

**THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN MANAGING VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN
SCHOOL:**

EVIDENCE FROM ONE SCHOOL

BY

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I solemnly declare that “**The Role of Teachers in managing Vulnerable Children in School: Evidence from one school**” is my work and that all sources used as references have been acknowledged.

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This dissertation has been submitted with / without my approval.

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‘I CAN DO ALL THINGS IN CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME’ - *Philippians 4:13*

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in school.

The dawn of democracy in 1994 in South Africa meant that schools became multi-cultural and political, social and economic factors affected schools became. My experiences as a teacher for thirty-three years, together with observations made of challenges experienced by teachers in managing children with physical, emotional, psycho-social problems as well as forms of child-abuse and neglect inspired me to undertake this study. A further challenge for teachers were big class-sizes, lack of resources, lack of parental involvement and discipline in schools. In their quest to provide quality teaching and learning as stipulated by the South African School's Act and Education White Paper 6, together with stipulations in the National Education Policy Act (76 of 1996) the role of teachers became more complex.

It appears that in schools often the management team is "held responsible" for maintaining discipline and attending to children who present challenges as a result of various forms of vulnerability. It also emerged that Institution Level Support Teams were not as effective as they ought to be. In addition, managing vulnerable children was seen to be the role of the Life-Orientation teacher, in the absence of guidance counsellors, rather than the joint task of all teachers and stake-holders; this is the gap this study sought to make a contribution to.

In this study, the experiences of teachers and the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children were explored. A Qualitative approach was adopted and the study was located in the interpretive paradigm. Individual and focus-group interviews were conducted. Findings suggest that teachers need to engage all stake-holders in a collegial way to assist in managing vulnerable children. Department of Education Guidelines in terms of screening, identification, assessment and support must be adhered to. Catering for needs of vulnerable children will improve quality of teaching and learning.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO STUDY

“The purpose of life, is a life of purpose” - Robert Byrne

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aims to investigate the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in school. The background provides an impression of the context from which this study emanated. Closely associated with the background and contextual determinants of the study is the statement of the problem. This, followed by the purpose and rationale for the study provides clarity about the necessity for such a study. It provides a personal account of the researcher’s experiences and the impetus for proceeding with such a body of research. The study significance, objectives and critical research questions are outlined. The demarcation of the study provides the environmental context for the study in order to contribute to understanding the nature of the research.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Democracy in South Africa since 1994 heralded many changes in education. Significant changes included a distinct change in demographics in schools; both the learner and teacher complement in many schools rapidly transformed following the abolishment of apartheid with resultant diversity in schools (Engelbrecht, 2006). Democracy marked the advent of multicultural classrooms in South Africa. Changes in politics had a significant influence on school systems particularly in the areas of human resources, resource distribution and schools’ management structures. As such, this change brought a distinctive need for alteration in teaching practices particularly to accommodate diverse learners (Oswald & Swart, 2011). Although there has been improved access to education, teaching and learning continue to be affected negatively by the inability of schools to rapidly and effectively implement changes

that promote schools as centres of diversity and inclusivity, thus catering for needs of every learner.

An influx of learners to urban areas coupled with a unique set of needs from children of different races, cultures, home circumstances, religions and ethnicity presented new expectations of the government, the Department of Education, and provincial departments. It necessitated a structural hierarchy change, modification of training of teachers, integration of learners and a need for identification of needs of learners and a transformation toward inclusive education (Maher, 2009).

This study aimed to highlight the role of teachers in the management of vulnerable children in schools. A vulnerable child is one with threatened opportunity and probability for access to and completion of education. Additionally, for varied reasons, they have thwarted development and progression due to marginalisation, stigmatisation, or discrimination (The Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, OGAC, 2006). There are a multitude of factors and circumstances which place children in a vulnerable position in our South African education system. This study became necessary in order to evaluate these factors from the perspective of teachers who are considered crucial in education provision. Additionally, the researcher aims to be inclusive of experiences of teachers and to highlight the way in which teachers cope, address issues and achieve outcomes in learning and teaching.

I am currently the deputy principal of a primary school and during my thirty three year teaching career, I have had the opportunity to identify social, emotional, economic and psychological factors that contribute to vulnerability of learners. I experienced the impact of these factors on the process of education continually in my capacity as a teacher, and particularly in my position in senior management. I have had the opportunity to interact with many other teachers over this period. I have experienced the distinct evolution in the education system, which means there must be adaptation in teaching strategies, attitudes and goals. It is clear that a vast number of

teachers feel overwhelmed by the changes and demands in the needs of learners, which present challenges to teachers as classroom practitioners. Therefore, it may prove beneficial to examine teachers' experiences in the implementation of any move towards promoting inclusivity and diversity in schools with a view to catering for child vulnerability.

Common social and economic elements contributing to child vulnerability include the lack of parental supervision, poverty, malnutrition, abuse, neglect and instability in the home environment due to family fragmentation. Ethnic and cultural differences are found to render children vulnerable when there is inability to cater for the diverse needs of these vulnerable children in the school environment (Schell, 1997). Changes in curriculum and school governance that do not consider the needs of these learners, inadequate teacher training and poor identification of vulnerability that may be masked as poor behaviour is an underlying contributor from schools to worsening the plight of children (Wood, 2009).

Furthermore, although we often consider the vulnerable child as an entity that enters the school with pre-existing experiences and circumstances that distinguish them from other learners, teaching approaches, lack of implementation of policies outlining strategies to implement inclusive education and other contributory factors from the school itself may play a role in negatively contributing to the plight of the vulnerable child. According to Sayed and Jansen (2001), South African educational policies have been accorded high acclaim since the advent of a shift toward inclusive education, however, although prescriptive, these policies are not wholly implemented in our current schooling system, for example, Education White Paper Six.

In my experience, teacher identification of contributory factors to vulnerability are often limited to a historical account of home circumstances. Many children are not completely forthcoming with information on home circumstances for fear of disappointing their caregivers or for fear of possible repercussions. The role of teachers, acting "in loco parentis" would infer upon teachers the responsibility to develop confidential and trusting interpersonal relationships with

learners in the classroom environment whilst maintaining professionalism and maintaining a high standard of education. Meaning, “in the place of a parent,” this doctrine is understood to bestow upon teachers the assumption of the qualities of a parent; supportive, protective and disciplinary roles (Stuart, 2009).

Teachers’ roles also extend to the identification of manifestations of vulnerability. This implies that in addition to the responsibility of education, teachers are tasked with relating detached or isolated behavioural patterns or conversely delinquent or disruptive behaviour as possible manifestations of vulnerability. However, teachers can no longer attribute lack of discipline, disrespect, under- achievement of learners, unmannerly behaviour, high truancy levels and drop- out rates to just delinquency, poor adaptation to the learning environment, poor academic inclination or disinterest. In addition, children cannot continue to be reprimanded in schools for poor academic performance if they experience some form of undiagnosed, unidentified psychological trauma, abuse and neglect. Teachers need to be made aware of these challenges.

Notably for the purposes of this study, the ability of teachers to manage the varied manifestations of vulnerable behaviour is imperative in an inclusive education system. Defining and identifying the significance of the role of the teacher, the school and greater community in addressing vulnerability has become a prominent vehicle of transformation and revision of our current schooling system (Govender, 2004). The ideal of inclusive education is central to policies outlining teaching practice in South Africa (Engelbrecht, 2006).

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This particular body of research aims to investigate the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in school. It examines teachers’ perceptions of their role in the education of vulnerable learners. It also examines experiences of teachers in their management of vulnerable children in school.

The problem which provides the contextual support for this study is that although various policies exist to provide a framework for inclusive education, catering for varying learner needs and the management of orphaned and vulnerable children, teachers continue to experience difficulty in provision of quality education and achievement of desired educational outcomes. In my experience, some policies relating to professional, ethical, obligatory responsibilities of teachers and schools in provision of education for orphaned and vulnerable children do not always relate positively in practice. In some instances this aspect of pastoral care and learner welfare is sorely neglected in schools. The Department of Basic Education has clearly outlined policies, processes and procedures and there are clear structures in place in order to access support for learners who experience challenges or barriers to learning, which render them vulnerable. However, teachers appear to be uninformed. Teachers appear to be frustrated. They even resort to corporal punishment, because they do not adopt support- structures and coping-mechanisms which are in place. Therefore, it may prove valuable to understand teachers perceived roles in education provision for the vulnerable child and take note of their account of their actual experiences, challenges, strengths, shortcomings and triumphs.

Children differ largely in needs, capabilities, and individual vulnerabilities based on circumstances, age and level of development (The Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, OGAC, 2006). Teachers experience difficulty managing such diverse needs of these children when faced with increasingly high numbers of learners per class and increasing numbers of vulnerable learners requiring individual attention and intervention beyond academic instruction. In my experience, although discipline is in fact a shared responsibility in a school and is amongst one of many duties of an educator, it is often difficult for teachers to spend time attending to a few disruptive children and neglecting the entire class whilst also attempting to complete the curriculum. Teachers are often ill-equipped to provide support to the vulnerable child in need of care, attention, social intervention and support. Whilst the negative behaviour

of these vulnerable children has proven to be challenging, this negative behaviour, if unnoticed by the teacher may cause the vulnerable child to become frustrated. They disturb others and become so inattentive and restless that the child could harm himself or herself, harm others or even become violent as a result of the sheer frustration of not being able to cope.

Teachers also have co-curricular and extra- curricular duties which are demanding. Teachers have become stressed and have developed low morale and resultant lack of fulfilment. As such, I believe that this study has relevance in addressing teachers' understanding of child vulnerability as well as teacher challenges and experiences in attempts to offer support while educating the vulnerable child. This study may also highlight participants' understanding of their roles in managing child vulnerability in the school environment.

