionally, Kiama (2022) states that most interviewed suspects of murder admitted that the crime had been committed when they were under the influence of alcohol. Some participants provided similar responses to the views of the World Health Organisation (2018) and Kiama (2022). The following insights were offered:

“The main cause of murder is alcohol. When people are under the influence of substances their ability to handle situations calmly is influenced and increases the likelihood of aggression. With that being said they are then involved in unnecessary fights that lead to stabbing and shootings, most of the time resulting in murders” (D-1).

“Alcohol abuse is the main factor that causes murders among young youth because being intoxicated impairs judgment and decision-making. When judgment is compromised, a person reacts aggressively when engaged in arguments with others causing the death of the other person” (D-2).

“Another common factor is alcohol consumption. Alcohol reduces the brain’s ability to control impulses. This can lead to sudden, unplanned acts of violence leading to murder, especially if the individual is provoked or in a highly emotional state” (D-3).

“In this township murder hotspots are liquor outlets. People kill each other when are under the influence of alcohol following small arguments that lead to fights” (D-6).

“The other cause that can follow drugs is the use of alcohol. As most murder incidents do happen people are drunk, they stabbed one another to death in taverns and along the roads. This happens because the time they are intoxicated their decision-making is

negatively influenced and cannot differentiate between right and wrong. But when they are sober they regret their actions” (D-7).

“Most of the murders here in Umlazi emanate from alcohol usually in shebeens. People are involved in conflicts fighting for alcohol, fighting for a girl, and others fighting just for the sake of fighting no argument is involved. The problem is that they don’t want to be reprimanded. Recently, there was a case where young boys were fighting in a shebeen, and an older person intervened to stop the fight but was shot dead just because he was helping. So, you see having a gun while drinking is a problem because if the suspect was sober, he wouldn’t have fired a shot” (D-8).

“Another factor is substance abuse. Murder is often associated with higher rates of substance abuse as individuals take drugs or drink alcohol to cope with their stress and despair. Substance abuse impairs individual judgment, reduces inhibitions, and increases the likelihood of engaging in violent behaviour such as armed robberies that sometimes result in innocent people being killed for their belongings. Many people lost their lives due to these incidents just all because of money to feed addiction or buy alcohol” (D-9).

The above responses revealed that alcohol abuse tended to be a primary contributing factor to murder, especially as its consumption is commonly rife among the youth and abused in specific locations like shebeens. Each participant emphasised the role of alcohol in escalating conflicts into fatal altercations. The responses also highlighted a pattern of aggression linked to alcohol consumption, with individuals engaging in unnecessary and often deadly fights over trivial matters. The responses additionally illustrated the broader social issue of alcohol-fueled violence in community settings, affirming that interventions to stop these conflicts might also lead to tragic outcomes, as demonstrated by the narrative of D-8 when a peacemaker was killed. This recurring theme of alcohol-induced aggression resulting in murder underlines the need for targeted interventions to address alcohol abuse in the Umlazi community.

Another similarity in the participants' responses was noted, which was their identification of specific environments where murder incidents occurred. These were predominantly liquor and shebeen outlets. The participants’ views suggested that these locations were hotspots for murder due to high and uncontrolled alcohol consumption and the subsequent conflicts that

erupted. The examples provided by the participants showed that disputes over seemingly minor issues such as alcohol, romantic interests, and even unprovoked aggression often escalated quickly due to impaired judgment. Drawing from the response of D-8, the presence of firearms further exacerbated the situation, leading to fatal consequences. When the similarities in the participants' responses are considered, it seems pertinent to argue that the combination of alcohol and access to weapons significantly increases the likelihood of lethal violence. This observation highlights the urgent need for community and policy interventions to curb alcohol-related violence in the various hotspots in Umlazi Township.

5.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Robberies

The majority of the participants agreed that different types of robberies were instrumental in driving most of the murders that had occurred in the Umlazi area. Robberies involve physical contact that is usually of a violent and intimidating nature and that sometimes result in murder. Such a violent crime normally has long-term effects that often linger. Sometimes their effects are permanent as they affect the families of the victims both physically and psychologically. The participants revealed that a significant number of people had been murdered during robberies and burglaries and they explained how robberies had resulted in murder as follows:

“Another contributory factor is robberies. A large number of murders happen during a robbery. When robbers find residents in the targeted houses, and they fight back to protect their properties, that is how murder occurs” (D-1).

“Robberies are also considered to be the factor leading to murders here in Umlazi since some of the murders are committed when criminals attempt to rob other people in the street, and it doesn't go the way they planned it. Murder happens when the victim refuses to submit leading to a fight that further results in one person being killed in the process” (D-2).

“Here in Umlazi, house robberies, and armed robberies contribute significantly to murder rates. During the commission of a robbery or burglary, if the perpetrator encounters resistance or feels threatened, the situation can quickly escalate to violence, resulting in murder. Victims get killed if they resist being robbed. It is unlikely that offenders end up being killed because they are always armed with weapons” (D-5).

“Thirdly, there is a house robbery that led to a murder. The suspects enter a certain house and demand property forcefully. It can be a car parked within the premises, they take belongings such as watches, cell phones, laptops, and appliances then take the car. Most of these robberies lead to someone being shot it can either be an owner of the property or someone who will be there because victims do not let suspects take their belongings easily without a fight. So other people are killed in the process of the robbery” (D-7).

“Another factor that leads to murder is armed robberies. The armed robbers usually use the threat or force to take your things from you and they usually have weapons with them. The presence of weapons escalates the likelihood of physical confrontations resulting in serious injuries or fatalities. During a robbery, if the perpetrator feels threatened, or if the victim resists, the situation can quickly escalate to lethal violence causing murder in the process” (D-9).

“Robberies also contribute to murder statistics in Umlazi. Criminals approach people intending to rob them of their belongings and when things take another route and do not go according to their plan someone is killed. Whether the victim or the offender” (D-12).

“Some murders occur as a direct result of the armed robbery itself. This happens when robbers kill to eliminate witnesses, enforce compliance, or prevent the victim from calling for help. In these cases, the primary intention might be robbery, but the result is often murder” (D-14).

The participants provided similar views on the link between robberies and murder. These views were in line with those of Kramer and Ratele (2012), who argue that murder often occurs as a result of attempted robberies that went wrong. In such instances, the perpetrators had guns and/or knives that were used to kill the victim/s. The detectives highlighted that the fatal confrontation generally occurred when the victim resisted, or when the robbers encountered unexpected obstacles. The similarity in the participants' responses underscores the dangerous potential of robberies to result in fatal encounters, particularly when the criminals feel compelled to use violence to protect themselves and achieve their goals.

5.2.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Drugs

The participants deemed drugs a significant driver of murder. It is well known that South Africa, as a developing country, faces high levels of unemployment, especially among its youth. Due to the high unemployment rate, many young people turn to the drug market to earn money, which often leads to deadly conflicts and disputes that frequently result in retaliatory killings. The participants' responses were aligned with the views of Howell (2015), who argues that drug traders are highly likely to resort to violence due to competition for customers and drug markets and as a way to solve disputes. The following comments are cited to illustrate the participants' views on how drugs contributed to murder.

“Drugs are also a contributory factor to murders. Here in Umlazi there is what is called drug trade conflicts. So, rivalries between drug trafficking and gangs often lead to violent confrontations. This includes territorial disputes, competition over markets, and conflicts over control of supply routes which result in murder when no one wants to change routes” (D-1).

“Drugs conflict to take over territory. Drug dealers kill each other to take over territory due to high competition in the drug market. Drug dealers do not want to share territory since they will not be making enough profits when there are two dealers in one territory” (D-3).

“Illegal drug trade is the common cause of murder. In the context of drug trafficking, disputes over territory, transactions, or competition led to murder. Drug cartels and gangs often use murder to enforce rules, eliminate rivals, or send messages to competitors” D-4.

‘In most cases as we are living in the township, the most ones are drugs. Drug-related murders. For example, let me say I am a drug dealer, and I am sharing a sector or site with another dealer. So, both of us are having customers. The problem starts when so there is what is called greediness between these two dealers. When I see that you have many customers, I will have to eliminate you, but I won't eliminate you as a person, I will eliminate post which are the people that come to me as a boss, give them the staff, they sell the staff and give me the money visa verse. I have to sort out the post to get to

you and your business, but I will not kill you myself I will hire someone to do the job for me. That is how drug-related murders occur eMlazi” (D-7).

“The availability of drugs is also a significant factor leading to murder. Neighbourhoods with high levels of drug activity experience higher rates of violence. The presence of drugs erodes community structures, reduces social cohesion, and increases the likelihood of violence since dealers and traffickers use murder to enforce territorial control, prevent competition, and maintain discipline within their operations” (D-5).

The use of and trade in drugs can also be drivers of murder in a different way than perceived by the majority of the participants. Weatherburn (2022) asserts that many individuals who have become drug-dependent commit high rates of property crime to fund their addiction. Participant D-2 agreed with the statement of Weatherburn (2022) by stating the following:

“Drugs also cause murder in such a way that consuming certain drugs increases aggression or paranoia, leading to violent acts when people want to feed their habits. Their need to finance a drug habit drives individuals to desperate measures, including robbery and burglary, which sometimes escalate to murders”.

Participant D-6 agreed with the Howell’s (2015) argument that the only way for drug dealers to win over the territory that they want to occupy is by spilling the blood of those who stand in their way. The participant stated:

“Murder is associated with the drug trade or market. The illicit nature of the drug market drives high profits and fierce competition, which is often resolved by spilling the blood of other drug dealers, killing them to eliminate competition”.

The above responses revealed that the participants understood that drug use and trafficking resulted in murder for different reasons. The participants’ comments highlighted the link between drug trade activities and increased incidences of murder and emphasised that drug trafficking conflicts could escalate into violent confrontations. The majority of the participants discussed the rivalry among drug dealers and gangs, pointing out how territorial disputes, competition over market share, and control of supply routes often led to fatalities. The consistent similarity across the statements was that inherent violence associated with the illegal

drug trade is driven by fierce competition for control and profits. As per Howell (2015), dealers and traffickers resort to murder as a strategy to eliminate rivals, enforce rules, and secure their operational territories, which collectively creates a cycle of violence that disrupts community stability and safety. The ready availability of drugs is a disruptive element among communities, as dealers and traffickers not only compete with one another but also commit murder to assert dominance and control.

5.2.2.4 Sub-theme 4: Unemployment and inequality

Some participants highlighted that murder was committed due to inequality and unemployment. South Africa has a large percentage of young people who are unemployed despite the fact that some were trained for specific jobs. However, many can't find any employment regardless of their training or willingness to work. The participants shared Nordin and Almén's (2017) view that being unemployed often leads to financial difficulties, which can create stress and desperation. So, individuals facing severe economic strain may resort to criminal activities, including violent crimes and murder, either as a means of survival or due to conflicts arising from financial disputes.

Participant D-4 supported the views of Nordin and Almen by stating the following:

“Unemployment is also the cause of murder. High levels of poverty and unemployment lead to increased crime rates. In desperate situations to make ends meet, crimes are committed for economic gain such as carjacking, and robberies which are likely to turn violent and things get out of control, leading to murder. For example, if a suspect carjacked someone known to him that person will likely be killed to avoid any traces of evidence coming back to him”.

Similarly, participant D-8 said:

“Unemployment along with inequality are also the factors that contribute to the occurrence of murder. Individuals without stable jobs here in Umlazi resort to illegal means to support themselves. Young people joined gangs to earn a living out of desperation”.

Participant D-11 added the following view:

“Unemployment leads to financial hardship, causing poor individuals to struggle to meet basic needs such as food, housing, and healthcare. This economic strain then leads to desperation, pushing some individuals toward criminal activities, including violent crimes, as a means of survival or obtaining resources”.

Participant D-14 responded to the question by providing the following comment:

“Unemployment along with Income inequality is also a contributory factor to murder cases. High levels of poverty and unemployment caused by income quality increase the youth's involvement in the drug trade as a means of economic survival and being able to maintain basic needs. This, in turn, can lead to an increase in drug-related violence, including murders”.

The participants collectively supported Mazorodze and Nsiah's (2020) argument that exposure to criminal opportunities had turned many unemployed individuals into criminals because their failure to achieve financial success frustrated those ranking low in the social structure. Their economic deprivation, which consequently and potentially bred retaliatory crime tendencies, then erupted in violent aggression, which often resulted in aggressive and brutal murder. The participants' responses collectively outlined how unemployment led to economic desperation, compelling individuals to resort to illegal means to sustain themselves. They argued assertively that the economic strain resulting from unemployment drove individuals to join gangs or engage in other illegal activities out of desperation, and this condition often escalated into violence and, ultimately, murder. This created a vicious cycle where unemployment not only affected individuals' lives, but also undermined community safety and stability.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Challenges that murder detectives face during murder investigations

It is very challenging for murder detectives to carry out their duties because they are experiencing difficulties that prevent them from effectively doing their jobs. Most participants admitted that they encountered challenges when responding to murder cases and that these challenges often impeded their efforts to apprehend and bring suspects to book. This theme emerged in response to the third objective of the study, which sought to explore the challenges that SAPS murder detectives face when addressing cases of murder in Umlazi Township. The following sub-themes were also identified, namely workplace challenges such as a heavy

workloads, insufficient resources, lack of witness cooperation, as well as mental strain and stress.

5.2.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Heavy workloads

The first challenge the participants referred to was the heavy workload they had to contend with as murder detectives. Most police officers around the world are overburdened with heavy caseloads. Fahsing and Ask (2013) state that heavy caseloads mean that detectives have to juggle multiple cases at once, which leads to unusual and often unmanageable work schedules. The participants revealed that investigating many cases at once was an obstacle that impeded their ability to solve cases quickly and efficiently.