1.4 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The rationale for this study arises out of experiences and both positive and negative observations that I have made during my career, pertaining to the interaction between teachers and orphaned and vulnerable learners. I have a vested interest in the wellbeing of vulnerable children in the schooling system, and an equally important personal interest in the wellbeing of the teachers that serve to educate them.

Senior management is often held responsible for not establishing sound discipline in schools. I believe that establishing sound discipline and a conducive learning environment is the joint responsibility of all stake- holders involved in education not only the school management team. With child vulnerability on the rise, however, instances of indiscipline are also on the increase. The problem of learner indiscipline in schools is closely linked with substance misuse and abuse, defacement of school and other private property, absenteeism and malingering, disobedience, insolence, delinquency, involvement in robbery instances of assault and other forms of violence (Marais & Meier, 2010). These manifestations and unacceptable behavioural

patterns are by no means limited to, or characteristic of vulnerable children only. However, child vulnerability is an identifiable factor in many instances of the aforementioned dysfunctional behaviour. In some cases it would appear that not all teachers manage the vulnerable child effectively. Instances of corporal punishment have been identified in response to this challenging situation. Teachers and school management together cannot distance themselves from their roles in addressing such issues. Therefore, if there is a greater understanding of teacher experiences in attempts to provide support, there may be potential to address possible means to curb progression of the problem.

In my many years of experience I have been part of the various changes and challenges in the education system; from the apartheid era through to the time when schools first opened their doors to learners of all races, to this current era in this democratic country which celebrates diversity of all its people and advocates inclusivity. I believe firmly that teachers have a vital role to play in addressing challenges arising in schools as a result of imbalances, redress and constraints or barriers in classrooms as a result of the range of differences which render children vulnerable.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in all South African public schools since 1996. However, many schools have incidents of corporal punishment, bullying and abuse (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). As a school leader and manager I am also interested to know what causes such actions on the part of teachers and to understand what teachers perceive their roles to be in managing vulnerable children. I am interested in what drives teachers who are successful and what causes teachers to become disillusioned in their experience of managing child vulnerability. A learner rehabilitation and discipline modification approach called Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (ATCP) was introduced in schools to curb instances of corporal punishment (Tungata, 2006). Although efforts have been made to employ alternative means of discipline in schools, in my experience and from observations I have made, teachers isolate children, send them out of the

class, during teaching time, or give some form of punishment which may be unacceptable, due to unacceptable behaviour. A large cohort of learners are identified as vulnerable. These learners, if not properly understood, supported or corrected, often continue with destructive behaviour patterns throughout the formative years proceeding into high school. Quality education is compromised in this way, and relationships between teachers and their learners are strained, with no measurable improvement or sustainable intervention.

Through research one may construct an understanding of the experiences of teachers in their role of managing vulnerable children. Thus, potentially inferring a conclusion about teacher emotional experiences, professional barriers or even positive outcomes they may have experienced through the identification of specific teacher roles in addressing child vulnerability. This body of research may contribute to a deeper understanding of this dynamic, complex interaction that exists in our schooling system, which may enhance the provision of quality education for all.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Current research illustrates challenges in schools relating to providing for needs of orphans and vulnerable children (Govender, 2004). Challenges include poor provision of support structures for teachers and learners and inadequate policy implementation relating to orphaned and vulnerable children. Inadequate teacher training and poorly defined teacher roles in the management of child vulnerability contribute to the problem. The Department of Education suggests that it is an inherent responsibility of all schools and teachers to adopt principles of inclusive education, which have an important role in education of a vulnerable learner. A study by Wood and Goba (2009) found that the adoption of the roles of mentors and counsellors is difficult for teachers as they report limited training in teaching orphaned and vulnerable children and limited availability of support services. This has led to stress, resentment and

internal challenges. Examining teacher experiences may provide impetus for schools to re-evaluate their policies relating to teacher roles and responsibilities in educating orphaned and vulnerable children.

The term “vulnerable” is also often understood in a very limited context. Needs that render children as vulnerable are diverse, therefore it became apparent to consider the role of teachers in identification of child vulnerability. Through investigating teacher experiences, one may highlight the necessity for schools to encourage respect for ethnicity, religion and language amongst learners and teachers. There are within the classroom learners struggling with issues of curriculum, language barriers, home- background and family issues, as well as physical differences and differences in gender, race, religion, culture and value- systems. Furthermore, the need to create and employ multi-cultural policies that recognise the wealth in individual and societal differences, embolden diversity and advocate for cultural freedom may be established through this study.

Current research places emphasis on poverty, and the effect of HIV/AIDS (Richter, 2004) which appear to overshadow other causes of vulnerability such as neglect, family fragmentation, crime, violence and abuse, home background, parent- child relationship. There has generally been very little significance placed on the experiences of teachers. This study is significant in providing a body of research outlining actual teacher experiences which also include children made vulnerable by circumstances other than HIV/AIDS and financial constraints.

Statistics show that there are too few psychologists to service schools and in schools where educational psychologists are employed, their involvement in educational policy construction and expansion, as well as the process of learning and teaching is often limited (Sharratt, 1995). Through this study, the need for allied educational professionals and support services may be highlighted drawing from negative or positive participant experiences.

This study may provide perspective on the necessity for teachers to engage with parents and the community in their role of supporting vulnerable children. Enhancing knowledge on the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children has potential to effect positive change. This may encourage change on a personal level, school management level, possibly progressing to inclusion of parents, care-givers, community, non-governmental organisations and various stake-holders who could support the teacher in the role of managing vulnerable children more effectively.

A favourable outcome of this study is enhancement of knowledge of the role of teachers in the support of vulnerable children. Any improvement in delivery of quality education through adjustment of teaching strategies may be considered constructive. By evaluating other teachers' experiences, schools may be encouraged to look at ways to adapt teaching strategies, approaches and methods in order to support learning in vulnerable children.

This study may be significant since it aims to enhance knowledge about the role of teachers in management of vulnerable children in school. It refers to various issues of diversity and inclusion, which endorse the policies and legal framework within which teaching and learning should take place advocating that, given the appropriate education and opportunities, every child will achieve optimally and develop holistically, and that schools will become excellent centres of teaching and learning.

Educational research aims to improve the standard of education. In the light of this statement another significant outcome of this study may be to contribute to an improved awareness of the important role various stake-holders can play in improving the standard of education by working with teachers as they support vulnerable children; "it takes a village to raise a child," as is the famous African Proverb.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The objective of the study is to elucidate the role of teachers in management of vulnerable children. Furthermore, to reveal what were the actual experiences of teachers in managing vulnerable children.

1.7 CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do teachers experience the behaviour of vulnerable children in school?

What is/are the roles of teachers in managing vulnerable children in school?

1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Vulnerability

Vulnerable children are those who experience various social, emotional, physical and psychological challenges as a result of a myriad of factors and need support in their development. Vulnerable children represent a significant number within our current schooling system (Lehohla, 2013). Vulnerable children are those who are unlikely to achieve a reasonable, socially acceptable standard of health or development (The Vulnerable Child Bill, 2013). It encompasses aspects of social, psychological, environmental, physical, financial and physiological function. It also includes those conditions or any other plight that may be ill defined that may render children vulnerable (Carr-Hill, 2000).

According to Smart (2003) the term orphaned and vulnerable child(OVC) includes any child under the age of eighteen who has experienced any of the following ; one or both parents demised, experienced the loss of family members or experienced illness of parents and/or family members. Another identifiable category of child vulnerability by Smart (2003) is any

child neglected, abandoned, rendered destitute or has suffered the impact of increased poverty levels. They are also described as vulnerable if they have or are experiencing any form of human rights abuse. This definition could include all children affected by HIV and AIDS, poverty, orphaned, subjected to neglect, abandonment or abuse or any other plight that renders them vulnerable.

1.8.2 Management of vulnerable children

In this context management relates to the way in which teachers identify factors that render children vulnerable, respond to, interact with and discipline children; the manner in which children's behaviour is handled in a school setting (what teachers do or do not do). In addition "management of vulnerable children" refers to the means by which teachers adapt teaching strategies and cope with the separate set of challenges presented in educating vulnerable children; how teachers identify and support these children. It alludes to how teachers address them, respond to them, communicate with them and cater for their needs. It also includes the means by which teachers respond when children are disruptive and do not do their work as expected.

Considering the difficult economic climate, parental unemployment and poor socio- economic conditions and difficult upbringing many scholars have had to contend with, (Carr- Hill, Kataboro & Katahoire, 2000), the effective management of vulnerable children is a point of interest. The process of teaching has become challenging with consideration of increasing number of orphans due to illness associated with HIV with resultant child headed households, increased instances of abuse, neglect and resultant negative affectation of the child(Skinner, 2006).

1.8.3 In Loco- parentis

“In loco-parentis” means to function in substitute of or in absence of the parent; in this context with particular reference to the guardianship and assumption of duty likened to parental care inferred upon teachers whilst children are in their care during school hours. Black (1979) defines it as being “in the place of the parent; charged, factitiously with a parent’s rights, duties and responsibilities.”

1.8.4 Teacher

The term teacher applies to persons who engage in formal teaching or education of other persons; those who provide professional educational services at any public school. According to the National Education Policy Act (No. 27 Of 1996), a teacher in this context refers to a professionally qualified adult who functions within the context of the following seven roles; leader, learning mediator and facilitator, interpreter and designer of learning programmes, assessor, learning-area specialist, administrator and manager, scholar, researcher and life- long learner.

1.8.5 Diversity

In this context refers to individuals of more than one national origin, race, culture, religion, socio- economic group, and gender. It embraces the idea of respect, acceptance, tolerance and understanding of individuals who are different from each other.