The following participants had similar views and agreed to a large extent with Fahsing and Ask (2013):

“Workload! There is a lot of work in this field that we are in. It becomes hard to keep up with all the dockets. There are multiple murder dockets that you need to investigate at the same time. That time trying to work on the dockets another docket is assigned to you which requires your urgent attention. While busy on that, you get a call that you need to attend a scene. Yeey it a lot and it causes headache. When I am on leave, I become stressed thinking about the pile of dockets that will be waiting for me on my table when I get back to work. There is no time to rest in this field of work” (D-5).

“There are a lot of challenges that we encounter when responding to and addressing murder cases. First and foremost, it is the workload. As you can see these dockets and other dockets are flashing in, in numbers. The members of the diseased family, want all these cases to be solved as soon as possible. Whereas, for example, we don’t have manpower. As of now, I am sitting at 160-something dockets, I, myself alone. Now tell me, how am I going to solve these dockets? Eventually, as I am busy investigating this case, another case will come up which means I have to leave the one I was busy with even if there is a lead because I have to prioritize. If there is a new case coming in you have to attend to it and see what leads I have and how am I supposed to investigate” (D-7).

“Manpower and workload. Murder detectives here at Umlazi are far short. You can’t investigate 153 dockets. How will you investigate so many dockets by yourself?”

However, you need to investigate them because the number of dockets allocated to each detective ranges at that number that you got, and at the same time dockets are needed by the court. On the other hand, families of the deceased want post-mortem reports which still haven't come back from the pathologists. Honestly, working in such an environment causes the brain to stop working. Maybe you have noticed many police officers are drunkards; there is no way you won't drink because of the way we become stressed when we are at work as we work under pressure and in a toxic environment. Police work alone makes you drunk" (D-8).

The participants disclosed that each detective currently had over 150 dockets to investigate, attributing this overload to a shortage of manpower. The literature also refers pertinently to a shortage of manpower in the SAPS, as affirmed by Wasserman (2016). The shortage of murder detectives increases the pressure on existing detectives and often leads to diminished efficiency. Wasserman (2016) explains that, with fewer SAPS detectives to share their many responsibilities, each detective is forced to take on additional cases, which results in longer working hours and greater stress levels.

Participant D-11 also responded to the question by providing the following comment:

"Heavy workload caused by lack of Manpower. There are not enough detectives or investigative officers. The fewer the detectives the more the work. Not having enough manpower causes workload which leads to us having a lot of dockets to investigate which later leads to other cases being neglected because when the detective is assigned a new murder docket, he/she needs to prioritize that case and leave the other dockets for later. So, balancing multiple cases simultaneously is challenging. The pressure to prioritize certain cases can result in neglect of others, impacting overall case resolution rates. That causes a lot of workload as other cases can be regarded as cold cases".

All the participants emphasised the overwhelming workload that they were faced with, attributing this situation to an unmanageable high volume of cases and the lack of sufficient manpower. Each participant highlighted the intense pressure and stress associated with managing multiple murder dockets simultaneously. They described the burden of the continuous cycle of new cases that demanded urgent attention and that left little time for rest, which exacerbated their anxiety. This constant need to handle an excessive number of cases forced investigators to prioritise new cases over ongoing ones, leading to the neglect of some

investigations. Clearly, this imbalance not only hampered their ability to solve cases effectively, but also increased the overall pressure on the detectives, potentially turning unresolved cases into cold cases. The participants reflected on a constant state of being overburdened with tasks, which of necessity contributed to their mental and physical fatigue.

The following sub-theme exposed mental health as a challenge in effectively addressing murder cases.

5.2.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Mental strain and stress

Some participants mentioned that the challenges they experienced translated into mental strain due to constantly being exposed to scenes of murder. Boshoff et al. (2015) argue that police officers usually develop remarkable stress reactions right after being exposed to dead bodies and dangerous incidents. This means that being exposed to such situations result in sleep deprivation, flashbacks, bad nightmares, and anger problems. Eck and Rossmo (2019) add that such stress reactions eventually result in emotional and psychological problems among SAPS officers. The findings of the current study aligned with the argument by Boshoff et al. (2015), as most participants revealed that being exposed to different murder scenes negatively impacted their psychological well-being. The following responses indicated that the majority of the Umlazi detectives experienced stress as a challenge due to their heavy workload and being constantly exposed to brutal murder scenes:

“The second challenge is mental strain which may result in experiencing trauma in the long run. Attending murder crime scenes can be pretty traumatizing as some of these murders occur in a very cruel manner, so cruel that you would never sleep peacefully without having a bad nightmare or feeling like you are sleeping in a room full of corpses” (D-1).

“Another challenge is trauma. Most of the murder scenes are traumatizing by nature. I am a person and have feelings, so I do experience trauma seeing another person just lying there in a helpless state. Sometimes I do become emotional because it is not like an animal has died but someone’s child is dead. Seeing 8 dead bodies a month alone causes long-term trauma. It is not a normal thing to be constantly exposed to dead people” (D-4)

“Another challenge is Mental health. Repeated exposure to gruesome crime scenes may lead to secondary traumatic stress or PTSD. Experiencing trauma sometimes leads to depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Such issues result in sleep disturbances, hypervigilance, or emotional numbness. My experiences in working with murder cases relate to cases that I just can’t forget easily as they haunt me for some time, especially in scenes where women and children are involved. It becomes so disturbing emotionally to see vulnerable people being victims of murder” (D-12)

“Investigating murder cases causes stress. I guess we are experiencing the trauma of dealing with dead bodies; when you deal with dead bodies on a regular basis, you end up worrying about the fact that one day you will also die and wonder how you will die if people are killed so brutally. These thoughts end up affecting me mentally in such a way that sometimes it becomes hard to fall asleep because when I close my eyes I see corps. I am not suggesting that I have depression but to some extent, stress that is caused by work can lead to depression and anxiety” (D-14).

The participants highlighted the profound psychological impact on detectives exposed to violent and gruesome crime scenes and emphasised the potential for long-term trauma and the need for mental health support in their profession. In this context, Boshoff et al. (2015) argue that the police eventually tend to normalise the trauma they are exposed to. They describe this as a process in which police learn to numb their emotions while detectives avoid using their emotions when confronted with graphic scenes. This was evident in the following participants’ responses:

“Another challenge is stress. I am not saying I experience stress but as a murder investigator, I witness the most horrific acts people do to one another, and I must remain composed and level-headed because my position within society demands it. Seeing other people killed like dogs sometimes traumatised me but I remain strong because of the nature of my job. It is not easy to just erase such events in your mind because you think that someday one of my family members can be a victim of such an act” (D-3).

“Dealing with murder investigations has an emotional and psychological toll on us detectives as we are exposed to dead bodies almost every day. We try to be strong because we need to act professionally at all times, and we need to be strong for our families. Regularly confronting violent death and interacting with grieving families is

distressing. Managing personal emotions while maintaining professionalism in a toxic environment is a constant challenge in such situations and we are traumatised being exposed to such evil” (D-10).

The participants emphasised the traumatic impact of murder scenes on their mental state and well-being and explained that seeking professional help was challenging as it might lead to being perceived as mentally unfit for the job:

“The challenge that we face is mental stress. I attend four to six murder crime scenes per month, and sometimes it gets up to nine. So, seeing dead people that frequently in a month damages us emotionally. We are humans, not robots. We have feelings and over extended periods after encountering horrific and graphic crime scenes affect us psychologically and sometimes lead to trauma that causes hallucinations and bad dreams. I once attended a scene where a person's brain was spilled everywhere in the scene. After witnessing such a scene how are you going to sleep? The minute you seek for help, your colleagues call you weak. That is the disadvantage seen in the police environment. The minute I go consult a social worker or psychologist; it is the time promotions are out. How will I get promoted because I am considered a person who is mentally unstable because I consulted a social worker” (D-8).

The above participant’s comments indicated that witnessing graphic and horrific scenes, such as those involving spilled brains, impacted his psychological well-being, even to the point of leading to hallucinations and nightmares. The participant additionally highlighted a critical issue in the police culture where seeking mental health support is stigmatised, with colleagues labelling those who do so as weak. This fear of stigma not only discourages officers from seeking the necessary help but also poses a threat to their career progression, as consulting a social worker or psychologist is perceived as a sign of mental instability that potentially hinders promotion. This creates a detrimental cycle where officers are left to cope with trauma alone, which exacerbates their mental health issues and undermines their long-term effectiveness and well-being.

The cited comments revealed the consistent prevalence of mental strain, emotional disturbance, and the development of mental health issues such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety among Umlazi detectives who were frequently exposed to ruthless crime scenes of murder. The participants illustrated how repeated exposure to violent and gruesome scenes caused

significant emotional and psychological distress. For instance, the vivid description of being unable to sleep peacefully due to nightmares and the haunting memories of such scenes reinforced the experience of long-term traumatic effects, and the recurring mention of mental health challenges demonstrated the severe impact on these detectives' mental well-being.

5.2.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Lack of witness cooperation

As discussed in the literature, another challenge that the murder detectives encountered was a lack of witness cooperation caused by the distrust of society towards police officers. Skogan and Maxfield (2014) state that the lack of witness protection is the main cause that results in witnesses withdrawing from cases because they feel unsafe regardless of 'police protection'. The majority of the participants supported the idea of Skogan and Maxfield (2014), who argue that community members become resistant to working with the police to provide information that can help solve murder cases because they fear for their lives as suspects will target them or their families if they find out that they ratted them out to the police. The findings by Skogan and Maxfield are in line with the following participants' responses:

“The number one challenge is the lack of witness cooperation. Witnesses are not coming up and giving the statements, they are scared of their lives due to the fear and mistrust generated by contrast killings hence making residents less willing to cooperate with law enforcement or intervene in violent situations” (D-1).

“The challenge is witnesses. People are not willing to come forward with helpful information. People are afraid that if they do give information to the police then the suspects will come after them, hurt them and also their families. Some witnesses agree to write statements but after a day or so they come back and change or withdraw the statement because they have been threatened by the suspects” (D-2).

“The witnesses. Witnesses are not coming forward with information, they don't give statements, they don't want to testify in court because they fear for their lives” (D-3).

“Witness cooperation. People or the community do not want to give information to the police. I say that because it is impossible that in all murders committed here Umlazi no one saw or knows anything. There are witnesses one way or another, but they are just not willing to share that information with the police” (D-6).

“Lack of co-operation from the witness. The community is not supportive at all, and witnesses are afraid to come forward with information. They are refusing to write down statements or testify against the suspects in court. Some witnesses are willing to give out information and write statements, but they are threatened by the suspects at a later stage saying that if they reveal them to the police or tell the police what happened then their families will be killed. With such threats witnesses end up changing the nature of their statements and withdrawing from being witnesses because no one can put their families at such risk. I for one, would never risk with my family just for a case” (D-8).

“Lack of witness cooperation. This is the main challenge that we encounter as detectives. You will find that when the murder happened there were people around but when the police are questioning people no one knows anything. How is that even possible? For instance, a murder happened at the tavern, mind you there are people in the tavern who are drinking only to find that no one saw anything. Note that for us to be able to solve that murder we will need to have witnesses without the witness statement and testimony that case is inactive. People are not willing to cooperate with the police” (D-9).

“The challenge that we have is witnesses. Possible witnesses don’t want to talk, they don’t want to come forward with information that may assist the police in solving murder cases. Even though they have information, they don’t share it with us. Until it happens to people close to them like families and friends they will confess referring to older cases saying the culprit is so and so and also the murder that took place back then so and so was the culprit, referring to the same person although the police questioned them about it then and no one said anything. Now because the victim is a relative they are willing to cooperate. By the time they cooperate, the case is long closed, and information is of no use” (D-10).

“Witnesses also pose a challenge. People don’t want to work with the police to ensure that the suspects are brought to justice. But they decide to keep important information to themselves; information that may be a key factor in solving a case. In some cases, you do get witnesses and their statements but at a later stage witnesses change their minds, stating that they don’t want to be witnesses anymore. There is nothing that can

be done about that because we can't force people to testify when they don't want to" (D-12).

"Secondly, there is a lack of witnesses cooperation. People are not willing to give information to the police, although they have seen what happened, they were there when the incident took place, but they are not showing up as witnesses. Number one, some witnesses saw but did not want to give statements. Secondly, They are witnesses who were there but are not willing to help. This is the main challenge that we face. Witnesses fear retaliation by the perpetrator or their associates. This fear leads to reluctance to come forward, reluctance to testify, or changes in their testimonies. Therefore, it is impossible to solve a murder case without witnesses" (D-13).

All the participants referred to the lack of witnesses as a challenge in addressing murder cases effectively. They explained how it hindered their progress as investigative officers and how the lack of cooperation by witnesses prevented them from solving murder cases. They narrated the common experience that, despite being present at the scene of a crime and having crucial information, witnesses were often unwilling to come forward to provide statements to the police. They argued that the reason for this reluctance was fear of retaliation by the perpetrator/s and/or their associates, which created a pervasive sense of danger for those who might testify and their families. This fear manifested in various ways, including outright refusal to give statements, reluctance to testify in court, or altering their testimonies to avoid potential threats. These comments affirmed that the CJS faces a substantial impediment in gathering the necessary evidence and testimonies and that this makes it exceedingly difficult for the police to resolve cases, particularly murder.

The participants' responses revealed that, without vital witness statements and testimonies, investigations would stall, rendering the case inactive. Clearly, it may be argued that the lack of witness cooperation significantly hampers the ability of the police to gather the necessary evidence and pursue justice. This impediment emphasises the critical role of witness cooperation in solving criminal cases and the severe consequences of their absence and withdrawal.