1.8.6 Inclusivity

Inclusivity refers to the intention to include people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised as a result of being physically handicapped or have learning disabilities or experience barriers to learning. It could include minorities. In this context it also alludes to meeting the learning needs of all children by adapting teaching methods, strategies, assessment tools and creating an environment in which every child is supported and able to learn.

1.9 Demarcation of the study

The site of the research was a co-educational school in Newlands-West, a suburb north of Durban. There were 1013 learners; from Grade R to Grade 7, with a Foundation Phase roll of 540 learners. The Intermediate and Senior Phase roll of learners was 473. The majority of learners lived in areas outside the immediate vicinity of the school and travelled by public transport. The home language of the children differed. There were 163 learners who spoke English, 843 IsiZulu speakers, 2 IsiXhosa, and 3 Setswana speaking children. The staff comprised of 24 qualified, permanent educators, 2 substitute educators and 6 educators employed by the school governing body. The average learner-teacher ratio is 40:1.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organised into five chapters

Chapter One

In this chapter an introduction and background to the study is presented. The research problem is stated. Key terms are defined. The rationale and purpose of the study is outlined. The context (or demarcation of the study) is described. The significance of the study is highlighted. Research questions are stated. A brief summary of the study is presented.

Chapter Two

Chapter two comprises of a literature review; scholarly work and articles are referred to. Discussion is presented around academic writing which informed this study. Key-concepts are defined. The theoretical framework which underpins the study is highlighted.

Chapter Three

Chapter three outlines the research design and methods employed. Criteria for selection of research participants and site selection is explained. The sample, role of facilitator and context of study is discussed. Issues of ethics and confidentiality are presented. Limitations of the study, the approach, paradigm and methodology are described.

Chapter Four

Chapter four includes data presentation and discussion of information obtained from semi-structured individual interviews and focus- group interviews. Themes are identified.

Chapter Five

Chapter five provides a summary, conclusions drawn and recommendations of the study.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter one introduces the context and rationale for the research and outlines the researcher's interest in the study. The geographical location, context of the school and a history of the school in which the current study will be undertaken is presented. Research questions are stated, key concepts defined and the significance of the study is outlined. In conclusion a format of the dissertation is outlined. In Chapter Two, a discussion will be presented around academic writing which informed this study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” Socrates

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter One provided a brief exposition of the research topic “The role of teachers in managing vulnerable children; evidence from one school.” It provided the background, rationale and motivation for the study and presented a brief outline on procedures and processes to follow.

In Chapter Two, literature pertaining to teachers’ management of vulnerable children in school is presented. The issue of child vulnerability is explored in relation to published literature. The challenges experienced by teachers and the impact that these challenges have on the education process is examined in the light of information available. An approach to educational management and leadership is explored.

South African Education was shaped by colonial rule and apartheid politics. Education was profoundly segregated, influencing the quality of education provision. The dissimilarity in opportunity offered to each group by virtue of racial profiling and status largely reflected this divide (Asmal, 2000). South African Education revealed evidence of political restraint reflecting inequities imposed by the apartheid government. Since the implementation of a post-apartheid education system with new admission policies and laws regarding school admission, governance, funding and provision of curriculum and resources, schools have great diversity in terms of the population of learners. Education has become the responsibility of a non-racial education department with nine provincial departments of education. There is the challenge of cultural diversity and challenges of post-apartheid times. Learners need skills, attitudes and knowledge as well as a positive value- system to function in this democratic society. If children are not properly equipped they could be rendered vulnerable.

As a result of socio-economic, emotional and psychological problems and hardships including effects of crime, death, breakdown in family structures and various forms of neglect and abuse, many children are rendered vulnerable. The HIV-AIDS pandemic, other opportunistic infections and malnutrition, coupled with deficient parental supervision, poverty, hunger and a lack of care and discipline at home worsen their plight. This manifests primarily in their behaviour as inability to concentrate in class, restlessness, absenteeism and incomplete work tasks. Teachers assume the task of optimising the function of teaching and learning in the midst of addressing the behavioural problems, learning impairment, inattention, poverty, psychological and physical trauma experienced by learners (Wood, 2009). Many teachers find this task challenging.

These challenges are by no means unique to South Africa and are found in most countries in the world. A report by the United Nations Development Programme (2004) reflected the necessity for implementation of multicultural policies encouraging respect for diversity, culture, spirituality and language. Beyond the formation of democratic governments and economic growth, these were identified as essential means to create sustainable development.

In a study by McKown and Weinstein (2002) it was hypothesized that children from academically stigmatized groups experience negative teacher expectancies. Following a research undertaking, it was concluded that members of stigmatized groups (particularly based on ethnicity) were prone to significant teacher underestimates of capability within the schooling system. Currently all education practice is governed by the South African Constitution and the South African Schools Act.

2.2. GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE, INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The South African Schools Act no.84 of 1996 (as amended) directs educational practice. It clearly outlines procedures for organisation, governance and funding of schools. The Constitution of South Africa together with the Bill of Rights and White Paper 6 of 2001 are relevant in this study. They relate directly to the provision of education for all children. This legislation also helps to guide teachers in their role of managing vulnerable children in schools. The South African Constitution describes education as a basic human right. The content therein provides directives on the necessity for education to reflect inclusivity. However, in practice some discrepancies still exist in the case of effective management of vulnerable children.

Educational processes must also make provision for teaching vulnerable children in the South African schooling system. Education White Paper 6 was developed with great sensitivity to the appropriateness of education provision and training to suitably cater for a diverse range of learning needs. It advocates inclusive education and training which is directly applicable to the management of learner vulnerability. The governments' recognition of the requirement to have a more representative, cohesive education and training framework signified a shift in provision of basic education. Legal provisions and policy development reflect governmental obligation to all learners and commitment to the central principles of the Constitution as reflected in the ideal of schools as centres of inclusivity in education.

According to these policies, teachers and school managers must bear in mind the needs of vulnerable children and adopt strategies to manage them. It is imperative that beyond curriculum completion, provision is made for support services, care and personal interest in the well-being of all children. It emphasizes the need for rectification of shortcomings pertaining to the education and management of vulnerable children in schools.

These policies directly have a bearing on this study. Furthermore, Education White Paper 6 outlines the organization of schools into conventional or mainstream schools, full service schools and Special Schools as Resource Centres. The organisational structure further differentiates Institution Level Support Team (ILST) and District Based Support Teams (DBST) for additional support services in schools. This has implications for teachers and the manner in which they make support services accessible for the vulnerable child (Education White Paper 6).

2.3. FORMS OF VULNERABILITY

In order to appropriately define and manage vulnerability in schools, teachers must be equipped to identify forms of vulnerability. These learners have a unique set of needs and schools play key roles in meeting these needs. Vulnerabilities manifest in child specific means. Teachers therefore have the unenviable task of identifying possible behavioural manifestations of environmental, physical, psychological and health related challenges, often with little history available. In addition other barriers to teaching and learning exacerbate the problem.

The teaching profession has come under significant strain and necessity for change in approach to classroom teaching in the advent of the HIV pandemic, increasing numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children in the classroom (Govender, 2004). Financial constraints, low income, child headed households, poverty and inequality may result in child labour, child trafficking, child sexual exploitation. The manifestations of this in a classroom include inappropriate behaviour, poor concentration, truancy and an increase in school drop-out rates. Such children perform poorly in school. Teachers find it challenging to manage them in class.

Vulnerability arising from breakdown in family structures, violence and instability manifest in neglect, behavioural disruption, emotional instability, poor interpersonal relationships and

ultimately poor development. In order to understand the forms of vulnerability, teachers need to become attuned to relating behavioural manifestations with causative factors associated with child vulnerability.

2.3.1. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD VULNERABILITY

Factors associated with child vulnerability in relation to schools may be described as intrinsic, extrinsic, socio-cultural, systemic, and pedagogical.

2.3.1.1. Intrinsic

Factors to consider in evaluation of child vulnerability include neurodevelopmental delay, childhood illness, psychological factors and mental illness. According to studies by Baker et al, children with developmental delays have higher instances of behavioral problems. It is imperative that teachers play a role in recognition of developmental delay in the early-foundation phase. Often poor performance, inability to cope with academic demands, inability to follow instructions and behavioral abnormalities may serve as indicators of developmental delay.

Debilitating or chronic childhood illness place children in a vulnerable position. The issue of limited healthcare provision with subsequent poor healthcare outcomes and education may be viewed as separate entities. However, it may be said that they are in fact interdependent. Poor health impacts holistic wellbeing. This may directly or indirectly have a negative effect on academic progress. Teachers are to be cognoscente' of the impact of ill-health of learners and their families and how these factors contribute to child vulnerability.

2.3.1.2. Extrinsic: occurring outside of the schooling system

Factors associated with the development of conduct disorders include broadly financial constraint, parental factors; parenting styles, forms of abuse, single parent households, low

parental education attainment, psychopathology (Brotman, Gouley, O'Neal & Klein, 2004). These factors are also associated closely with child vulnerability. Poor interpersonal relationships and strained social circumstances; poverty, overcrowding and low household stimulation are identifiable risk factors for child vulnerability.

Abuse

Children and young people live with parental substance abuse and may in fact resultantly be involved in substance abuse themselves. Substance abuse and misuse among children and adolescents are major contributors to poor education, crime, violence and socio-economic concerns in South Africa. (Flisher, Mathews, Mukoma, Lombard, 2006). Often, this abuse affects their functioning at school. Teachers must be mindful of the possibility of such practices in the home environment and be equipped to seek the necessary help for learners affected by substance abuse, dependence and misuse.