5.2.3.4 Sub-theme 4: Insufficient resources

The participants mentioned that the SAPS faces severe limitations in terms of manpower, funding, and technological resources. As mentioned earlier by Davis and Henderson (2019), inadequate staffing levels and limited access to cutting-edge technology and forensic equipment can stretch investigative capacities thin, as these impediments delay progress and hinder the pursuit of justice. The participants further stated that insufficient resources within the SAPS put obstacles in their way and prevented them from solving murder cases as this condition caused delays in investigations and the commencement of trials. The following responses corroborated Davis and Henderson's (2019) view that the lack of resources is a major challenge that hinders the effective response to murder cases:

“ The lack of resources is the main challenge that we encounter when investigating murder cases. Having no work resources or having few resources makes our work hard. There is no equipment, there are limited state vehicles. When I am investigating a murder case where a person was shot, I need to have DNA tests done, and also I need to obtain a ballistic report from the laboratory which we do not have here in KZN. I need to prepare for the trip but when I go to the Finance Department they say they don't have money and they are out of budget. I need to put in an application to obtain that money once they have received the budget for the trips. At that time, you don't have the money yourself but because you need to go to Pretoria you are forced to borrow money. On the other hand, there is an issue of limited vehicles. When you ask for a vehicle for your trip you find that all vehicles are fully booked for that day and you have to postpone your trip to a later date because no vehicle is available. At that time, you are getting calls from the deceased's family asking about the case progress of which there is none because you are waiting for vehicles to be available so that you can go and get the evidence tested. When I get a vehicle, I still have to travel a long distance to the laboratory which is in Pretoria to get the evidence tested. Mind you, I won't get evidence the same day, I have to wait days before I can go back and fetch the result myself. By the time I get back to the station, I will have more dockets on my desk”
(D-5).

“Another challenge is limited resources. Detectives often have to work within constrained budgets, limited vehicles, and limited manpower. Firstly, the budget allocated for the detective component is not enough. When we need to prepare for trips to the Pretoria laboratory for forensic results, the finance department tells us there is no money to travel. Yet, some dockets need to go for trial but there are no forensic analysis reports. Meaning the case cannot go to trial without those reports. In that way, a delay is caused. Secondly, other units within SAPS have danger allowances but us detectives we do not. Why is that, because we are also exposed to danger when responding to murder scenes? Not having a danger allowance makes us reluctant to put ourselves in danger or risk knowing very well that we do not have danger allowances. Unlike other units within SAPS, we work even on holidays, but we earn little money. That money is not enough to sustain our lives let alone that of our families. Every day when it is time to go to work we become apathetic because our work is not valued. Thirdly, there are few vehicles in police stations and members are forced to share state vehicles. Sharing of vehicles has its disadvantages. If you know you will take a trip, you need to book the vehicle days prior to making sure that there is an available vehicle for you. Otherwise, you will need to cancel your trip due to not getting a vehicle” (D-11).

Participants D-5 and D-11 revealed the severe challenges detectives face due to inadequate resources, particularly regarding a sufficient budget, the lack of vehicles, and limited support from the Finance Department. Both participants highlighted that the lack of resources hindered effective investigations and caused significant delays in obtaining the necessary forensic reports, which are critical for progressing with murder cases. They further detailed the logistical difficulties detectives encountered, such as the need to travel long distances to Pretoria for lab results and the resultant delays due to the unavailability of funds and vehicles. Furthermore, both responses touched on the financial strain detectives experienced, not just professionally but personally, noting the lack of danger allowances and insufficient pay, which demoralised and demotivate them. The first quote provides a more detailed narrative of the step-by-step struggles faced during a typical investigation, including borrowing money and dealing with family inquiries, while the second quote outlines the broader issues of a constrained budget, lack of a danger allowance for detectives, and vehicle sharing. These comments reveal a comprehensive picture of the dire problems experienced within the detective unit At Umlazi police station.

Other participants provided similar responses as they also detailed delays in obtaining forensic analysis reports as part of the evidence that is critical in court proceedings. The following comments are quoted:

“Another challenge is obtaining analysis reports from the forensic and pathology services. As a murder detective, I wait for days to receive results from forensic analysts. There is nothing you can do without these reports because they are needed in court to enroll a case. When the court date arrives, the case is withdrawn because the docket is without expert analysis. Just like that, all my hard work investigating the case went down the drain because I hadn’t received back the forensic report” (D-2).

“The challenge is delayed reports such as forensic reports, DNA reports, and fingerprint reports. I as the investigative officer happens that I have finalised my investigation but due to the [delayed] report, the case is not taken to court causing more delays in terms of solving the case” (D-4).

“Here at work, we are working together with the mortuary, Bagrin. Let me say I have a murder docket allocated to me and I have a lead on the suspects, and I arrest the suspects. If the deceased passed away at the scene of the crime, mind you the photographer will be summoned to the scene to take pictures. If the photographs have been summoned together with the pathologist’s report, the mortuary guys will be there to take the body to Bagrin Mortuary for the postmortem. Now the challenge is there at Bagrin. The Provincial Head Office is aware that there is a shortage of doctors who are responsible for postmortem duties. On my side, the suspect has been arrested and I will need the postmortem report for trial processing, but it is delayed due to the shortage of doctors. On the other hand, the photographers, the ones who took the photos at the scene, take a long to compile the photo album. The photo album consists of the wounds that were sustained by the deceased. The photos come together with the postmortem before set for trial but the docket won’t go for trial without those. Furthermore, the third thing, if maybe the person was shot, and the firearm was recovered, the firearm as well as the postmortem report needs to go for a ballistic report for DNA comparison. Whereas, when the deceased was assaulted with a sjambok and was stabbed with a knife, and a knife was recovered, it also needed to go to Bagrin to acquire the deceased’s blood. That knife got blood stains maybe the suspect clothes also had blood stains. Now they will have to take the deceased’s blood which is PMD

2 from Bagrin. The knife with blood stains together with the suspect's clothes that also have blood stains are packed and taken to the Pretoria lab for DNA comparison. Now, if we have to prepare for that trip in our organisation is a problem because they will tell you they don't have money. Then how I am supposed to solve that case? Now I have to make what is called an advance, even such advance you will find it in your way or while you are there you need to book a hotel for those days that you will stay while waiting for the results. By that time the still hasn't come in which means you need to have an alternative plan so that when the money comes late you won't be stranded. When I came back I found new cases waiting” (D-5).

“Another challenge is limited state resources. Resource limitations such as budget, manpower shortages, and lack of advanced technological tools hinder the investigation process. We cannot solve a murder case without DNA and ballistics reports. If a person was shot I will need to have a ballistic report as well as the DNA report in a docket. The same thing happens when a person is stabbed, I need to obtain a DNA report and fingerprint report on the knife if the knife was found at the scene. However, due to not having easy access to laboratory technological tools, I need to wait days even weeks to receive back the result from head office, which is 8 hours away from here, and by the time I receive them the case will already be thrown out of court and suspects are released without any repercussions” (D-6).

Other participants also highlighted limited resources such as a lack of vehicles, computers, and landlines when explaining the challenge of insufficient resources in addressing criminal cases:

“The primary challenge is limited tools. We don't have enough tools. For example, Here in my office, I am supposed to have a computer, in my office, I am supposed to have a landline, an alternative telephone. Now you tell me, for example, if I need to attend a murder case and I have to meet up with the victim or deceased family members who do not have a fixed address and live in an informal settlement. I can't get hold of her/him on the phone, where I am supposed to go or look for her. You see it too much” (D-14).

“Insufficient resources. Resources are not as plentiful as they should be. Tools to assist us in responding to and addressing murder cases are not sufficient enough. Vehicles are not enough for us to conduct work-related activities. If the other team is using the

vehicle, the other team needs to wait for the team that is using the vehicle before they can also go outside. This issue of vehicles is a barrier in responding to murder cases because let's say you got a call that a person is shot, how would you attend that scene without a vehicle? You need to wait for a vehicle to be available before you can attend” (D-9).

“Another challenge is the lack of resources. We don't have the resources to carry out our duties effectively in the police department. You see now, I'm busy with paperwork, which I don't like doing it. As we speak, I should have gone out because there is a lead I got in one of my cases that I am investigating but I'm sitting here in the office because there are no state vehicles. There are not enough vehicles, thirty members are sharing seven vehicles which is not okay but what can we say? Mind you, by the time I get the vehicle, I might arrive there and find that my lead is gone meaning I have taken ten steps back” (D-10).

All the participants' responses highlighted the common challenge of insufficient resources in their work environment, with particular reference to the shortage of vehicles. This scarcity not only caused delays in responding to critical incidents, but also forced the detectives to remain passive or engage in less critical tasks while waiting for a vehicle to become available. The waiting time for vehicles directly impacted the ability to respond swiftly to emergencies, thereby potentially compromising the quality of service and outcomes in critical situations such as murder investigations. It was also outlined that the absence of basic office equipment like computers, landlines, and alternative telephones created substantial obstacles in carrying out administrative and investigative tasks, and these delays caused difficulties in locating and contacting individuals, especially those living in informal settlements without fixed addresses.

Upon reflection, it is clear that resource limitations not only impact the day-to-day operations of SAPS detectives but also affect long-term investigative processes and reduce the ability of murder detectives to perform their responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Therefore, without adequate resources, the Department's ability to function optimally is significantly compromised.

5.2.4 Sub-theme: Coping mechanisms to address challenges

After the participants had shared their narratives of the challenges they encountered inside and outside the workplace when responding to murder cases, they were asked if they utilised any coping mechanisms to mitigate the challenges they faced. According to Keppel and Weis (2014), detectives often collaborate and form partnerships both within their stations and with other law enforcement agencies, such as metro police and specialized task forces, to solve murder cases. This close cooperation with other agencies provides additional manpower and resources, promoting the sharing of information and resources across jurisdictions. The National Justice Institute (2024) endorses the views of Keppel and Weis (2014) by stating that collaboration among detectives brings fresh perspectives and specialised expertise to difficult cases. Similarly, the participants provided responses that were in line with the arguments of the above-mentioned authors. To overcome the challenge of insufficient resources, the participants shared the same techniques:

“There is not much we can do to address the issue of resources because every police station has the same issue. However, working together with other investigative officers helps a lot in terms of closing the gap that is caused by a lack of resources. There is a saying that says, ‘Teamwork makes wonders’. So, that is what we are doing, assisting one another to reach victory. Cooperation between detectives goes a long way in such a way that if there is a crisis, other detectives from other units who have experience in the murder unit reach out to help. That is how we overcome the challenges” (D-5).

“To overcome the issue of resources we collaborate with other law enforcement agencies such as metro police, specialised task forces, and federal authorities to provide additional resources and expertise as well as build networks with other detectives and departments to share information and support. Joint operations and shared resources help in managing complex cases” (D-13).

“We use whatever resources we have at that particular time to our advantage. Even if those resources are insufficient we use what we have at that time to address murder cases and forget about things we don’t have. As murder detectives here at the station, we try by all means to work together to successfully solve a case. At the end of the day, there are cases that need to be solved with or without resources” (D-6).

“There is nothing we can do in terms of resources other than prioritizing cases based on factors such as the severity of the crime, availability of evidence, and the potential for solving the case quickly. Without enough resources, we are forced to triage cases to allocate resources to those with the highest probability of resolution” (D-9).

“You need to do anything in your power to solve a murder case using those insufficient resources that you have. As a detective, I have to combine the available resources and see what I can achieve by using them because there is no way I sit back and do nothing because of a lack of resources. If I see that the resources that I have are insufficient, I go to the nearby police station that has those resources and access them rather than not doing anything due to resources. At the end of the day, a job is a job. So, teamwork plays a huge role in closing a gap opened by resources” (D-10).

“When internal resources are insufficient we tend to outsource assistance from other places. We outsource tasks such as forensic analysis because, within the SAPS premises, we don’t have forensic laboratories to use for DNA or Ballistics testing, hence we seek help from Pretoria laboratory in such situations” (D-11).

The participants revealed that teamwork and collaboration among detectives, law enforcement, and other stations were significant in their efforts to close the gap caused by insufficient resources. The detectives also emphasised that working together, both within their own station and with other law enforcement agencies, was essential for addressing resource constraints. By collaborating with other police stations, metro police and specialised task forces, they gained access to additional resources and expertise, which were crucial in managing complex cases. This network of support and information-sharing between different detectives and departments helped to bridge the gap created by resource shortages, highlighting the power of collective effort in law enforcement.

Furthermore, the detectives outlined the importance of maximising the use of available resources and being proactive in seeking support from nearby stations when necessary. Despite the inherent challenges, the detectives stressed the necessity of solving cases with whatever resources were at hand, demonstrating a commitment to their duty regardless of the circumstances. Teamwork within the station ensured that all available resources were utilised effectively, while cross-unit assistance during crises allowed experienced detectives to share

their expertise where it was most needed. This collaborative technique not only enhanced the detectives' ability to solve cases, but it reinforced the idea that working together could overcome any challenge at hand. The participants revealed that, through cooperation, resource-sharing, and teamwork, detectives could effectively manage and overcome some challenges posed by limited resources in their efforts to solve murder cases.

The participants also shared the fact that accessing services provided by the EHW team assisted them in coping with stress and traumatic events that were experienced when conducting their investigations. As stated earlier in the literature review, exposure to trauma may result in distress, which can progress to a wide range of psychological problems in the future. So, as revealed by Sibisi (2022), the SAPS provides various support services to officers, such as social work and spiritual and psychological services. These services generally include counselling and therapy sessions to provide emotional support and capacitate employees with coping strategies. The participants' responses corresponded with the view offered by Sibisi (2022), as they indicated the importance of counselling in overcoming stress:

“In police stations, we have what is called EHW services. EHW services provide us with Peer Support Programs. This program is found in many police departments. This is where us officers get to talk to other colleagues who understand the unique challenges of our jobs and people who relate to our situation” (D-1).

“Here in the police station, we have a unit that focuses on employees' health and wellness. These people are employed to assist police officers who are struggling mentally, emotionally, and psychologically. So, to cope with traumatic events that get exposed to, we make appointments and speak to social workers since they are professionals and are well-trained in helping people with mental health. They provide confidential counselling services to help detectives manage work-related stress and personal issues”(D-4).

The murder detectives revealed a common focus on the availability of mental health support services provided by the Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) unit, and they highlighted the importance of professional counselling and peer support programs. All the participants emphasised the availability of resources aimed at addressing the psychological well-being of police officers. One participant mentioned EHW services and peer support programs, which

he/she stated provided a platform for officers to discuss their unique challenges with colleagues. Similarly, another participant discussed a dedicated unit for employees' health and wellness, emphasising the role of social workers in providing confidential counselling to help officers cope with stress caused by traumatic events. These statements underscored the integration of mental health support into the organisational structure of police stations. However, while some participants focused on the availability and benefits of these services, participant D-3 introduced a challenge within this system:

“There are social workers and psychologists based in each police station to provide professional counselling to officers who might need it. So, if we feel strained or stressed we are more than welcome to visit them and have a chat with them. But it becomes a problem when you go to them, and they don't help you at that instance but rather give you a later date to come.”

This participant acknowledged the presence of social workers and psychologists for professional counselling but lamented the issue of postponement as the immediacy and accessibility of these services were compromised. Thus, officers in need of immediate support might be asked to return at a later date, which can be problematic when timely assistance is crucial. This contrast illustrates a disparity between the intended support framework and the practical experiences of some officers, pointing to potential areas for improvement in ensuring timely and effective mental health support.

One participant also stated the following:

“Me, I have the I-don't-care attitude, but I do get stressed from seeing dead bodies, So, to cope with work-related stress I visit my psychologist once a month. That helps me a lot in staying sane at work. Getting time to offload my emotions to someone helped a lot because after each session I felt so light and relieved emotionally. There are free social workers at work, but I don't like consulting them because other colleagues see you as mentally unfit when you are visiting social workers”(D-8).

The participant quoted above emphasised the importance of personal psychological support, which was to regularly consult a psychologist to offload emotions, feel emotionally relieved, and help maintain mental stability. Despite having access to free social workers at work, the

participant avoided such services due to the stigma associated with such visits among colleagues.

Participant D-10 provided the following response to the question:

“I don’t know if you are aware that here at the police station we have an EHW unit which stands for Employee Health and Wellness Services. This unit provides different programs that help officers deal with stress. They offer what is called Debriefing Sessions. This is the platform for us after witnessing traumatic events, such as dealing with a gruesome crime scene, we participate in debriefing sessions to talk about our experiences and emotions in a structured setting.”

Similarly, participant D-14 stated:

“To cope with all the challenges that we encounter when dealing with murder cases, We as detectives attend case reviews and briefings regularly. These meetings and briefings allow us, detectives to share information, brainstorm ideas, and ensure that all team members are updated on the status of ongoing investigations. These sessions assist a lot in managing cases to avoid workload and spending so much time in cases regarded as cold cases.”

The two participants quoted above shared similar views and highlighted the structural support provided at the police station by the Employee Health and Wellness Services (EHW) unit, particularly through debriefing sessions that offer a structured platform for officers to discuss and process their traumatic experiences. Furthermore, they described the benefits of attending regular case reviews and briefings that not only facilitated the sharing of information and ideas but also helped in managing workloads and preventing the accumulation of unresolved cases.

In contrast to the views above, participant D-11 adopted a more physical approach to stress management by emphasising regular exercise as a means to reduce stress, improve mood, and maintain physical health:

“To cope with stress, improve mood, and maintain physical health, I exercise a lot. I maintain my physical health by regularly participating in activities that assist me in reducing stress. Exercising releases the frustration that comes with the job or work. I get time to be mind-free of all thought that causes stress.”

This participant argued that physical activity provided a mental break from job-related frustrations, suggesting that exercise served as a crucial outlet for stress relief.

The participants' statements revealed common themes of dealing with work-related stress in the police force, although their methods varied. While some participants emphasised the necessity of accessing professional help through support mechanisms for emotional release, whether, through private sessions or organised debriefing programs, others highlighted the benefits of physical health routines in coping with the demands of the job. Despite their different strategies, all the interviewed participants recognised the necessity of finding effective ways to manage the significant stress associated with their roles in law enforcement.

The participants were also asked what they did to overcome the issue of a lack of witness cooperation and the majority shared that there was nothing they could do when witnesses refused to cooperate. Some revealed that the only things they could do were to place potential witnesses in a witness protection program and try to build community trust by developing personal relationships with the public. Skogan and Maxfield (2014) point out that community distrust plays a role in many unsolved murder cases as it makes it hard for police to obtain the cooperation of witnesses to solve murder cases. Reising and Lloyd (2021) offer a solution, stating that building trust with the community through community policing can significantly increase the public's willingness to cooperate with law enforcement. They emphasise the idea that, by being visible and approachable, police officers can create an environment in which witnesses feel safe, comfortable and willing to come forward. Three participants provided responses that aligned with the proposed view of Reising and Lloyd (2021):

“The public feels much better seeing police visible in the communities. This serves as comfort and creates a sense of unity. So, as murder detectives, we are more concerned about building trust with the community. We build this trust by creating personal relationships with the public. We are doing all that so that when it happens that witnesses are being questioned they will be able to trust the police enough by sharing useful information that might assist in addressing the murder cases”(D-2).

“There are ways that police use to ensure cooperation with witnesses. For example, as Investigative officers, we try to build a cooperative environment by approaching witnesses with respect and empathy, showing understanding of their fears and concerns

by offering robust protection programs for witnesses who might be afraid of retaliation. By doing this, we are trying to create an environment where witnesses feel safer and more motivated to cooperate”(D-3).

“To deal with the issue of witness protection, we try to build trust and rapport by building personal relationships with witnesses and showing empathy and understanding to make them feel comfortable, valued, and safe. Even though it does not help a lot, it is better than nothing”(D-9).

These responses underscored the importance of building trust and creating a sense of safety and cooperation between the police and the community, particularly witnesses. Each response emphasised the role of personal relationships in fostering this trust. D-2 focused on the broader perspective of community engagement, suggesting that visible police presence and personal relationships with the public enhanced trust, which is crucial for obtaining useful information in murder cases. Similarly, D-3 and D-9 emphasised the necessity for empathy, respect, and understanding when interacting with witnesses and aiming to reduce their fears and encourage cooperation.

Upon reflection, it seems that all three responses converge on the concept of trust-building as a fundamental strategy for effective police work, especially in serious cases like murder investigations. The participants argued that witnesses were more likely to cooperate when they felt safe, respected, and understood, which could be achieved through robust protection programs and empathetic engagement. While D-2 spoke more generally about community trust and its benefits for police investigations, D-3 and D-9 referred to specific methods to ensure witness cooperation, such as building respect, empathy, and protection. The similarities across all three responses are the need to cultivate personal relationships and to create a supportive environment to foster trust and cooperation from witnesses and the community.

Some participants referred to the witness protection program as a strategy that is utilised by the SAPS to cope with the issue of reluctant witnesses. As mentioned earlier, the US Marshals Service (2023) recommends protection programs as a vital tool in securing witness cooperation in high-risk cases, with significant improvements in relocation processes and support services to ensure witnesses' safety. The participants provided comments that were in line with this argument:

“To address the issue of witnesses, the government has offered what is known as a witness protection program. This program was designed to protect the witnesses from the suspects who may want to threaten them against testifying. If the witnesses are placed under witness protection and they feel protected they are unlikely to withdraw from the case”(D-6).

“There is no way to cope or address the issue of witness cooperation because if witnesses do not want to talk to the police we cannot force them. Forcing them is against work policy. All we can do is promise to place them under the Witness Protection Program to protect them should they wish to cooperate, but they fear for their lives. Even placing them under this program doesn’t guarantee that they won’t withdraw but it is worth the try”(D-13).

The participants shared a common perception of the role and challenges of the witness protection program in securing witness cooperation. Both comments emphasised the primary purpose of this program, which is to protect witnesses from threats posed by suspects to encourage them to testify. The first comment outlined the design and intent of the witness protection program, which is to instill a sense of security in witnesses, thereby reducing the likelihood of witnesses withdrawing from the case. The second comment, while echoing the protective intent of the program, highlighted the limitations and the non-coercive nature of securing witness cooperation, noting that placing witnesses under protection does not guarantee their cooperation but remains a crucial measure. The comments shared by the participants suggest that witness protection is an essential strategy to encourage witness cooperation, but it is not entirely foolproof.

Other participants argued that, if witnesses were unwilling to come forward with the necessary information, there was nothing that could be done as they could not be forced to cooperate:

“As detectives, we cannot force witnesses to talk, so there is no other way to cope with such a challenge, as people say they don’t know anything then they don’t know anything, although they were there when the incident took place. If they say they haven’t seen anything, we cannot force them. The law does not allow us to do that”(D-1).

“There is no way to ensure that witnesses come forward with information because the reason they are not cooperating with us is that they are afraid for their lives. It would be so unfair for us to force them to communicate with us because that would be putting

their lives at risk. There is no way to address this challenge because without witnesses there is no case”(D-2).

Both participants emphasised the difficulty murder detectives face in obtaining information from uncooperative witnesses. The first participant indicated the legal limitations preventing detectives from forcing witnesses to speak, and acknowledged that, if witnesses claimed ignorance or lack of observation, detectives had to accept it. The other participant similarly highlighted this challenge but attributed the lack of cooperation to witnesses' fear for their safety, suggesting that forcing them to talk would endanger their lives and be unethical. The participants ultimately concluded that, without willing witnesses, resolving murder cases was extremely challenging.

5.2.5 Theme 4: Preventive strategies to curb murder

The last theme that was identified responded to the fourth objective of this study, which was to examine existing preventive measures implemented by SAPS management to curb incidences of murder in Umlazi. The severity of the murder phenomenon has become so overwhelming over time that employing safety and security measures has become a necessary need to promote the safety of the general public. However, some felt that current measures were not enough or effective. The participants referred to different types of programmes that could help reduce incidences of murder. These suggestions included collaboration with CPF, police visibility, awareness campaigns, and conducting operations.

5.2.5.1 Collaboration with community policing forums (CPFs)

The participants highlighted that CPFs work with police officials to ensure public safety. As Cano and Rojido (2022) assert, CPFs were launched to serve as a prevention strategy aimed at improving police services through collaboration between the police and the community to reduce crime, curb disorder, and reduce fear of crime by intensively cooperating. The participants confirmed this view by voicing the following:

“There is a CPF. CPFs are working along with ward councillors and the community to fight against crime. CPFs work closely with local police stations to prevent crime in their communities. They do this by enforcing neighbourhood watch programs, patrolling, and reporting suspicious activities that take place in their community” (D-1).

“There is what is known as Community Policing Forums or CPFs developed by SAPS to fight against crime in our communities. CPFs are established in local communities to foster cooperation between the police and the public. By involving community members in crime prevention, the SAPS can gain valuable intelligence, enhance trust, and encourage residents to report suspicious activities”(D-4).

“I would say that because we do have police that focus on crime prevention. Even though some things skip them, but they are there. Some CPFs serve as a vital link between law enforcement which is the police and the community. CPF enhances the overall safety, security, and well-being of the residents”(D-5).

The responses all revealed the role and importance of community policing forums (CPF) in crime prevention and community safety. Each participant emphasised the importance of collaboration among CPFs, the police, and the community. One response focused on the practical activities of CPFs, such as neighbourhood watch programs and patrolling. Another described the implementation of CPFs as an initiative by the SAPS to enhance cooperation and trust between the police and the public, such as the reporting of suspicious activities. The third response added that CPFs act as a critical link between law enforcement and the community to enhance overall safety, security, and well-being, even acknowledging that while some issues might be missed, the presence and role of CPFs remain essential. All three responses underlined the collaborative efforts of CPFs in crime prevention.

The following participants mentioned another program that had been implemented to conduct regular operations:

“There have been measures put in place by Vispol members within the SAPS, such as specialised units. These units conduct daily operations. The deployment of specialised units such as the Tactical Response Team (TRT) and Public Order Policing (POP) to hotspots helps in managing and preventing violent crimes, including murder. As murder detectives, we don’t focus on preventing crime, but we address crime after it took place”(D-2).

“There are prevention measures put in place to help prevent murder from happening. but that is based on the Vispol unit. They do patrols, plan operations, conduct stop and searches for illegal firearms, and shut down taverns that do not have an operating

license for selling alcohol. Also, there is a meeting conducted twice a week by the SCCF committee to discuss murder hotspots and threats. Once murder hotspots have been identified then Vispol will plan an operation to visit those areas”(D-6).

“There is a crime prevention office that deals with preventing crime by conducting operations through stop and search for drugs, illegal firearms, and ammunition. We, detectives, cannot go out there and do stop and search because we have cases to solve”(D-7).

“There is the Firearm Control Act put in place. SAPS has enforced strict firearm licensing laws which include conducting regular audits of licensed firearm owners to help to control the circulation of legal firearms and ensure they do not fall into the wrong hands. They further conduct operations to seize illegal firearms, thus reducing the availability of weapons used in murders”(D-12).

“There are targeted operations. Targeted operations are conducted against known criminal groups and individuals involved in violent crimes. These operations help in reducing the capacity for murder since they include raids, arrests, and the confiscation of illegal firearms and drugs” (D-14).

The above statements shared the common theme of crime prevention efforts undertaken by the SAPS to manage and reduce violent crimes. The participants emphasised the role of specialised units and measures aimed at reducing murder. Specialised units within the SAPS, such as the Tactical Response Team (TRT), Public Order Policing (POP), and crime prevention offices play crucial roles in managing crime hotspots and preventing violence. Similarly, the implementation of measures like stop-and-search operations, shutting down illegal taverns, and the enforcement of strict firearm licensing laws to control the circulation of both legal and illegal firearms were highlighted as critical strategies to reduce the availability of weapons used in violent acts as they aim to disrupt criminal activities and prevent crimes before they occur.

Additionally, the statements highlighted the distinction between the roles of different units within the SAPS, where units like Vispol focus on crime prevention through proactive measures, while detectives primarily address crimes after they have occurred. The preventive measures that were mentioned included shutting down unlicensed taverns, conducting regular

audits of licensed firearm owners, and organising targeted operations against known criminal elements to address potential threats before they escalate. These efforts should be supported by regular meetings, such as those conducted by the SCCF committee, to discuss and strategise around murder hotspots and threats. The overall strategy involves a coordinated approach to reduce the availability of weapons and dismantle criminal networks, thereby decreasing incidences of violent crimes.