Domestic abuse is another major contributor when evaluating the behaviour of vulnerable children. When dealing with behavioural abnormalities in the classroom, one needs to consider the possibility of children being subjected to abuse, homelessness and exposure to violence. In a study by Holt, Buckley and Whelan (2008) it was found that children are negatively affected by exposure to domestic violence. Significantly, it was concluded that children are in fact resilient even in the face of domestic adversity. Children are capable of developing positive, healthy means of coping despite difficulty on the home front. This has an implication for teachers. If children are able to actively construct strategies to overcome their home environments, perhaps if teachers provide understanding, support and encouragement for this vulnerable group they may influence them positively to overcome challenges and barriers in the school environment as well.

2.3.1.3. Socio-cultural issues

Ethnic and cultural differences are undoubtedly a source of misunderstanding within the past and current South African schooling system. This is not however, limited to the South African schooling system. In a study by McKown and Weinstein (2002) it was hypothesized that children from academically stigmatized groups experience negative teacher expectancies.

Following a research undertaking, it was concluded that members of stigmatized groups (particularly based on ethnicity) were prone to significant teacher underestimates of capability within the schooling system.

2.3.1.4. Systemic factors

Systemic factors include those events, circumstances or situations that exist within the schooling system that place children in a vulnerable position. These include resource constraints, inadequate human resources; high learner-teacher ratio, classroom overcrowding, policy and curriculum challenges, transportation or logistical difficulties and inadequate support services for both learner and educator.

2.3.1.5. Pedagogical factors

These describe inferior teaching competencies that prevent a child from receiving a quality education. These factors render children vulnerable within the schooling system. There is an outcry over limited training with regard to protecting learners, and thus teachers exhibit lack of confidence in managing vulnerable children in schools (Kay, 2003).

2.3.2. THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN IDENTIFICATION OF FORMS OF CHILD VULNERABILITY

Learners enter the classroom as persons with their own life experiences, thought constructs, language, perception of acceptable behaviour and situational responses (Shade, Kelly & Oberg 1997). Factors such as poverty, crime, social problems and politics impinge on what happens

in the classroom. The consequences of such problems are played out in the classroom (Hepburn, 2002) with teaching and learning increasing in complexity. The additional demands associated with limited concentration spans, trauma, heightened discrimination, and increased poverty experienced by learners have proven challenging (Foster & Williamson, 2000; Wood, 2009).

As the “heart of the school” (Wood, 2004) the teacher has experiential understanding of the demands of teaching vulnerable children (Clarke, 2008). The educator is ideally placed to protect the learner. Self-motivated and competent teachers are associated with quality education implementation and delivery (Oxfam, 2000). However, although many countries have developed multi-sectoral responses to meet the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children (Pridmore & Yates, 2000; Richter, Manegold & Pather, 2004), few Ministries of Education in sub-Saharan Africa seem to have directed attention to, or invested resources in teacher education for this purpose (Clarke, 2008).

Beyond their normal duties, educators are tasked with identification of the problems and needs of each child. The needs of vulnerable children are similar to those of children who do not find themselves in circumstances that render them vulnerable. Additionally their unique circumstances require a distinctive managerial approach to address needs that may not be otherwise catered for. The process of identification of needs by teachers makes the assumption that beyond training to educate learners, teachers have a vested interest in the circumstances surrounding the behaviour of each of their learners. Also, it makes the assumption that teachers are in a position to exert their judgement and are equipped to identify needs and challenges in an unobtrusive manner whilst maintaining a satisfactory level of education.

Banks (2010) states every teacher and learner is unique and as such have established beliefs and values through life experiences and situations. These affect perceptions of the world and others and influence behaviour. Teachers need to be knowledgeable about all factors which

influence the way in which they teach and respond to learners and the way in which learners learn and behave in class.

Defiant behaviour is a frequent manifestation of behaviour resulting from circumstances that render a child vulnerable. Differentiating a behavioural manifestation versus an actual conduct disorder may prove challenging in circumstances in which little family support or disinterest in the educational process exists from primary caregivers. Children who experience neglect often have an insatiable need for stability, or conversely have difficulty formulating and sustaining any interpersonal relationship with peers and their teachers. It is imperative for teachers to identify the need for stability, consistency and continuity of care.

The challenge lies in ensuring that provision of a safe, beneficial, enriching environment in the classroom is not an effort in futility, as once learners leave the schooling environment, they are then returned to a dysfunctional home environment. Children who experience abuse or neglect may in fact, after years of exposure to abusive, unpredictable, tumultuous home circumstances, themselves repeat the vicious cycle.

Additionally, the challenge lies in the implementation and maintenance of disciplinary measures and procedures that uphold order in schools with understanding and compassion. One of the first steps is to try to understand the common causes of learner misconduct in schools and classrooms. There have been responses by various international educational institutions to consider needs of vulnerable children in schools and children themselves were found to be instrumental in instituting change within education (Pridmore & Stephens, 2000). In South Africa, challenges faced by teachers include poor training in how to manage vulnerable children in the classroom, inappropriate attitudes, lack of consultation, existent language-barrier amongst learners, teachers and management as well as poor co-operation from the school and community (Wood, 2009). This presents the need for adaptation of teaching strategies.

2.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.4.1. THEORIES OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The Ecological System's Theory, eco-systemic theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner serves as the main theoretical framework which underpins this research. The multifaceted nature of this research lends itself to application of various management and leadership models which are used to support the main theory; hence reference is made to more than one theory, as well as models of leadership. In addition, a needs theory which is included is applicable to understanding the plight of vulnerable children and importantly, teachers' roles in identification of learner needs and managing these needs.

According to Dimmock (1999), School leaders are faced with harmonizing the functions of leadership, management and administration. It is particularly important for the effective management of child vulnerability that the aforementioned functions are optimised within a school. Sound leadership is imperative for sustainability of beneficial educational practices. Cuban (1988) describes leadership as "influencing others actions in achieving desirable ends". For the purposes of this research, management of vulnerable children is of particular importance. Management here is described as efficient and effective organisational structure and the maintenance thereof with sound provision for both leadership and management. (Cuban, 1988). According to Sergiovanni and Carver education administration is an ethical science concerned with good or better processes, means or ends and is immersed in values, preferences, ideas, aspirations and improvement on that which is correct and valuable. For good teaching, decisions, policies and schools prime consideration must be given to what is good.

Management theories include models of educational management. Bush (2003) describes the following six management models with parallel leadership models; formal, collegial, subjective, political, cultural, ambiguous. The associated leadership models include the

managerial, participative, transactional, post-modern, contingency and moral. These models exist within over-arching theories of management that are both normative and descriptive. As such, management theories serve to conceptualise organisational behaviour, organisational interests, culture and factors that influence managerial decision making.

It is imperative that a suitable environment is created within schools for managers, teachers and learners to accommodate and provide for vulnerable children. This can only be accomplished if there is appropriate management, support, consideration and leadership in schools. Although each management model has its own merits, the models most applicable to this study, and those which have implications for the management of child vulnerability in schools include the collegial model, subjective model and cultural model. Considering that this study deals with the role of teachers in supporting vulnerable children, these models have relevance.

According to Bush (2003), the collegial model includes theories which emphasize sharing of power and decision-making amongst members who share a common understanding of a particular organisational or institutional aim. Similarly, Brundrett (1998) infers that collegiality may be described as a vital management tool in which teachers collaborate with other teachers to improve a particular situation. It is based on the assumption that there exists a staff of trained professionals where there is consensus, compromise, harmonious relationships and all members agree on the objectives of the organisation. There is adequate teacher representation, vision and values to guide management of schools. In such a climate and culture of learning these features may be reflected in the manner in which teachers support vulnerable children in schools. Subjective models encourage the creation of an institution that reflects the management, educators, learners and community it serves.

The Department of Education aims to create schools of inclusivity (Education White Paper 6). The most appropriate starting point for school managers to ensure school transformation to centres that are inclusive of vulnerable children would be to ensure that teacher experiences are

elicited, documented and incorporated into development of policies that govern the care of the vulnerable child. This has implications for appropriate, versatile school leadership.

Participative (democratic), post-modern and moral leadership models correlate well with research on the role of teachers in management of child vulnerability in schools. Participative leadership implies a style that allows subordinate inclusion in major decision making and collective involvement in issues that affect institutions (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). Addressing child vulnerability requires inclusion of all stakeholders in actively seeking out means to improve the identification of vulnerable children in schools and implement means to sustainably address this issue. Appropriate participative leadership is a vital component. It deviates greatly from a historical authoritative approach. Postmodern leadership is not authority based (Tierney, 1996). It reflects personality, values, beliefs, training, culture and needs of an institution (Bush, 2003).

The informal aspects of organisations are emphasised in cultural models which involve being cognoscente' of societal and organisational culture (Bush, 2003). Moral leadership is closely associated with cultural models of leadership. This stresses the personal aspects of management. It is essential for principals and teachers to display and instil sound morals and values in an organisation, in order to address the plight of the vulnerable child.

The contextual framework from which this study emerged includes the prevalence of vulnerable children in the experience of the researcher. It was deemed necessary to explore the way in which teachers in one school experience this set of circumstances and the way in which they cope with such demands. This study is within an epistemology of constructionism as it attempts to gain an understanding of teachers' interpretations of reality within a particular context. It also contextualises the importance of recognition of the needs of children within a learning environment as part of education, leadership and management of child vulnerability in schools.