Bloch-Wehba (2021) argues that the visibility of police in the community (particularly patrols) provides an effective and responsive policing service as it strives for the reduction of crime and the safety of communities. Whowell and Cook (2019) agree with this view, stating that having police vehicles and personnel visible in the streets will reduce escalating crime levels because the chances of perpetrators being apprehended are high with police officers patrolling the streets. The following participants confirmed these views by providing the following statements:

“Visible policing and patrols have been implemented by the SAPS. Visible police and patrols have been increased. Police regularly patrol in high-crime areas. Their visibility acts as a deterrent to potential offenders. By maintaining a strong police presence, the SAPS responds swiftly to incidents and provides reassurance to the public”(D-3).

“There is an increase in police visibility. Here in the police station, police work in shifts. It is either working a day shift or a night shift. During each shift, police officials patrol around the crime hotspots to ensure that there is no chance for criminals to commit violent crimes”(D-9).

“As murder detectives, we have the end results of a crime committed. There is a crime prevention unit that focuses on preventing crime before it happens. For example, this unit has put patrols in places where murder cases are more prevalent. They patrol areas and hotspots such as taverns because many murder cases are alcohol-related. Also, there are stop-and-searches that focus on closing down areas that sell alcohol without liquor licenses. There are many prevention strategies including operations and awareness”(D-10).

All the above participants emphasised the significant increase in police visibility and patrols by the SAPS, particularly in high-crime areas. Each response highlighted the strategic deployment of police patrols to deter potential offenders, noting the general increase in patrols

and their role in swift incident response and public reassurance. The operational aspect was discussed, and it was mentioned that police officers were deployed in day and night shifts to maintain a constant presence in crime hotspots, thus preventing violent crimes. Similarly, there was a focus on the crime prevention unit's targeted patrols in areas with prevalent murder cases, particularly those linked to alcohol, and the use of stop-and-search operations to shut down illegal liquor outlets. These findings collectively enhance the notion of public safety through visible policing.

Two other participants shared similar views, but referred to awareness campaigns as a key strategy to curb murder in Umlazi Township:

“There are awareness campaigns conducted by the crime prevention team. The SAPS prevention team conducts regular awareness campaigns to educate the public on crime prevention tips, domestic violence, and the dangers of illegal firearms. These campaigns aim to inform and empower communities to take proactive measures against crime”(D-8).

“SAPS has established socio-economic interventions aimed at addressing the root causes of violence and murder among the youth and that are aimed at youth development. Firstly, there are youth development programs. The implemented programs focus on youth empowerment through sports, education, and employment opportunities. These programs help to divert young people from criminal activities and reduce the likelihood of them being involved in violent crimes”(D-13).

The above responses revealed concerted efforts by the SAPS to educate and inform the public about crime prevention through empowerment initiatives, with specific focus on raising awareness and providing practical tips to avoid becoming victims of crime. Additionally, both participants emphasised the importance of socio-economic interventions aimed at the youth in the form of programs that offer education, sports, and employment opportunities to divert young people from criminal activities and to address the root causes of violence. Awareness campaigns foster safer communities by empowering individuals with knowledge and positive alternatives.

The following theme emerged from the previous theme, which was safety measures devised by SAPS to mitigate the killing of people in the Umlazi area.

5.2.5.2 The effectiveness of preventive measures implemented by the SAPS

The participants were asked if any implemented prevention programmes had an impact on the number of murder cases reported and, if so, how they impacted this phenomenon. The majority of the participants highlighted that the strategies put in place did not have an impact on murder rates. They therefore felt that none of the strategies were effective at all in achieving the goal of reducing instances of murder in the Umlazi area. In fact, the participants stated that, even after the programs had been implemented, murder continued to rise instead of decrease. A participant offered the following responses with reference to the effectiveness of crime prevention programmes:

“I would say they are helping although we haven’t seen the results because even those people, like CPF members and committee people, are also targets. They are also killed conducting their duties such as patrolling the area. At the moment we haven’t seen any fruits of their efforts because they are targeted by suspects” (D-1).

The participant pinpointed a challenging situation where community members and officials involved in crime prevention efforts, such as CPF members and committee members, are under threat. Despite their active participation in patrolling and safeguarding the area, their effectiveness is hindered by the fact that they are being targeted and killed by suspects.

Another participant expressed the following view:

“Not really. These strategies are not effective because if they were effective, the reported crime cases including murder cases would be less, but they are not. Instead, they are increasing at a higher speed. Even if crime prevention tries to fight crime, it does not happen in their presence or while patrolling, but it occurs when they are not there”(D-2).

The participant argued that current crime prevention strategies were ineffective, as evidenced by the rising number of reported murder cases. The argument hinged on the observation that, if these strategies had been effective, the crime rate would have decreased rather than increased. The participant suggested that murder typically occurs in the absence of law enforcement, despite efforts to patrol and maintain a visible presence.

Another participant shared the following view:

“I can’t speak badly about the crime prevention unit. So, I will say it is effective even though it is not effective. But it is not assisting us in any way because right now there is a new murder case being opened. Just a day before yesterday, on Saturday, there was another murder reported. Now it is Monday, and another murder was reported. If they were effective we wouldn’t have four murders reported in such a short period” (D-3).

The participant critically evaluated the efficacy of current crime prevention strategies, pointing to the rising number of reported cases as a key indicator of their failure. This participant highlighted a direct relationship between the effectiveness of these strategies and murder rates, arguing that if the implemented strategies had been effective, the murder rate would have declined rather than increased. The participant’s statement suggests that murder persists and even thrives in areas with insufficient law enforcement presence, implying that the visibility and presence of patrols are inadequate.

Another participant provided the following view:

“Even though there are CPFs, they are not effective because they are also part of the community. It is hard to trust them as sometimes the suspects are their friends, relatives, and family and they spend most of their time with these people so they do not report them to the police. Rather, they find ways to hide information that will implicate them in any way. So, tell me how can it be effective if members of the CPF are protecting criminals” (D-4)?

The participant highlighted the ineffectiveness of community policing forums (CPF) due to inherent conflicts of interest. CPFs are supposed to bridge the gap between the community and law enforcement, promoting safety and trust. However, their effectiveness is compromised because CPF members’ lives are deeply embedded in the same community, and some have personal relationships with perpetrators and even suspects. This proximity leads to a lack of impartiality, as CPF members may prioritise protecting their friends, relatives, and family over upholding the law. Such actions undermine the main objective of CPFs, which is to ensure community safety and transparency. When CPF members hide information to shield criminals, they are rendering CPFs ineffective in their role.

Another participant expressed the following view:

“Not yet. As for me, I am not seeing any positive change in violent crime after these prevention strategies were implemented because crime is still happening. Instead of decreasing, it is rising. So, if these strategies were effective then we would not be receiving these many cases to investigate. As we speak I am drowning in work” (D-6).

The above participant expressed frustration with the perceived ineffectiveness of crime prevention strategies, emphasising the ongoing rise in violent crimes despite their implementation. The participant noted that the number of reported cases remained high, which suggests that the measures in place have not yielded the desired outcome of crime reduction.

Participant D-7 stated the following:

“The crime prevention unit is not effective at all because, if they were assisting us, there wouldn’t be murder cases that emanate from unlicensed firearms. There are people who don’t have gun licenses, but they own firearms. All of this would not happen if the crime prevention office was actively doing its job through stop and search. If they were doing their job these firearms would have been recovered long ago” (D-7).

The participant argued that the crime prevention unit was ineffective. The core of the argument was that if the crime prevention office had actively performed its duties, particularly through proactive measures like stop-and-search operations, then the unlicensed firearms that had been utilised to commit murder would have been confiscated, thus preventing fatal crimes.

Another participant expressed the following view:

“These strategies are not effective because the public that they tend to educate about crime prevention tips is the one that perpetrates violence in communities. When awareness is conducted, the public pretends they will take part in stopping crime during a community meeting with law enforcement (Imbizo), but secretly they continue to be involved in violent crime” (D-8).

The above participant critiqued the effectiveness of strategies aimed at educating the public about crime prevention, suggesting that they failed due to the complicity of the targeted audience. This response emphasised that people might outwardly express support and intention

to combat crime during awareness campaigns but, in reality, many would continue to engage in violent activities.

Another participant offered the following view:

“They are not effective. Personally, as a murder detective, I see them being useless, especially those working night shifts because they are not doing anything. These people instead of patrolling they sleep on duty. Where will they get time to patrol around the area if they are sleeping at work? Others take vehicles as if they are going on patrol while they visit their girlfriends using state vehicles” (D-9).

The above response revealed a strong critique of the effectiveness and professionalism of police officers, particularly those assigned to night shifts. The participant condemned those police officers as ‘not effective’ and accused them of being ‘useless’. The criticism extended to their lack of activity during their shifts as it was claimed that they slept on duty instead of patrolling. This rendered patrols ineffective and ‘useless’.

The following view was offered by D-10:

“I don’t think these measures are done enough because operations are conducted once a week. On the days when there is no operation, levels of violent activities committed increase. Patrols are not effective and are also not done enough. Visibility of the police vehicles alone can deter a person who is about to commit a crime. The appearance of a state vehicle causes disturbance to the perpetrator. All of these prevention strategies are not effective as there is a gap in their commencement” (D-10).

This participant revealed that operations were conducted only once a week, implying that this frequency was insufficient to deter crime effectively. The participant further indicated that, on days without operations, levels of violent activities increased, thus emphasising the importance of police visibility as the mere presence of police vehicles can disrupt potential criminal activity.

The following comment was also offered:

“The interventions implemented are effective in deterring trio crimes: property crimes, and other serious crimes but are not effective in reducing contact crimes such as murder, rape, and assault cases. These interventions are not well-supported and

actively engaged to by the residents, and for to that reason, there are no notable improvements in ensuring community safety. Thus, making these measures ineffective in achieving their goals” (D-11).

The participant argued that the effectiveness of some implemented interventions appeared successful, but only in deterring property crime and other serious offenses. However, they fell short in addressing contact crimes such as murder and rape. This means that implemented measures have failed to significantly improve community safety and have been ineffective in achieving their intended goals.

The following participant also shared related views:

“No. They are not effective. Police officers who are assigned to do crime prevention are not committed to doing their job to fight against crime. These police wait for anonymous tip-offs to go and conduct firearm operations. If there is no tip-off they sit and do nothing. This behaviour is motivated by insufficient monitoring and evaluation by their commanders. Without proper supervision, Vispol drags their feet in conducting their duties. If they are committed to doing their job, maybe their strategies can be implemented effectively with positive results” (D-12).

The participant highlighted that some officers were not sufficiently dedicated to their role in fighting crime, as they relied too heavily on anonymous tip-offs to initiate firearm operations. This argument indicates a lack of initiative among officers, suggesting that without incoming tips, they remain inactive. If crime prevention officers were more committed to their duties, their strategies could potentially be more effective in yielding positive results.

Another participant stated the following:

“Crime prevention strategies implemented by crime prevention are not assisting at all because as we speak there are taverns, shebeens, and clubs that operate without liquor licenses. If crime prevention were effective enough all of these taverns would be closed down by now. So, you see they are not effective at all” (D-13).

The participant argued that if crime prevention measures were truly effective, then unlicensed taverns, shebeens, and clubs would have been shut down. Despite efforts to prevent crime,

allowing illegal activities to persist implies a failure of law enforcement and regulations, resulting in lacking and ineffective measures.

Another participant provided the following views:

“They are not effective at all. They are useless. Strategies established by Vispol rely on community involvement which often fails due to poor relationships between the police and the community. Furthermore, these strategies are more reactive than proactive. They focus on responding to crimes after they occurred rather than preventing them. That is why they are not effective” (D-14).

The participant outrightly dismissed the effectiveness of strategies in place to fight against murder. This participant dismissively referred to them as ineffective and useless, attributing this failure primarily to poor relationships between the police and the community. The participant further criticised the reactive nature of these strategies, noting that they prioritised responding to crimes rather than taking proactive measures to prevent them from happening.

All the participants were in agreement that the implemented programs to curb crime and murder were ineffective. They all provided their reasons and believed that the programs alone were not enough, thereby highlighting a perceived gap between strategies and effective implementation. This gap signals a need for reassessment on how such programs can be improved or restructured to achieve their intended goals more effectively.

5.3 Participants’ Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is apparent that the participants revealed a variety of challenges that hindered their efficiency in performing their duties to the highest standard. These obstacles significantly impaired the ability of the SAPS detective team in Umlazi to effectively address the issue of murder and ensure the safety of residents. The challenges they experienced ranged from inadequate resources and insufficient training to bureaucratic delays and a lack of interdepartmental coordination. To successfully overcome these challenges and enable SAPS murder detectives to operate at their full potential, the participants made several pressing recommendations.

Reinstate capped leave and danger allowance for detectives

“I recommend that our government should bring back capped leave or increase danger allowance. In the older days, there was capped leave, if you didn't take a leave, your leave days were converted into cash. What did the ANC Government do? They closed capped leave because they didn't want any money coming out. If not, danger allowance should increase because when conducting detective duties, our lives are put at risk. We put our lives in great danger protecting the lives of others at the end of the day we are worth R400 which danger allowance. At least, we deserve a reasonable danger allowance” (D-1).

Increase police visibility

“There should be an increase in police visibility by employing more officers to effectively deter crime. Assigning more crime prevention officers to patrol known murder hotspots is crucial, as the presence of police can disrupt and prevent individuals from committing criminal acts” (D-3).

Increase manpower:

“I can suggest an increase in manpower. We would appreciate it a lot if the government could employ more police officers because the workload is above us. Having enough manpower can decrease the workload of each detective and we can manage our cases. By doing so, no detective can have 200 and something murder dockets to investigate and also there will be no cases regarded as cold cases. Additionally, Police officers must be well trained in their field of work, mostly the detectives because they are short-staffed and they are the ones that carry all the hardship since they have more duties than other police officials. If the government could employ more detectives and offer them an allowance to motivate them to work hard. Other police officers do not want to come to the detectives component because there are lots of dockets, so offering allowance can encourage others to work as detectives” (D-4).

Improve equipment and infrastructure

“To enhance our effectiveness as detectives, it would be immensely beneficial if the government could provide us with the relevant equipment needed to successfully solve cases. This support would significantly assist us in our work. Beyond this, we believe we have addressed all other areas comprehensively” (D-5).

More recruits and better police visibility for enhanced trust in the police

“I strongly recommend the recruitment of more police. Recruiting more police simultaneously increases police visibility to enhance community safety and deter crime effectively. When police officers are more visible in neighbourhoods, it not only provides a sense of security to residents but also acts as a significant deterrent to potential criminal activities. This heightened presence can foster better relationships between the police and the community, leading to increased trust and cooperation. Additionally, visible policing can result in quicker response times to incidents, potentially reducing the severity of crimes and improving overall public safety. Therefore, a strategic increase in police visibility is essential for maintaining order and promoting a safer environment for all citizens”.

Take politics out of law enforcement

“As a person who has been in the police for over 15 years, there has been politics going on in the department. People who are elected to be the Minister of Police know nothing about police. What usually happens is that ministers shuffle across the department. Someone who was the minister of transport was re-elected to be the Minister of Police. So, I highly suggest that the government should elect a minister of Police from SAPS. Elect someone who has years of experience in the Police, someone who knows the police in and out so that that person can make decisions that will benefit SAPS because he/she has worked in the Police he knows the places that need improvements within SAPS. Someone young who will be able to bring or come up with new and fresh ideas. There are people within SAPS, and some have retired, people who went to Police training college for 9 months and studied policing who can take over this position, people who know SAPS as they know themselves, and people with experience who can bring change” (D-7).

The SAPS should permanently employ CPF members

“Here in Umlazi, there are CPF members who guard at night, these people assist a lot, but the state won't hire them because they didn't ask them to do all those duties they do them just out of the goodness of their hearts, but they do make a difference. I would suggest that the Government should employ them and pay them because they did make a difference in terms of reducing crime” (D-8).

Employ advanced technologies in township police stations

“I highly recommend the implementation of technological advancements such as fast-tracking exhibits of evidence analysis. Accelerating the turnaround time for ballistics reports and DNA evidence ensures that suspects are convicted promptly, significantly reducing the likelihood of cases being dismissed due to delays. By prioritizing the rapid processing of these critical forensic analyses, we can enhance the efficiency of the judicial system, uphold justice, and improve public safety” (D-9).

Supply advanced resources regularly

“Currently, our office lacks essential equipment which is crucial for our daily operations. So, the government can supply our organisation with the required resources to perform our duties more effectively and enhances productivity. This investment in proper office equipment is vital for maintaining high standards of public service and ensuring we can execute our tasks with the utmost competence” (D-12).

The majority of the participants shared viable recommendations on what could be beneficial in effectively addressing murder and reducing murder rates. Paying attention to these recommendations is essential if the current challenges faced by the SAPS detective team in Umlazi are to be overcome and their efficiency enhanced. The participants emphasised increasing manpower, remunerating CPFs, providing advanced and effective resources, and increasing the danger allowance of detectives.

5.4 Summary of the Chapter

The findings emphasised the need for SAPS officers to engage with the community and work hand in hand with them to devise and sustain effective crime prevention programmes to eradicate murder occurrences. The findings also shed light on the nature and degree of murder. It was revealed that most murders occurred at social gatherings and during celebrations where hostilities erupted, particularly when alcohol consumption was excessive as it impaired judgment and self-control and sometimes resulted in a fatality. The participants' views and information also corroborated SAPS crime statistics that emphasise that incidences of murder have escalated particularly in the past three years.

Factors that result in high levels of murder were also highlighted. The comments provided by the participants corroborated the literature and emphasised that alcohol, robbery, the drug trade,

gang violence, and the availability of firearms contributed significantly to murder rates in the Umlazi area. The majority of the detectives felt that murder could be curbed only if there were proper strategies in place to address the factors that play a significant role in increasing murder levels. The challenge that was most strongly raised by all the participants was the lack of witness cooperation. The detectives argued that, to solve murder cases, they needed eyewitnesses as without them most cases cannot be resolved. Moreover, they agreed that detectives were helpless when witnesses refused to cooperate due to fear. They stated that witnesses tended to fear for their lives and the safety of their loved ones. The comments also revealed that limited resources and manpower were obstacles that detectives need to overcome if they wish to resolve murder cases. In their view, the shortage of resources and manpower not only impacted their day-to-day operations, but also affected long-term investigative processes by diminishing the ability of murder detectives to perform their responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

All the participants raised the point that the SAPS had implemented programs to address crime and combat murder, but they agreed that none of these had been effective to date as murder rates continued to rise at an alarming rate. So, the deployment of more vehicle and foot patrols in hotspot areas was a strong suggestion to prevent crimes and murder. They also argued that the community should make it their duty to work hand in hand with the police to eradicate crime in the Umlazi area and to ensure a safe society.

In conclusion, the commitment and dedication of the participants were undeniable and commendable. The data clearly revealed that detective work is not as easy as most people might believe. It was evident that all these detectives worked hard to ensure that justice would be served and that perpetrators would be brought to justice. Although they might face challenges along the way, these detectives obviously made it a priority to ensure the conviction of criminals. However, the environment in which they work is fraught with challenges that cause severe strain and pressure. Society should take note of the dedication of these officers and appreciate the good work that the SAPS personnel in Umlazi do to create a safe space for everyone.

The next chapter will conclude the discourse with a specific emphasis on the manner in which the aims and objectives (Chapter One) were achieved. Furthermore, recommendations and suggestions are offered to encourage further research on murder to fill the gaps that still exist in the literature.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In the the previous chapter, the researcher presented the data and discussed the findings which gave meaning to the objectives of the study. This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the study, consolidating the primary findings, identifying limitations, and offering insights for future research. Through a structured examination, this summary revisits the study's core aims and objectives, relating these to the key findings that emerged from the research. By analysing these findings in depth, a clearer understanding of how the study has contributed to knowledge in the area of crime and violence will be gained while also noting any areas where the findings were inconclusive. The purpose of this summary is to highlight which aspects of the research objectives were met and where any gaps might exist. Such an approach ensures that the study's main insights are presented clearly and cohesively, emphasizing their relevance within the broader context of crime and violence studies. Secondly, this chapter acknowledges the study's inherent limitations, which may include several factors or unforeseen variables that impacted the findings.

In addition to summarizing and contextualizing the findings, this chapter also offers practical recommendations for future research. These suggestions provide pathways to expand the current study's work and strengthen future studies within the field. The conclusions drawn in this summary are rooted in the data analysis of Chapter Five, offering a thorough reflection on how the findings support or challenge existing literature and highlighting the potential for future exploration and refinement in this important field of study.

6.2 Overview of the Study

This study report is presented in five chapters. Chapter One provided an introduction to the study that focused on relevant background information. It outlined the problem statement, summarised the significance of the study, and stated the aim as well as the objectives of the research. This chapter thus served as a guide to inform the reader about the purpose and nature of the study. The second chapter provided the literature review and highlighted the nature and extent of murder, contributory factors to murder, the challenges that the SAPS encounters in

addressing murder, and strategies to curb murder. In the third chapter, the theoretical framework was discussed with reference to two theories, namely the general strain theory and the social learning theory. These theories were utilised to explain why murder is committed. The general strain theory emphasises that when people experience strain, they may respond by committing a crime to alleviate their emotions and strain. The social learning theory was used to explain that people develop the abilities and motivation to commit crimes from the people they associate themselves with.

Chapter Four outlined the research methodology that was employed to achieve the objectives and to address the research questions. The researcher described the research methods and techniques that were used to conduct the study and explained how the study was conducted, and the sampling method and the data collection and analysis methods were elucidated. Chapter Five presented the data in the form of verbatim quotations, and these were analysed and the findings were discussed. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The current chapter, Chapter Six, concludes this dissertation and provides a summary of the key findings, acknowledges the limitations, and offers key recommendations based on the findings.

6.3 Summary

The study aimed to explore the murder phenomenon in Umlazi Township by interviewing SAPS detectives specialising in murder cases. These participants were sampled from Umlazi SAPS in KZN Province. This study was exploratory. The focus of the study was motivated by the high trend of murder cases in Umlazi, as was highlighted in Chapter One. The objectives that guided the study were the following:

- To evaluate the nature and extent of murder in Umlazi.
- To explore factors that contribute to murder in Umlazi.
- To identify the challenges faced by the murder detectives/investigation officers who dealt with murder cases.
- To examine the measure of success of current programs in the effort to curb murders in Umlazi.

6.3.1 Findings relating to the nature and extent of murder

The detectives were first asked about their understanding of the term ‘murder’. Their responses showed how they understand murder and the majority of the responses described murder as the intentional and unlawful killing of a person by another person. The first objective of the study was achieved as the participants shared their definitions of the concept of murder and it was evident that they had an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon as they had first-hand experiences of murder scenes and cases. Not a single detective lacked an understanding of what murder entails. Some participants revealed that murder is taking someone's life in a brutal manner, which is traumatic and can cause detectives to experience mental breakdown at work.

To understand if the detectives were familiar with the extent of murder in the Umlazi area, they were asked to estimate how many murder cases were opened each month in their station. Many stated that murder occurred every week, and even three or more cases were reported during the week. Many of the murders occurred on weekends, on paydays, and at the end of the month because people had money to purchase alcohol. Most responses indicated that murders were committed when people were intoxicated. The detectives agreed that, when provoked while under the influence of alcohol, people would easily retaliate, and this often resulted in one or even more fatalities per event in Umlazi. When asked about the number, the majority were uncertain of the exact number of murder fatalities per month, but they highlighted that more than twenty murders were usually reported each month and that the victims usually died of firearm wounds as such weapons are readily accessible in Umlazi. It was further revealed that, after the COVID-19 lockdown, the figures reported each year in KZN showed an increase when compared to the previous year. The statistics provided by the SAPS in the literature (Table 3) revealed the extent to which murder was prevalent in South African society. The findings of this study indicated that murder can be persistent due to the possibility of unrest in hotspot areas if not addressed appropriately.

6.3.2 Findings relating to factors that contribute to murder

Drawing from the fact that murder is escalating at a high rate, the participants showed concern and indicated that behind the increase in the murder rate, there are factors that contribute significantly to the murder phenomenon. Contributory factors that were mentioned were excessive alcohol consumption, robberies, the drug trade, unemployment, inequality, and the pervasive nature of poverty. The participants agreed that murder is highly associated with

alcohol abuse. When intoxicated, people become aggressive and end up engaging in unnecessary and often deadly fights over trivial matters. The participants further indicated that murder hotspots are usually liquor outlets such as taverns and shebeens.

The findings indicate that alcohol consumption highly impacts murder trends and needs to be dealt with. Robbery was also identified as a significant contributory factor to murder. The detectives emphasised that house and armed robberies played a significant role in the increasing number of murders. The participants argued that, during the commission of robberies, whether in homes or on the streets, resistance by victims led to violent confrontations. Robbers frequently carry weapons and resort to fatal alternatives when their plans are thwarted, or when they feel threatened. Then victims who attempt to resist or protect their property or those who refuse to submit end up being killed. Consequently, the escalation of these encounters during robberies substantially contributes to the high murder rate in Umlazi.

Another factor that was identified as contributing to murder was drug use and drug peddling. According to the participants, the illegal drug trade exacerbates violence through territorial disputes, competition over markets, and control of supply routes. Rivalries among drug traffickers and gangs result in violent confrontations, as these groups use murder to eliminate rivals, enforce rules, and prevent competition. Moreover, high competition in the drug market drives dealers to kill each other to take over territory, aiming to maximize profits by monopolising the market. This widespread drug activity weakens community structures and social cohesion while also increasing the overall rates of violence and murder in the Umlazi neighbourhood.

Collectively, the participants' responses affirmed that Umlazi has a dangerous community and that its demographics create an environment that is conducive to violent criminal activities. Umlazi Township is notorious for its high crime rates and was ranked second in South Africa for murder cases for over five years. Additionally, the detectives highlighted various challenges in crime prevention in Umlazi due to both the township's demographics and resource limitations at the two SAPS stations in this township.

6.3.3 Findings relating to the challenges SAPS murder detectives face

It appears that SAPS detectives in Umlazi encounter several challenges when addressing murder cases. The detectives reported experiencing challenges both outside and within the workplace. In terms of challenges experienced outside the workplace, witness cooperation is a key challenge that impedes the successful response to murder cases. According to the participants, both community members and witnesses become resistant to cooperating with the police when they are required to provide information that can help solve murder cases. This is because people fear that suspects will attack them or their families if they find out that they have been collaborating with the police. Some witnesses agree to write statements but after a day or so they come back and change or withdraw the statement because the suspects have threatened them.

In terms of work-related challenges, the issue of insufficient resources is a barrier to solving murder cases as it causes delays in the investigation process and the commencement of trials. The participants lamented the shortage of vehicles as not being mobile causes delays in responding to critical incidents and also forces detectives to deal with paperwork while waiting for available vehicles. The time delays that this challenge causes are frustrating and counterproductive. The detectives also have to contend with limited and outdated equipment such as old computers, landlines, and cell phones. They are impeded in carrying out administrative and investigative tasks and experience difficulties in locating and contacting possible witnesses and other individuals.

The lack of resources also hinders effective investigations and causes significant delays in obtaining the necessary forensic reports, which are critical in progressing with murder cases. Logistical difficulties are also encountered, such as the need to travel long distances to Pretoria for lab results and the resultant delays due to a lack of funds and vehicles. It was found that forensic reports take a long time to access in murder investigations and, without these reports, the case will not proceed.