Schools are instrumental in addressing needs of vulnerable children. Negative and maladaptive behaviour arises from a series of unfulfilled needs. Abraham Maslow, a practising American psychologist established one of the most popular “needs theories”. He illustrated needs in the form of a pyramid. The hierarchy demonstrates differentiation between lower-order needs and higher order needs. Self- actualization needs can only be achieved when lower-order needs are fulfilled. In the light of this theory , a child who is hungry, tired, neglected and facing challenges with fulfilment of basic needs, cannot be expected to perform or behave similarly to learners who have their needs met. As such, various factors need due consideration in order to appropriately address educational needs, progress and holistic wellbeing of vulnerable children.

Additionally, recent research has illustrated that systemic approaches are central in interventions for children (Weare, 2005). This study is about the role of teachers, vulnerable children and what goes on in the home, classroom and the school and the way in which each entity interacts and perceives the other. Classrooms are sub-systems of the school; no school functions without the classroom functioning well. According to Bronfenbrenner’s “Ecological or Eco-systems Model” the child is surrounded by circles or spheres of support. This model focuses on the reciprocal relationship between people and their internal and external environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). What goes on in the home, affects what goes on in the classroom, what goes on in the classroom affects what goes on in the school; in management of vulnerable children the role of the teacher is of utmost importance. This model forms the theoretical back-drop to this conceptual framework applicable to this body of research. In this model there is understanding and construction of knowledge in a holistic way. It involves parents, teachers, neighbours, community and all stake-holders. This happens at a micro, meso and macro level (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The eco-systemic approach serves to present a new standpoint on emotional and behavioural challenges in schools. In this way it allows analysis of the interactional patterns observable in social systems; including those that involve the

vulnerable child, the family unit, school, community and society at large. This theory alludes to the fact that change in a part of a system affects the rest of the system. It takes into account the link between psycho- social, cultural, economic and political factors in society.

The Department of Education stipulates in Education White Paper 6 that every school must have an Institution-Level Support Team (ILST). In terms of school management the ILST is a support structure at school level, aligned to whole school development. Areas in which support is offered are institution development, educator capacity building and learner support. This ties in with the eco-systemic model since it aims to develop the school as an inclusive teaching centre. This requires all three sub-committees to work together. This approach is distinctly different from various other approaches as it is representative of circular interpretation patterns; referring to the micro-system, meso- system, exo- system, macro-system and chrono- system all of which are intertwined. This has significant repercussions for school management as it is suggestive to schools of the importance of their role in actively bringing about change in the lives of vulnerable children by using all possible means and resources available, with teachers being the vehicles of transformation in the classroom.

As part of this theory, change is viewed as dependent on all stakeholders involved in ensuring the wellbeing of the child. It illustrates a view that teachers, schools and community members who wish to intervene all have the ability to effect change in the lives of these children. This theoretical and conceptual framework is congruent with my study due to its“ holistic approach.

These aforementioned theories have implications for my study as I aim to explore teachers“ experiences with vulnerable children with their uniqueness and differences in needs, secondly to explore the management of these children and lastly, to explore the possible adoption of a holistic, collaborative approach, with teachers being its driving force, to effectively manage vulnerable children.

Schools need to make provision to cater for needs of vulnerable children in school. Teaching strategies and policies should cater for diversity. School leaders and managers must be aware of issues around vulnerability and put policies and strategies in place to cater for these needs. A democratic model of leadership must be adopted, featuring elements of catering for diversity, multi-culturalism and Ubuntu leadership.

Current research shows that there are challenges in schools related to providing for needs of orphans and vulnerable children. Department of Education statistics show that there are very few psychologists to service many schools. There is often emphasis on poverty, single parenthood and education. A further limitation is that the effect of HIV/AIDS appears to overshadow other causes of vulnerability in children. It is the basics in relationships, that is, the absence of sound, healthy parent- child relationships which I see as a gap. The inadequate training of teachers, mind-set of teachers and heavy work - load creates a gap which prevents early identification of learners with barriers. This prevents early adoption of intervention strategies. Solutions must be provided in terms of providing necessary support as early as possible to prevent the problem from getting worse.

The adoption of the roles of mentors, counsellors and welfare workers is not easy for educators, as reported in previous studies (Bhana, Morrell, Epstein & Moletsane, 2006). Being tasked with attending to issues pertaining to vulnerable children, Life-Orientation teachers comparatively work longer hours. Although there has been published work pertaining to provision of care for vulnerable children, a significant gap in information exists by way of exploring teachers' experiences of this issue. It appears that there is a need for closer collaboration within the school and school- community to support teachers in their role of managing vulnerable children. This kind of problem is something that can only effectively be dealt with at school level under the leadership of the principal (Wood & Webb, 2008). Although this is in fact the case, few published research papers pay particular reference to the issue of understanding what the

experiences of teachers are in managing vulnerable children. Secondly, even those that have displayed interest in the experiential aspect of teaching vulnerable children, few go on within the same body of work to determine what strategies teachers adopt to manage vulnerable children.

Within this research, a distinguishing factor that may improve on previous research is a vested interest in the determination of what role teachers could play in managing vulnerable children.

A combination of all these factors presented, in fact, prevents early identification of learners with challenges, thus preventing early intervention in terms of providing support for vulnerable children. The first step is close screening in order to identify vulnerability and understand the common causes of learner misconduct in classrooms and schools. For teachers to understand learners' behaviour it is necessary to look deeper into the background of learners to develop appropriate teaching strategies. Teaching strategy may be defined as a plan of action to achieve outcomes and establish positive discipline in the classroom. In the exchange of teaching and learning various attitudes of teachers and learners become evident. Flanders (1970) suggests that the most important elements are the relationship between teacher and learner. There must be trust, openness, mutual respect, tolerance of cultural differences. A teacher can make the school a place where a student who is homeless can find security, acceptance and a safe haven (Wong, Peace, Wang, Feeley & Carlson, 2005).

Denscombe (1985) identifies three categories of strategies in dealing with disruptive learners; domination which imposes control, co-optation to engage willing participation of pupils and classwork management strategies which seek to structure activities which promote order and discipline. Alternatives to how disciplinary measures can be employed to help prevent disruptive incidents must be implemented to establish good discipline.

The goals of misbehaviour, (Dreikurs, Grunwald and Pepper, 1968) which motivate misbehaviour in the classroom arise from pupil inadequacy, attention- seeking, seeking power or revenge. Effective classroom management should reduce potential for conflict and confrontation; learners must be engaged in useful and interesting activities.

Another key factor to consider is management functions in schools; planning, organisation, leadership within the school. Schools must in all their planning and organisation make provision to cater for needs of vulnerable children in school. Operation „Sukuma Sakhe“ is a continuous interaction between government and community. It has a “whole government” approach. It is a holistic programme which deals with individuals, household and community needs, addressing the challenges of extreme poverty and food security. It addresses empowerment of women, children and vulnerable groups, calling for community to work together to rebuild communities. Schools should support such initiatives.

Teaching strategies and policies should cater for diversity. School leaders and managers must be aware of issues around vulnerability and put policies and strategies in place to cater for these needs.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Classrooms are sub-systems of the school; no school functions without the classroom functioning well. What goes on in the classroom affects what goes on in the school. Therefore, in order to ensure all children’s needs are catered for so that quality teaching and learning occurs, it is necessary for researchers to represent this issue in published works.

A review of current literature on the topic reveals that whilst there is much literature available on vulnerable children, the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in schools needs to be explored. In order to provide support for vulnerable children in school the role of the teacher must be carefully examined to establish how best teachers can support these vulnerable

children. In addition to presenting literature available on this study, gaps and silences encountered in these studies were highlighted. Key-concepts relevant to the study were defined.

The subsequent chapter deals with research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

“Seek wisdom, not knowledge. Knowledge is of the past, wisdom is of the future.” Indian Proverb

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to examine the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in school. The previous chapter presented a review of related literature, and the theoretical framework which underpins the study. This chapter describes the research paradigm, research design and methodology. Sampling and data- generation methods are explained. Finally data-analysis procedures, as well as issues of ethical consideration and trustworthiness are presented. The context within which the study was undertaken is explained. A summary and conclusion follows.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A paradigm is a method of interpreting research according to scientifically acceptable knowledge and acceptable models (Kuhn, 1962). It describes belief systems that are shared, the means of the pursuit of knowledge, principles and frameworks for development of ways in which to find consensus about problems; what they are, how to go about investigating problems and how to attain consensus.

This study is located within the interpretive paradigm. It aimed to research the actual experiences of teachers in managing vulnerable children. Interpretive research is a collective process (Garrick, 1999). This perspective is called naturalistic research. Naturalistic research is conducted in a natural, uncontrived context with the researcher paying particular attention to being unobtrusive (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000). This type of research makes provision

for recognition of participant realities that are resultant from their experiences. The interpretive paradigm highlights experiences through exploring teacher narratives of their interpretations of their experiences of child vulnerability in education. This paradigm is deemed to be relevant to this study because participants share information pertaining to their interpretation of child vulnerability.