The detectives also have to deal with an overwhelming workload and a critical shortage of manpower. Detectives are burdened with an excessive number of cases, which makes it nearly impossible to give each case the attention it requires. Frustrating delays are experienced and certain cases have to be prioritised over others, which adds to the frustration. Moreover, limited manpower exacerbates caseloads, resulting in each detective handling over 150 dockets. This

significantly leaves many investigations incomplete and causes delays when new cases that demand urgent attention are assigned. The immense pressure caused by the high workload as well as the toxic work environment that detectives work in contribute significantly to their levels of stress and fatigue and result in unhealthy coping mechanisms, particularly excess alcohol consumption.

6.3.4 Findings relating to intervention programs to curb murder in Umlazi

The last objective of the study was to examine existing intervention programs intended to eradicate murder in Umlazi Township and to address their efficacy. The severity of murder incidences has been so invasive over time in Umlazi that implementing security measures has become essential to ensure the safety of its residents. The findings indicate that measures that have been devised and implemented by the government are not sufficient to help curb murder. CPFs were established to help in the fight against crime and murder, and these bodies collaborate with the local police to address and solve safety and security issues. They aim to enhance public safety through active community involvement in partnership with local SAPS stations. These groups of people work to build trust and cooperation between the police and the community and aim to foster a sense of shared responsibility for maintaining public safety. They do this by enforcing neighbourhood watch programs, patrolling crime hotspots, and reporting suspicious activities that are observed in their community.

The Crime Prevention Unit of the SAPS implemented visible policing and patrols in the Umlazi area. However, according to the participants, this strategy is not effective at all due to limited state vehicles. The Vispol team that is deployed in the area focuses on crime prevention, but cannot at all times be patrolling murder hotspots because of a shortage of manpower. However, during busy days (e.g., public holidays and school holidays) they maintain a constant presence at crime hotspots, especially in liquor establishments such as taverns and shebeens, because evidence has shown that the majority of murders were alcohol-related. They patrol these areas to serve as a deterrent against crime.

The regular operations conducted by POP (Public Order Police) were also highlighted as they aim to ensure order in society. These operations involve stop-and-search patrols, door-to-door searches for illegal firearms, and the closure of unlicensed liquor outlets. However, despite conducting raids, making arrests, and seizing illegal firearms and drugs, the efforts of the

Visible Policing (Vispol) unit have not effectively reduced the risk of murder or improved overall community safety and security.

All the participants generally expressed similar views and highlighted that the implementation of the programs mentioned was aimed at reducing murder rates, but they agreed that these measures were ineffective. They believed that the programs alone were insufficient, pointing to a perceived gap between the strategies and their effective implementation. This gap indicates a need to reassess and possibly improve or restructure these programs to better achieve their intended goals.

6.4 Limitations of the study

The researcher faced significant challenges in gaining access to the SAPS organisation, leading to a lengthier process than anticipated. Accessing study participants who were murder detectives also proved particularly difficult, as many were unavailable due to busy schedules, being on leave, attending court or meetings, being on parades, and conducting inspections. The detectives were always in and out of the station and most were barely available during the day. These challenges forced the researcher to either interview the detectives early in the morning before their shifts commenced, or late after they had knocked off work because that was the only time they could spare. These challenges extended the data collection period beyond the original expectations. Moreover, one detective withdrew from the study because he was on sick leave. However, the limitations of the study need to be acknowledged.

One limitation was that the study focused on one township and police station only, which limited the scope and possibly the richness of the findings. However, the size of Umlazi and access to a relatively large sample of detectives for this qualitative explorative study mitigated this limitation, as the researcher was able to obtain sufficient data to understand the murder phenomenon in the township context. Having said that, it is acknowledged that the findings may not be generalised to neighbouring townships or those in the rest of KwaZulu-Natal Province. However, the findings may inform future studies in the same field and underpin such investigations that may fill the gaps that were left by this study.

Another limitation of this study was that it focused solely on the perspectives, approaches, and challenges of the South African Police Service (SAPS) in addressing murder cases, without incorporating the viewpoints of community members. This narrowed the scope of the research

and created a gap in understanding, as community members often have first-hand insights into the social, economic, and cultural factors contributing to violence and crime. Their lived experiences may highlight different patterns, root causes, or challenges that are not visible through the lens of law enforcement alone. By not including the community's perspective, the study missed the opportunity to explore alternative approaches to crime prevention, as well as the social dynamics that may influence the effectiveness of police interventions.

Another limitation observed was that the study explored factors contributing to murder, however, the focus was primarily on socio-economic aspects. This limited the scope of the research, as it did not fully capture the complexity of other critical factors, such as behavioral and psychological influences. Psychological factors, including mental health issues, trauma, and coping mechanisms within community members affected by murder, were not thoroughly analyzed.

6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 Recommendations for the South African Police Service

Murder detectives often face an assortment of challenges, particularly insufficient resources, a heavy workload, and a lack of witness cooperation. All these singly and combined significantly impact their ability to investigate and solve cases effectively. Therefore, the purpose of the following recommendations is to address the challenges faced by murder detectives when solving or investigating cases.

Increase manpower

The study's findings indicate that murder detectives experience a substantial caseload due to a shortage of personnel within the station. The workload intensifies as new cases are initiated, further burdening detectives who are already managing ongoing investigations. This excessive workload hinders their ability to thoroughly investigate, document, and follow up on open cases, ultimately resulting in ineffective investigations.

To address this challenge, the study recommends increasing the SAPS manpower base in Umlazi, specifically by appointing more detectives. With more detectives on the team, the workload may be distributed more evenly, ensuring that each detective handles fewer cases

simultaneously. The reduction in caseload per detective will directly impact the quality and thoroughness of investigations. When detectives are overwhelmed with multiple cases, they find it difficult to allocate sufficient time and resources to each case, leading to potential oversights and less meticulous work. By balancing the caseload, detectives will focus more intently on each investigation, allowing for a more detailed and comprehensive approach to solving murders.

Furthermore, a manageable number of cases per detective will enable them to maintain consistent oversight throughout the investigative process. This continuous attention is vital for developing leads, following up on evidence, and interviewing witnesses or suspects on time. When detectives dedicate the necessary time to each case, they will be in a better position to catch subtle clues and connections that may otherwise be missed. This thoroughness can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the investigative process, increasing the likelihood of resolving cases successfully and bringing perpetrators to justice.

Additionally, reducing the number of cases each detective handles will prevent the neglect of other important but less urgent cases. In a scenario where detectives are stretched thin, they might prioritise high-profile or time-sensitive cases at the expense of others, leaving some investigations to languish. This can lead to a backlog of unsolved cases, which not only hampers justice but also erodes public trust in the law enforcement system. By ensuring that detectives have a manageable caseload, law enforcement agencies will promote a more balanced approach where all cases receive the attention they deserve. This equitable distribution of attention will help to address the concerns of all victims and their families, thus reinforcing the community's confidence in the justice system.

Moreover, an increase in manpower will have positive effects on detective's morale and job satisfaction. When detectives are overburdened, they experience burnout and stress which diminishes job performance. By appointing additional detectives and distributing the caseload more evenly, the SAPS will create a healthier work environment. Detectives who feel supported and capable of managing their workload are likely to be more motivated, efficient, and effective in their roles. This will not only benefit the detectives themselves but will also translate into better outcomes for the communities they serve, as motivated and well-supported detectives are more likely to perform their duties with diligence and dedication than those who are burdened by an impossible workload.

Allocate sufficient equipment to SAPS detectives

The study uncovered the challenge of significant resource shortages in the Umlazi Detective Unit. These deficiencies include inadequate access to essential equipment and the absence of computers and landlines in offices. Additionally, the unit faces a shortage of state vehicles. These shortages are also identified as challenges in the literature. Therefore, to address these challenges, it is recommended that SAPS, particularly the Murder Unit, be allocated sufficient resources to perform their duties effectively. Each office should be equipped with computers and landlines. Furthermore, the government should provide every detective with a personal work cell phone, loaded with sufficient airtime, to enable them to continue their work outside the office or station. In addition, an increase in the provision of vehicles to stations should be imperative.

By supplying the required resources, the government can support fellow detectives in performing their duties more effectively and reduce the personal costs incurred by employees during work hours. Reliable and readily available equipment is essential for effective fieldwork and can significantly assist in maintain high standards of public service and in ensuring that detectives execute their tasks with the utmost competence.

Construct and equip more forensic laboratories

The study findings revealed the challenge of obtaining forensic reports timeously. The detectives indicated that delays in obtaining evidence analysis reports such as DNA, fingerprint, and ballistic reports made their job difficult as there is only one SAPS forensic laboratory located in Pretoria. Furthermore, it is mandatory to obtain those reports in murder cases, so detectives must travel to Pretoria for evidence analysis as all provinces utilise the same laboratory. Analysis reports are of vital importance to any murder investigation and are also essential for linking suspects to evidence found at crime scenes. These reports are also critical in court proceedings; hence, the absence of or a delay in obtaining such evidence results in cases being withdrawn due to the inability of SAPS detectives to provide the necessary forensic documentation.

The study recommends that the government should establish provincial laboratories similar to the one in Pretoria in each province. This decentralisation will allow detectives to promptly drop off and follow up on exhibits without the need for extensive travels to Pretoria, thereby reducing delays and improving case resolution times. By having a laboratory in each province,

detectives can expedite the processing of critical evidence and avoid the lengthy waits currently experienced for exhibit documents, ultimately leading to more timely and effective law enforcement outcomes.

Increase funding

The SAPS seemingly experiences insufficient funding which particularly affects the productivity and efficacy of investigations. Detectives encounter barriers when requesting financial assistance for forensic-related duties, being told that funds are unavailable. This financial constraint significantly leads to delays in investigations, unresolved cases, and overall inefficiencies within the criminal justice system. The study also recommends increasing funds to enhance forensic capabilities. Allocating funds specifically for acquiring advanced forensic equipment such as DNA analysis kits, fingerprint identification systems, and digital forensic tools will allow detectives to process crime scenes more efficiently and accurately, leading to higher rates of case resolution.

Regular training programs for detectives and forensic experts

The study recommends that continuous training programs should be implemented for detectives to ensure that all members of the detective team are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge required to handle complex murder cases. Training programs for forensic experts should also be implemented to keep them updated with the latest techniques and technologies. Implementing such training can ensure that the SAPS remains at the forefront of forensic science at all times, thus improving the quality of evidence collected and analysed.

Enhance community engagement

Many murder witnesses tend to refrain from coming forward with important information due to a lack of faith in the system's ability to protect them from potential retaliation by suspects. It is therefore proposed that community engagement is enhanced and that strong relationships are forged with residents. This should be accomplished by implementing and extending community policing programs. Strong community relationships can lead to better intelligence gathering and support for law enforcement efforts, particularly when murder cases have to be solved.

6.5.2 Recommendations to make current programs more effective in curbing crime

Payment of commission for CPF members' participation

CPFs have been implemented to assist the police in their fight against crime. However, they are not as effective as they should be. The study thus recommends that the government should provide financial compensation to members of CPFs. These dedicated individuals tirelessly work to ensure that the community remains free from crime, and many often patrol the streets day and night at great personal risk. To show appreciation for their commitment and bravery, the government should pay them a stipend monthly. This financial support will not only acknowledge their hard work but also motivate them to continue assisting the police in apprehending criminals. The members of CPFs deserve a fair commission for their invaluable contributions to the safety and well-being of our communities.

Increase police visibility

It is seemingly impossible to maintain police visibility in murder hotspots due to the shortage of police officials and vehicles. An increase in manpower is thus recommended to promote police visibility effectively. The recruitment of more police officers should be improved and accelerated to ensure that visible patrols operate in high-crime areas. The police should ensure a visible presence by patrolling in marked vehicles and sometimes doing foot patrols in townships. This visibility should act as a significant deterrent to potential criminals. With more manpower, police can patrol day and night. There shouldn't be a time when there is no state vehicle patrolling an area, particularly hotspot areas. To ensure the effectiveness of patrols, the state vehicles should have a GPS Tracker so that police will use state vehicles strictly for work-related purposes. The presence of more crime prevention officers will maintain order and promote a safer environment for all citizens.

By taking into consideration and implementing these recommendations, the SAPS can significantly improve its effectiveness in tackling murder cases and serving the public and, simultaneously, promoting the safety and security of the community.

6.5.3 Recommendations for future research

- Future research should consider exploring geographical variations in murder rates by considering urban vs. rural areas and exploring cross-national comparisons to understand the influence of location on murder prevalence.
- Future studies can explore murder from the perspective of community members, as this can offer a more holistic view of the issue as this study only focused on the SAPS and their approaches to and challenges in dealing with murder cases. Incorporating the community's perspective could offer a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the issue, leading to more effective and inclusive strategies for reducing murder and enhancing community safety.
- Although the current study examined factors that contribute to murder, it primarily focused on socio-economic factors and did not fully capture the complexity of other factors, such as behavioural and psychological factors, that contribute to murder. Therefore, future research can analyse psychological factors within the community, offering deeper insights into how mental health and emotional responses contribute to violence and influence community dynamics.

6.6 Summary of the Chapter

This study examined the prevalence of murder from the perspective of SAPS detectives investigating such cases. It is clear that the nature of murder is often brutal and traumatic and can potentially lead to the mental breakdown of investigators. The study also found that the incidence of murder had significantly increased and continued to rise to almost overwhelming rates compared to previous years. Factors that contribute to this rise are primarily alcohol consumption and drug use, with robberies playing a lesser role. Furthermore, it was revealed that detectives faced numerous challenges in their efforts to address murder cases, and these were primarily work-related. Lack of witness cooperation, heavy caseloads, a shortage of personnel, and limited resources (office equipment, vehicles, advanced forensic tools) significantly hinder effective investigations and cause delays. To curb the occurrence of murder, several preventive measures have been implemented, such as community policing forums, public order policing, operations, patrols, and community awareness campaigns. However, these strategies have not been as effective as intended and the SAPS needs to go back to the drawing board to devise effective strategies to protect citizens against the scourge of murder and to ensure that the victims of this crime receive justice.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



30 January 2024

Nhlanzeko Nonjabulo Sikhakhane (219040466)
School of Applied Human Sc
Howard College Campus

Dear NN Sikhakhane,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00006291/2023

Project title: An exploration of murder (homicide) from the perspective of South African Police Service: A study of Umlazi Township, Durban KwaZulu-Natal Province.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 09 October 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 30 January 2025.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee


Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

ANNEXURE C: EHWS APPROVAL LETTER

	SAP 21
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE	SUID-A FRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS
PO Box 1965, Durban, Kwazulu-Natal, 4001	
Reference : 7/3/1	THE PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER KWAZULU-NATAL
Enquiries : Lt Col R Botha	EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS
Telephone : 031 3106374	PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
Email : [REDACTED]	
A. UNIVERSITY OF KWA-ZULU NATAL B. MS NN SIKHAKHANE (219040466)	
CONFIRMATION LETTER: PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT TO RESEARCH (SAPS MEMBERS) PARTICIPANTS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Your request in the letter dated 06 December 2023 has reference.2. This office has no objections to providing the necessary Psychological support to our SAPS members that participates willingly in your study and that may be affected thereby.3. Should any member require support kindly refer the member/s to our Durban EHW office: Capt D Ramsingh (031 325 4103 / W/O S Pillay (031 325 4345)4. We wish you all the best with your studies.	
[REDACTED]	LIEUTENANT COLONEL
R BOTHA	
SUB-SECTION HEAD: PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES: KZN	

ANNEXURE D1: INFORMED CONSENT

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

My name is Nhlanzeko Nonjabulo Sikhakhane from the Department of Criminology and Forensic Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus. My contact details are as follows: 219040466@stu.ukzn.ac.za; 0 [REDACTED]

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research exploring murder that is perpetrated against Umlazi township citizens in Durban KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of the study is to explore the nature and causes of murder as well as the challenges that SAPS faces related to murder. This study is driven by the fact that there is much knowledge about the murders occurring in this township that people don't know about but the police officers do.

The study is expected to enroll 15 participants in total. The number of participants will be divided among detectives and police officers. The study will involve the following procedures:

- As a participant, you will be required to sign an informed consent,
- The interviews will be conducted individually,
- The interviews will last for approximately 30 to 45 minutes, and
- Interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder and the records will be held in a password protected file, only accessible to me, as the researcher, and my supervisor. After a period of 5 years in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.

The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be one month. This study is not funded.

The study will provide no direct benefits to participants. However, the study will be beneficial in terms of addressing the issue that has been noted as escalating.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at [REDACTED] or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Please note that the participation in this research is voluntary. Therefore, you have a right to withdraw at any time and will not be penalized for taking such an action. However, should you wish to withdraw, please alert the researcher ahead. The researcher will terminate your participation from the study should it happen that the participant is not comfortable in providing further information required for the purpose of the study.

It is important to note that the data that will be collected will be entered into a password-protected file. Upon completing the research, tape recordings of the interviews will be stored and locked in a safe place at the Supervisor's office, where only the researcher can access the data. After a minimum of 5 years, data will be destroyed and disposed of.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study titled *An exploration of murder (Homicide) from the perspective of the South African Police Service: A study of Umlazi township, Durban KwaZulu-Natal Province*. by

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at: 219040466@stu.ukzn.ac.za or [REDACTED].

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview

YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

ANNEXURE D2: IFOMU LOKUVUMA

IKOMIDI LEZENQUBONHLE KWEZOCWANINGO LEKOLISHI LEZESINTU ESIKOLENI SEZIFUNDO NGENHLALO YOMPHAKATHI (HSSREC)

ISICELO SOKUGUNYAZWA NGOKWEZENQUBONHLE
Okocwaningo olusebenza ngabantu

OKUKULEKELELA EKWAKHIWENI KWEFOMU LOKUVUMA

Okumele kuqashelwe abacwaningi: Noma kubalulekile ukutholakala kwemiphumela enembayo ngokwesayensi futhi esemthethweni, kumele kwenziwe konke okusemandleni ukuze kukhiqizwe umbhalo wokuvuma oqondakalayo ngokolimi futhi ocacile kakhulu ngaphandle kokushiya imininingwane ebalulekile njengoba kubaliwe ngezansi. Izihumusho ezigunyaziwe zizodingeka uma sekugunyazwe umbhalo wesingisi.

Kunezimo ngqo lapho imvume ngomlomo efakazelwe yamukelekile, nalapho imvume yomuntu ingeke idingwe yi-HSSREC.

Umbhalo Wemininingwane Nokuvuma Ukubamba Iqhaza Ocwaningweni

Usuku:

Imikhonzo efudumele kongase abe iqhaza

Igama lami ngingu- Nhlanzeko Nonjabulo Sikhakhane, umfundi wase Nyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natal, Howard Campus, ngaphansi komnyango we Criminology and Forensic Studies. Imininingwane yezokuxhumana nami imi kanje: 219040466@stu.ukzn.ac.za ; [REDACTED]

Uyamenywa ukuba ubambe iqhaza ocwaningweni oluthinta ucwaningo lokubulala olwenzeka kwizakhamizi zaselokishini laseMlazi eThekwini KwaZulu-Natal. Inhloso yalolu cwaningo ukuhlola uhlobo nezimbangela zokubulala kanye nezinsalelo i-SAPS ebhekene nazo ezihlobene nokubulawa. Lolu cwaningo luqhutshwa wukuthi luningi ulwazi mayelana nezigameko zokubulawa kwabantu kuleli lokishi abantu abangalwazi kodwa amaphoyisa elwazi.

Ucwaningo kulindeleke ukuthi lubhalise ababambiqhaza abangu-15 (ishuminanhlanu) sebebonke. Inani lababambe iqhaza lizohlukaniswa ngabaseshi namaphoyisa. Ucwaningo luzobandakanya lezi zinqubo ezilandelayo:

- Njengombambi qhaza, kuzodingeka ukuthi usayine imvume unolwazi,
- Inhlolokhono izokwenziwa ngazodwana,

- Inhlolokhono izothatha cishe imizuzu eyi-30 kuya kwengama-45, futhi
- Izingxoxo zizorekhodwa kusetshenziswa isiqophamazwi futhi amarekhodi azogcinwa efayeleni elivikelwe ngephasiwedi, elifinyeleleka kimi kuphela, njengomcwaningi, kanye nomphathi wami. Ngemva kweminyaka emihlanu (5) ngokuhambisana nemithetho yenyuvesi, izolahlwa ngokusikwa nokushiswa.

Isikhathi sokubamba kwakho iqhaza uma ukhetha ukubhalisa nokuhlala ocwaningweni kulindeleke ukuthi sibe yinyanga eyodwa. Lolu cwaningo aluxhasiwe.

Ucwaningo ngeke lunikeze izinzuzo eziqondile kubahlanganyeli. Kodwa-ke, lolu cwaningo luzozuzisa mayelana nokubhekana nodaba oluphawulwe njengolandayo kuleli lokishi.

Lolu cwaningo luhloliwe ngokwenqubonhle lwagunyazwa i-UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (00021933).

Uma kunezinkinga noma imibuzo/ukukhathazeka ungaxhumana nomcwaningi lapha: [REDACTED], noma i- UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, kuleminingwane elandelayo:

EZOKUPHATHWA KWEZENQUBONHLE KWEZOCWANINGO EKOLISHI LEZESINTU ESIKOLENI SEZIFUNDO NGENHLALO YOMPHAKATHI

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Sicela uqaphele ukuthi ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo kungokuzithandela. Ngakho-ke, unelungelo lokuhoxa noma nini futhi ngeke ujeziswe ngokuthatha lesenzo. Nokho, uma ufisa ukuhoxa, sicela wazise umcwaningi kusengaphambili. Umcwaningi uzonqamula ukuhlanganyela kwakho ocwaningweni uma kwenzeka ukuthi umhlanganyeli akakhululekile ekunikezeni ulwazi olwengeziwe oludingekayo ngenjongo yocwaningo.

Kubalulekile ukuqaphela ukuthi idatha ezoqoqwa izofakwa efayeleni elivikelwe ngephasiwedi. Ngemva kokuphuthula ucwaningo, amateyipu aqoshiwe ezingxoxo azogcinwa futhi avalelwe endaweni ephaphile ehhovisi likaSupervisor, lapho umcwaningi kuphela ongafinyelela idatha. Ngemva kweminyaka emi-5, idatha izochithwa futhi ilahlwe.

UKUVUMA

Mina ngaziswe ngocwaningo olunesihloko esithi *Ukuhlolwa kokubulawa (Homicide) ngokombono weSouth African Police Services: Ucwaningo lwaselokishini uMlazi, eThekwini KwaZulu-Natal*. ngu

Ngiyayiqonda inhloso nezinqubo zocwaningo.

Nginikezwe ithuba lokuphendula imibuzo mayelana nocwaningo futhi ngibe nezimpendulo ngokwaneliseka kwami.

Ngiyazisa ukuthi ukuhlanganyela kwami kulolu cwaningo kungokuzithandela futhi ngingahoxa noma nini ngaphandle kokuphazamisa noma yiziphi izinzuzo engivame ukuba nelungelo lokuzithola.

Uma ngineminye imibuzo/okungikhathazayo noma imibuzo ephathelene nocwaningo ngiyaqonda ukuthi ngingathintana nomcwaningi kule nombolo: 219040466@stu.ukzn.ac.za noma [REDACTED].

Uma nginemibuzo noma ukukhathazeka mayelana namalungelo ami njengomhlanganyeli wocwaningo, noma uma ngikhathazekile ngendawo ethize yocwaningo noma abacwaningi ngingathintana:

EZOKUPHATHWA KWEZENQUBONHLE KWEZOCWANINGO EKOLISHI LEZESINTU ESIKOLENI SEZIFUNDO NGENHLALO YOMPHAKATHI

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Ukuvuma okwengeziwe, lapho kudingeka khona

Ngiyavuma ukuthi kwenziwe lokhu:

Kuqoshwe ingxoxo yami

YEBO/CHA

Ukusayina kobambe iqhaza

Usuku

Ukusayina Kowufakazi
kunesidingo)

Usuku

(Uma

ANNEXURE E1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

An exploration of murder (Homicide) from the perspective of the South African Police Service: A study of Umlazi Township, Durban KwaZulu-Natal Province.

Interview Schedule (Questions to murder detective and police)

1. According to your understanding, what is the meaning of “Murder”?
2. On average, how many murder cases are reported in this station per month?
3. What are the most common instruments/tools used to facilitate these murders?
4. Based on your experience, has homicide increased in the last five (5) years? And what makes you say that?
5. Based on your experience, which gender and age group are more commonly victims of homicide cases?
6. What are the causes or contributory factors of murder in this township and how do they trigger the occurrence of murder?
7. From your perspective, what are the challenges that you, as a murder detective, face when responding to murder-related cases?
8. How do you cope with these challenges?
9. Are there any available preventive measures implemented by SAPS management in this area to assist in eradicating murder? (If yes, please elaborate on your answer).
10. How effective are these available strategies in curbing murder in this township?
11. In your opinion, what improvements can be made to assist with reducing murder cases?
12. Do you have any other comments regarding murder that is happening in this township that you would like to add?

ANNEXURE E2: UHLELO LWENHLOLOKHONO

Ukuhlolwa kokubulawa (Ukubulala) ngokombono weSouth African Police Service: Ucwaningo lwaselokishini laseMlazi, eThekwini KwaZulu-Natal.

UHlelo Lwezingxoxo (Imibuzo kumphenyi wokubulala kanye namaphoyisa)

1. Ngokuqonda kwakho, ithini incazelo yegama elithi “Ukubulala”?
2. Ngokwesilinganiso, mangaki amacala okubulala abikwa kulesi sitheshi ngenyanga?
3. Imaphi amathuluzi asetshenziswa kakhulu ukuze kube lula kubulala?
4. Ngokucabanga kwakho, ingabe ukubulala kunyukile eminyakeni emihlanu (5) edlule? Futhi yini ekwenza usho lokho?
5. Ngokubona kwakho, yibuphi ubulili kanye neqembu lobudala elivame ukuba izisulu zamacala okubulala?
6. Yiziphi izimbangela zokubulawa kwabantu kuleli lokishi futhi zigqugquzela kanjani ekubulaleni?
7. Ngokubona kwakho iziphi izinselelo wena njengomseshi wokubulala obhekana nazo uma uphendula amacala ahlobene nokubulala?
8. Ubhekana kanjani nalezi zinselele?
9. Ingabe zikhona izindlela zokuvimbela ezisetshenziswa abaphathi be-SAPS kule ndawo ukusiza ekuqedeni ukubulala? (Uma kunjalo, chaza kabanzi ngempendulo yakho).
10. Asebenza kangakanani lamasu akhona ekunqandeni ukubulawa kwabantu kuleli lokishi?
11. Ngokubona kwakho, yikuphi ukuthuthukiswa okungenziwa ekusizeni ukwehlisa amacala okubulala?
12. Ukhona yini okunye ukuphawula mayelana nokubulawa kwabantu kuleli lokishi ongathanda ukukwengeza?



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DECLARATION OF PROOF-READING

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Nicolina D. Coertze, declare that I meticulously perused the academic thesis referred to below for language editing and proof-reading purposes. I identified and corrected linguistic and stylistic inaccuracies to the best of my knowledge and ability. Using the *Word Tracking* system, I kept track of the changes that I made. I also offered additional annotations for consideration by the author should she deem it necessary to address areas that I considered might need attention. I declare that I adhered to the general principles that guide the work of a language editor and that I remained within my brief as had been agreed with the author of the manuscript.

Details

TITLE	An exploration of murder cases in Umlazi Township, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province from the perspective of the South African Police Service
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Respectfully submitted on: 28 October 2024

[REDACTED]

(MRS) N.D. COERTZE
LANGUAGE EDITOR

DISCLAIMER: The Editor was not responsible for the final presentation of this manuscript. It was the author's/supervisor's prerogative to format the manuscript and to make additional changes after editing without referring the document back to the language editor.

ANNEXURE G: TURNITIN REPORT

Turnitin Originality Report

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