A “secondary account” describes interpretive researchers’ descriptions of other individuals meaning systems (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this paradigm no data is “objective”; reality is subjective and constructed. Research is underpinned by the premise that people’s behaviour is context dependent and there are multiple truths. The rationale for application of this paradigm is that it easily enables the researcher, in this study, to examine teachers’ roles in managing vulnerable children in schools. It made it possible to explore the teachers’ actual thoughts, feelings and experiences with vulnerable children, which formed the basis of the research. It allowed freedom to explore this social reality using qualitative methods, since there is a broad perspective of knowledge.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to means of description of a study. This study utilised a qualitative case-study design. Utilisation of a case-study as a research design was deemed appropriate as it enabled collection of first-hand information about teachers’ experiences in managing the vulnerable child within the school environment. Stake (1995) suggested the use of the term “intrinsic” as an identifier of this particular type of case study. Intrinsic case studies are guided by researcher’s need to better understand a particular case, phenomenon or relationship. The selection of this design relates primarily to the work of Yin (2003) which offers guidelines on appropriateness of selection of a case study. According to Yin (2003), case studies should be considered for the following reasons;

- i when the focus of a study is to answer specific questions
- ii the behaviour of subjects within the research cannot be manipulated
- iii contextual conditions within the research are relevant to the research topic
- iv the boundaries between a phenomenon under investigation and its context are difficult to distinguish

I investigated the role of teachers in managing the vulnerable child in one school in the Umlazi district. In this case-study, three focus-group discussions and seven individual face-to-face interviews were held. This design allowed the focus of the research to be addressed. This presented an opportunity to gain a holistic view of teachers' experiences in an uncontrived context. The case study design also contributed to highlighting environmental and contextual influences of a particular schooling environment on the education and management of the vulnerable learner.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology refers to the way the researcher goes about generating data, analysing data and consolidating findings. It deals with practices, policies, processes and procedures followed.

Working within an interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009) a qualitative approach was utilised to respond to research questions in this research. Employment of the qualitative method allowed a multi-faceted, holistic picture of teachers' experiences, perceptions and feelings (Creswell, 2003). This was used to augment understanding of teachers' experiences in managing vulnerable children in schools. Qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach. It reveals feelings, behaviours, thoughts, insights and actions to help understand the identified problem. According to de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport (2002) qualitative research methodology assumes that understanding may be achieved through

accumulated knowledge gained through eliciting peoples experiences. Qualitative research methodology was therefore used in order to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences with vulnerable children.

The study was conducted in one co-educational, public school. This school is situated in a residential suburb and was purposefully selected. All teachers currently employed at the research site were deemed eligible for inclusion in the research. Purposive sampling was employed. Data was generated through individual and focus-group interviews. Teachers were randomly assigned to three focus groups for focus group interviews and seven individuals volunteered for inclusion in individual interviews. Data analysis involved thematic conception and data reduction procedures. Following analysis and consolidation of findings, recommendations are formulated.

3.4.1. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in one co-educational, public school. The school is situated in a residential area. I have a close association with the selected research site, therefore, I had the advantage of possessing sufficient background information of the selected research site and the wider school community. This proved to be useful in the purposive sampling process.

Moreover, through my experience and association, I am aware of some of the experiences of many teachers at this research site. This site proved suitable since half of the staff complement have been teaching for between twenty five to thirty five years and have an established knowledge base and experience in dealing with issues pertaining to orphans and vulnerable children. In addition, many of these teachers have been through various changes in the education system and have experienced various changes, challenges and triumphs in their efforts to cater for all children according to their diverse needs.

3.4.2. SAMPLING

Goffman's (1968) work on total institutions reflected the ideal of inclusion of an entire group in a study. However, it is challenging and in certain situations impossible for varied reasons, to study an entire group or population. Sampling, therefore, is the process of selection from a population of interest. Consideration was made of what would constitute a representative group for the purposes of this research and this group of individuals were then purposefully selected. Purposive sampling was utilised. This site had teachers from Grade R to Grade 7 who had a wealth of experience. The entire staff of teachers of the school was invited to participate in the research on a voluntary basis. Information pertaining to the study was provided. The sample finally included the agreeable staff complement. Thirty one teachers of a total of thirty two who were invited, participated.

Three focus-group and seven individual face-to-face interviews were held. Interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

3.4.3 DATA GENERATION INSTRUMENTS

INTERVIEWS

The key data collection strategy utilised within this research were the interviews. According to Kvale (1996), qualitative research interviews seek to describe the meanings of focal themes in the actual lives of the participants.

Two types of interviews were utilised; focus-group interviews and semi-structured individual interviews were utilised as the data collection strategy.

3.4.3.1 Focus-group interviews

Data was generated from three focus–group interviews, with an additional seven semi-structured interviews with 7 individual teachers. Terreblanche and Durrheim (1999) consider the term focus-group as research conducted in groups. These interviews provide means of observation, listening to peoples experiences, learning from these experiences and improving communication. The researcher conducted focus-group interviews to encourage spontaneity and in-depth discussion of participant experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009).

Focus-group 1 comprised of 11 participants, focus-group 2 included 8 participants and focus-group 3 comprised of 8 participants. Teachers from different grades were randomly assigned into groups. Fifteen of these teachers have been at the school for twenty-four years and five of them for eleven years.

The interviews were between forty-five to sixty minutes in duration for each focus-group and twenty-five to thirty minutes each for every individual face-to-face interview. Questions were posed from an interview schedule that had been formulated prior to the engagement and subsequent discussion was held to ascertain teachers’ experiences of managing vulnerable children. Interviews were flexible, participants engaged in discussion, shared ideas, opinions and experiences and rich information was obtained. Sessions were very dynamic.

3.4.3.2 Individual face-to-face Interviews

Individual interviews were structured to take approximately thirty minutes each. These teachers are teachers who have been teaching for between one year and thirty years. Three of these teachers have been in the school and working in the community for twenty four years. I am also aware of the needs of the community. The teachers who participated have experienced various changes and challenges in the education system for over two decades.

The focus of the interviews was to determine the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children. According to Behr (1983) interviewing is a very direct method of collecting necessary information from relevant individuals. These interviews provided credible, actual, true experiences of teachers.

3.4.4 DATA GENERATION PROCEDURES

Data generation involves an in-depth understanding of the topic being researched. In order to generate data two schedules of interview questions were used. Core questions were set. All responses were recorded. There was one schedule for the focus-group interviews and a second set of questions for the individual interviews; a schedule of pre-determined questions formed the basis of these interviews. Each participant had a pseudonym assigned. The exact responses of participants were audio-recorded.

3.4.5 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Data analysis was conducted according to Teschs' suggested steps in Creswell (2005) to identify emerging themes. Data analysis involved explaining responses in terms of experiences of participants. Information was arranged thematically.

Data analysis is a means to put a matter under discussion into perspective. Data analysis involves interpretation of participants' responses to questions in terms of their experiences. All information obtained from the focus group discussions and individual interviews were audio-recorded. The information was then transcribed and transferred onto a laptop. According to procedures in qualitative studies, the exact words of participants were recorded. Responses were grouped together according to themes developed. Responses were categorized according to teachers' experiences in managing vulnerable children. Notes and comments were made on transcripts. Categorizing data helped in data reduction, which took place immediately after transcription.

3.4.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission to conduct research was obtained from the Department of Education. All relevant information was furnished; proposed dates of visit, time and topic. Permission to go to the site was obtained in advance. Permission for access to the research site was obtained.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Permission from the Principal of the research site was obtained to conduct research, to access school premises and to identify and seek consent from participants. The researcher outlined the topic of the research, design-methods, guarantee of confidentiality, method of analysis of information and dissemination of information.

Anonymity of participants was assured by utilising pseudonyms in the verbatim transcripts of the interviews that were submitted to the supervisor at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The school was also assigned a pseudonym. The names of the participants, research site and school principal are not reflected anywhere.

Participation was voluntary and with informed consent. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) informed consent is described as the process of furnishing all relevant information to an individual with the mental capacity to understand all aspects of the potential research that may influence the individuals' decision, prior to inclusion. Letters inviting teachers to participate were given to all identified participants; in this case, all teachers on the staff.

All aspects related to the research process were explained to the participants; that it is voluntary, there is no monetary benefit, no names will be revealed, findings will be used purely for research purposes and a participant may withdraw at any point with no penalties. Letters of declaration of consent were signed by participants. Confidentiality was assured.

Research data will be stored in the research supervisors' office for 5 years. Documentary evidence will then be shredded and tapes incinerated.

3.4.7. TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to studies by Guba (1981), four criteria are to be utilised in qualitative research to ensure a trustworthy study;

Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Being trustworthy as a qualitative researcher requires that the research process is carried out fairly and that the products represent, as closely as possible, the experiences of people who are studied (Ely, 1991). It meant minimising bias when eliciting information from interviewees.

To ensure rigour of study and trustworthiness, interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim immediately thereafter. These interviews were conducted according to the interview schedule until saturation was deemed to be reached following repetition and non-emergence of new information in accordance with work published by Greeff (2005). Transcription occurred immediately after interviews were conducted. Annexures contained the actual spoken words of participants, including verbatim quotations. Observations referred to were true and specific. Transcripts were returned to interviewees for member-checking; thus verifying that information was reflected correctly.

According to studies by Lincoln and Guba (1985) ensuring credibility is of utmost importance in the establishment of trustworthiness. Within this research, triangulation through the use of different methods within the data collection strategy proves a significant contributor to credibility assurance. Triangulation within this research allows for verification of information through identifying corroborative responses.

Transferability is concerned with the extent to which finding of research may be applied to other situations (Merriam, 1998). The difficulty in ensuring such transferability in qualitative research is irrefutable, however, within this research, efforts are made by the researcher to ensure that contextual information is apparent. According to works by Lincoln and Guba (1985), if provision is made by the researcher to clearly outline the context of the research, although the researcher is not fully able to make inferences about the transferability of the research, providing sufficient contextual information contributes positively to achieving the ideal of transferability.

Dependability within this research was ensured through utilisation of “overlapping methods” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); individual and focus-group interviews.

Lastly, confirmability is ensured procedurally through triangulation in the data collection strategy.

3.5. CONCLUSION

The type and quality of data collected determines how successful a research project is. Research design and methodology are of paramount importance. This chapter served to explain suitability of the approach and methodology. Data-collection and data- analysis procedures were explained. Issues related to ethical considerations were presented.

In the next chapter data will be presented. The focus will be on themes that emerged during the interviews and discussion of thereof.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA-PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

“Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each.” Plato

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter there is presentation, analysis and discussion of data. Findings are presented.

The following Critical Questions guide data-presentation:

1. How do teachers experience the behaviour of vulnerable children in school?
2. What is the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in school?

Findings are presented in accordance with major themes and sub-themes which emerged during the process of data analysis. This chapter commences with a profile of the research site.

4.2 RESEARCH SITE

The research site was a co-educational school, situated in a suburb. The learner population was 1013 learners from Grade R to Grade Seven, comprising of learners of all race groups. The majority of learners were from homes of average or below average income group. Ninety percent of learners travel from areas outside the immediate vicinity of the school. They use public transportation. There were at least thirty-five children who were identified as being orphans and vulnerable children within this research site. However, as teachers, we are aware that every child experiences some degree of vulnerability in some form or other.

For the purpose of this study, in particular, vulnerable children are viewed as those who experience various social, emotional, physical and psychological challenges within the home

and school environment and require support in their personal and academic development; those children in need of care and support. Some children went to school without having a meal and did not take lunch to school. Some of them were said to be unkempt and displayed overt features of neglect. Academic performance could improve. Twenty-nine teachers participated in the research.

4.3 FINDINGS

Findings are presented from two data-sources which comprised of seven semi-structured individual interviews and three focus-group interviews. Data is categorised and will be presented in two prominent themes with associated sub-themes. Firstly, I examine what teachers experiences are, followed by elucidation of the role of teachers in the management of the vulnerable child in the school environment.

4.3.1 THEME 1: TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL.

The main question I asked in this theme was “how do teachers experience vulnerable children in school?”

There are 5 sub-sections which are further demarcated;

4.3.1.1. LEARNER-CENTRED CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS IN MANAGEMENT OF CHILD VULNERABILITY:

(i) Children display lack of respect for self and others

A theme that emerged within this research is the overt lack of respect displayed by children, particularly the vulnerable children. This is evident from teacher accounts of behavioural manifestations of disruptiveness and disrespect. Student misbehaviours in the experience of

participants included interruption of teaching and other learners' academic activities, mimicking bad behaviour and defying teachers. Participants cited unnecessary talking as an identifiable means of vulnerable learner disrespect toward teachers and other learners. In an individual interview participant "Jet" said the following;

Without knowing the reasons why they cry some of them just talk out of turn. Most of them seek attention because they don't get attention, so they want to get attention in ways that are not good.

Participants in all focus-group discussions described how disrespectful behaviour negatively affected classroom dynamics and this caused other learners to become isolated and hindered the learning process;

I think they disrupt other children when the teachers speaking or teaching the other children. Teachers don't continue with the lesson the way that they should because now they have to take care of this young person try and discipline this young person and the other children can't participate.

Participants in Focus-group 2 concurred that mimicking of disruptive behaviour is problematic. A participant revealed;

You find that that kind of behaviour aped by the other children if one person stands up and says what can you do to me? You find that others follow suit.

Another participant concurred in Focus-group 2 citing;

And you have that jeering; like laughing, mocking, when you scold one

It appears that defiance and disinterest described by teachers result in the classroom environment being not conducive to learning. Many participants agreed on the dire situation facing teachers regarding discipline. A third participant in Focus-group 2 interview said.

Some children are just rude. They just don't show any respect

Children are described as displaying lack of respect for other individuals and for property of others. Children not equipped for the day at school take belongings of others without permission, causing squabbles, fights, and petty thieving. They disturb and disrupt teaching and learning, infringing on rights of children who want to learn. The teacher must intervene. Teachers are unable to teach as planned, since time is spent disciplining deviant learners.

Within this body of research, teachers' responses to the management of disrespect as a manifestation of child vulnerability are in fact somewhat polarised. This is in-keeping with the subjective model framework. It emerged that participants view vulnerability differently. Understandably so, as this polarity is also reflected in some published literature. Throughout data analysis, it emerged that many teachers expressed frustration and made a somewhat direct association with the vulnerable learner and behavioural dysfunction, while a few teachers considered children's disruptive behaviour as an identifier of potential for them to teach with a view to improve and change behaviour.

A participant in Focus-group 1 had a different experience and expressed

The child could show withdrawal symptoms. Their head will always be bowed, they will not be self-motivated and confident enough to partake in decision-making.

A third participant in Focus-group 1 stated

They are attention seekers; you really get very few that are withdrawn

A sense of responsibility, understanding and patience was expressed following experiences of some teachers. They attempt to create an environment in which vulnerable learners and others are not disadvantaged and do not become disinterested and apathetic towards learning content. According to Langdon (1996) discipline is one of the inherent roles of a teacher. No specific distinction is made regarding the act of disciplining particular learner groups, but it is stated as a primary function of the teacher. Similarly, participant “Joeie” in an individual interview went on to say;

I would say teacher’s role very important; we cannot ignore them. (We need to) Seek help for them, anyway. It will make our work more pleasurable, make our work so much easier.

Comparatively, teachers considered the incessant interruption of other learners as a reflection of disinterest and disrespect which those learners ought not to have to contend with. Many teachers feel that this disrespect fundamentally impedes their professionalism and inherent right to teach with minimal interruptions (Freiberg & Driscoll, 1992). Disrespectful attitudes and challenges posed by vulnerable learners are often considered to be issues that teachers in the mainstream appear ill equipped to deal with. In an individual interview, participant “Joeie” highlighted the need to enlist the help of specialists and allied educational professionals to assist in catering for such needs;

I think in such a situation, in those schools, there are specialist educators who can cope with children coming from such backgrounds and they have guidelines by which they must work and communicate with such children.

Although disrespect has been identified as a prominent feature in classrooms, it cannot be ascribed to the actions of vulnerable children only. At this research site, teachers have identified disrespect amongst children as problematic. Therefore, the vulnerable child should not be

understood to be the only offender of disrespectful behaviour in the classroom setting. In my opinion, it appears that positive values are lacking.

(ii) Children lack interest in schoolwork

Many participants stated that in their experience they observed that vulnerable children often displayed lack of interest in the learning process. The most important thing, therefore, would be to distinguish what factors contribute to this disinterest, disobedience, violence and inattention. Child vulnerability was cited as a central contributor to discipline problems and the disinterest that ensued; as expressed in the experience of participant “Joeie”;

Ninety-percent of the time these are the children that we encounter most of the discipline problems-they are the ones that do no homework, schoolwork (and are) not interested in assessments, (they are) poor readers, (and have) poor comprehension skills. (These children) Come to the class really not interested in any form of work at school. They really run away from the present situation, see school as an escape but in school itself show no interest; that’s where the problem is.

Children from homes where parental supervision is lacking, where violence, abuse or neglect are apparent and where education is discredited, were commonly described as children who display disinterest in acquiring knowledge and participating in normal processes of teaching and learning. Reasons for this may include underdeveloped intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for completion of education. Some participants expressed frustration and a somewhat direct association was made with vulnerability and behavioural dysfunction. This was expressed in all three focus-groups. The cultural model is applicable in this instance since what is reflected in participant responses is the significance and impact of values and belief systems of teachers and parents and the influence this has on the education process.

Although many teachers ascribed childhood disinterest to individual and home environments, according to studies by Deci, Koestner and Ryan (2001) the conditions in the learning environment cannot be discounted as a contributor to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and reinforcement. Similarly, within the findings of this research, child vulnerability has been cited as a significant contributor to disinterest in schoolwork. Conversely it is imperative that lack of interest in school is considered as a multifactorial entity and not just an outcome of a child's home circumstance.

In my opinion the school may also contribute to child vulnerability. Teachers' perceptions may also affect interpretation of vulnerable child behaviour. Often, these children are labelled as disinterested when in fact the child has various other responsibilities and the child cannot cope with schoolwork. Defiance, poor completion of activities and poor attitude may in fact be a result of problems in the home or school. The child may appear to show no interest and there is little or no progress in academic work when in fact various underlying issues are not addressed as expressed by participant "Jet";

The challenges they face is mostly the community and society that we live in; is the biggest challenge.

Timmins, Leadbetter, Morris, Knight & Traxson (2001) suggest consideration of affective factors such as low self-confidence, anxiety and inhibition, in assessment of learner disinterest.

In Focus-group 2 interview, teachers also relayed that in their experiences, disinterest and behavioural dysfunction sometimes manifests in violence in school;

Children are not listening....Also what's manifesting is violence.

Teachers felt that child vulnerability is displayed in children's disruptive and violent behaviour. Participant "Flower", in an individual interview reflected on violence and the way in which it impedes the learning process;

It hampers learning. It hampers the teacher being able to teach subject. Every time you have to ask someone to be quiet, or stop talking and do not stress the person next to you and when you stop the lesson or have to see to the children who are being rowdy, making noise for example or trying to get attention; it completely hampers learning.

School-based violence amongst vulnerable children may be an expression of physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. If inadequately addressed, the violence may perpetuate throughout schooling leading to higher levels of school leavers, community disintegration, and academic underperformance (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014). Additionally, the other students' exposure to such violence affect their perception of learning and have physical, emotional and psychological implications for both teachers and learners (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014). In my opinion "children learn what they live with"; a child who is exposed to violence knows no better.

Although disinterest and violence are viewed as outcomes of poor discipline stemming from home environment deficiencies in addressing such problems, Harber (2001) suggests that effectively run schools experience lower levels of violence amongst students and outside community sources. As outlined in the collegial model, working together in an inclusive, democratic environment encourages a sense of possession, obligation, and accountability for self and for the institution. There are challenges that emerged in all of the above areas of management of child vulnerability.

(iii) Children present discipline problems

Similar to the issue of learner disinterest, discipline problems of vulnerable children dominated the issue of classroom difficulties experienced by teachers. In an individual interview the following emerged from participant “Madonna”;

The children that usually have a problem, they're very disruptive, they're always getting up, always walking around, never sit...still taking other children's stuff from them, throwing things around. Displaying bad manners, lack of discipline. Their listening skills are absolutely poor, they're not able to comprehend so they cannot follow instructions. These are the problems we have. On the whole they lovable, they loving caring children, but just don't know how to come across.

Although ill-discipline was cited as a major issue experienced by teachers, it cannot be concluded that ill-discipline is exclusively associated with the vulnerable child. The impact of discipline problems affects the class. The following sentiment was echoed by participant “Joeie” in an individual interview;

This behaviour impacts negatively on the whole class. Some classes have more children with such discipline problems and they cannot finish work allocated for that period. Most of your time is spent reprimanding, disciplining; the curriculum cannot get completed and you find the average performance in such classes much lower than the general with the other classes.

The goals of misbehaviour, (Dreikurs, Grunwald and Pepper, 1968) which motivate misbehaviour in the classroom arise from pupils' inadequacy, attention- seeking, seeking power or revenge. Misbehaviour is a source of distractibility. Participants in Focus-group 2 agreed.

This behaviour distracts the other learners. They want you to focus on them only. They need individual attention but in a class of thirty-six or thirty-seven, how do you leave the rest of the class you've got to see for needs of other children?

Many participants displayed a deep understanding of the behaviour of vulnerable children. Participant "Jet" in an individual interview reflected on a personal strategy implemented;

I noticed with young people once you tell them your expectations and you tell them what you want from them they are more able to co-operate with you. Tell them what you're doing makes me feel this way, I don't like what you did." Explain your feelings. Once you put your feelings to the young person they're able to see ma'am is feeling this way. So the young person, in a way, will co-operate with you and understands.

A very noticeable feature emerging throughout participant responses in individual and group-interviews was that teachers at this research site stressed they experienced a challenge maintaining class discipline. Whilst it may be credible that teachers in this particular site, experience high instances of problematic behaviour amongst those identified as vulnerable, it is not in fact plausible or impartial to make the deduction that only vulnerable children behave inappropriately. Efforts must be made to separate an underlying, general discipline issue within the school, from the contribution of the vulnerable child to school ill-discipline. The fact that one or two participants had different views means the collegial model does not work; teachers appear to work in isolation, not fully supporting each other in establishing good discipline. It also makes one question how teachers are being supported in their roles and to look into reasons why children are not fully engaged.

(iv.) Children are affected by bullying in school

Bullying is described as repetitive negative actions against another individual who is perceived as vulnerable. The offender may identify the individual on the receiving end of such torment,

to have an inability to defend themselves, but proceeds to inflict physical or mental abuse (Olweus, 1993). Teachers have experienced it to be a means by which vulnerable children vent pent-up frustration, anger or resentment. Many agreed with participant “Sitha” in an individual interview who stated;

Bullying is very current at the moment and its being driven in schools and I’m also very aware of bullying in our school, It’s a very negative trait in a child...it’s possibly because they are feeling low self -esteem, a child bullies because they experiencing peer- pressure. They are unable to make good decisions, so that’s how they react, by bullying.

Bullying is a negative trait, unacceptable and gives children a false sense of being in control. It is attention- seeking and children with low self- esteem or who lack positive conflict resolution skills may resort to bullying tactics. Many children experience abuse and violence at home and at school. A study by Spyropoulos (2006) proposes that bullies are consequential of families who neglect the needs of the child. Bullying may in fact be two-fold; it may cause child vulnerability, or in other instances bullying is an expression of vulnerability.

On this same matter participant “Sitha”, in an individual interview, said;

In my classroom I noticed a few learners in my class and I have realised that possibly because of their family life, and because of their situations with their own grouping of friends they get into this bullying sort of habit

Although participants described vulnerable children as frequently being the perpetrators of bullying, they are in fact also the victims of school bullying. This is reflected in the following statement which emerged in Focus-group 1 interview;

Vulnerable children have deep, embedded fear, fear of not being accepted. We need to get rid of that fear.

Additionally, one participant in Focus- group 1 interview described the vulnerable child as having “Low self- esteem” and being “susceptible to abuse”, always in need of help

A leadership model which promotes a spirit of Ubuntu is advocated. The collegial model and cultural models also apply here in ensuring schools reflect an ethos of non- violence. Bullying was alluded in the individual and collective data gathering process. Vulnerable children must not only be seen as perpetrators of bullying, but also as victims. This compounds an already complex psychological state.

4.3.1.2. TEACHER EXPERIENCES OF THE VULNERABLE CHILD IN EDUCATION

Abraham Maslow’s popular “needs theory” provides an indication of the effect of unfulfilled needs on education. A neglected, vulnerable, abused child who faces a myriad of challenges for which they are underdeveloped and ill-equipped, cannot be likened to or compared with the educational performance and behaviour of a child who comes from a stable home environment and to a supportive, inclusive school environment.

(i) Unmet needs of vulnerable children present a barrier to teaching and learning

Consensus emerged in Focus-group 2 interview that unmet needs and social deprivation are important factors to consider in managing vulnerability:

If social deprivation is the background of the child obviously the child is now faced with challenges. Very serious challenges, could be economic, could be financial, could be socially, could be broken home, single parent, divorced. Now with HIV/AIDS theres lots of children being orphaned. So this will have a totally negative effect on work in the classroom.

Similarly, participant “Tenelle” in an individual interview went on to describe the negative effects of unfulfilled needs;

The negative effects impact on their schoolwork; lack of concentration, inability to focus in the class, easily disruptive, distracted as well. Always seeking attention from the teachers or doing something wrong demanding attention

According to a study by Brotman, Klein, Gouley & O’Neal (2004), risk factors for conduct disorders include broadly financial constraint, parental factors, parenting styles, substance abuse, domestic abuse, single parent households, low parental education attainment, parental stress, psychopathy all contribute. Poor interpersonal relationships and strained social circumstances; poverty, overcrowding, and low household stimulation are identifiable risk factors for child vulnerability.

Participant “Flower” in an individual interview clarified the notion that child vulnerability and neglect are indeed two separate entities;

I would say physically maybe they disadvantaged maybe they have problems writing, they have hearing problems, a very slow understanding that becomes a mental issue. Also, children who find it difficult to perform in class; meaning they are not open enough to freely speak to the teacher or their peers, they always keep to themselves. They can also be vulnerable, but you must remember something..., there are certain, children who come from good homes but the thing is that what they are lacking there is parental care; they need to have that but it is not being done. We cannot consider these children vulnerable, they are being neglected.

The challenges of educating learners in the current climate, corroborates well with the work of Skinner (2006). Challenges experienced by teachers emerged from the discussion with participants in all 3 Focus-groups and individual interviews. Particularly, children of different

ability levels in every class, coupled with large class sizes coupled with attending to children who come from diverse backgrounds having diverse needs proved difficult for many teachers. Teachers need to cater academically for every child in the class, implying that not all needs of all children are met. Hence, children are not able to perform at the same level. It emerges also that not all teachers are equipped with the skills to accommodate children with special needs. Schools may not have personnel to assist children with special needs. Teachers do display concern regarding the potential negative effects of unmet needs, classroom distractibility, poor performance and attention seeking which emerged in an individual interview relayed by participant “Greg”;

If we have these few groups that are vulnerable it is not easy to move forward with your work. You need to go back to them looking at barriers to learning. They finding it very difficult to catch up with the other children. They need help. They need assistance. It is not easy to move forward while others are left behind (with work).

Furthermore, child-neglect, poor parental involvement and unfulfilled needs have psychological impact as described by participants in Focus-group interview 1

They lack emotional stability they don't know how to control their emotions and don't know how to control their anger they don't know sometimes how to express themselves.

The home background is cited as a significant contributor, but should not be regarded entirely as the problem, in inadequately meeting needs of vulnerable children. School circumstances also create and perpetuate vulnerability. Participants in Focus-group 1 interview were empathetic toward the plight of the vulnerable child;

That's very sad. These children take on responsibilities.

Also, many participants in Focus-group 3 came to a realisation through the group discussion that often the demands placed on the vulnerable child are in fact implausible;

Child is hungry, can't concentrate, emotionally....and we are expecting the child to perform in the classroom.

Children who do not receive love, respect, care and attention will not be able to give it in return. They adopt forms of behaviour which may be described as “attention-seeking” as a result of lack and unmet needs. These children are described by participants in Focus-group 2 as

“Emotionally challenged because of social deprivation” and “like a child under attack from all the challenges.”

Participant “Sitha” had the following to contribute in attempting to address the needs of children said in an individual interview;

The needs of these children are addressed because interviews are held with individual children, notes are taken down about all the problems and worries and negativities that face the vulnerable children. A one on one interview in total confidence is done regularly. Parents will be called or guardians will be called in; and possibly at times, parents, guardians and stake- holders are not aware. When calling parent or guardians in when having interviews it is done in total confidence.

However, again it is clear that all stake-holders are not seen to be working together in the best interests of the vulnerable child. The collegial model again becomes significant.

During Focus-group 1 discussion a participant said the following;

A great philosopher once said “The teacher should know the child better than a parent.”

Similarly, participant “Mrs. Tee” in an individual interview had the following to say;

We still experience problems with them. Can't say their needs are addressed. Some of them have different needs; getting to each learner catering for needs is a bit difficult.

The unmet needs of children and lack of basic values has progressively worsened, with increased instances of disintegrated family structures (Prinsloo, 2007). The Department of Education has introduced the Life Orientation (LO) learning area in an attempt to instil basic values and life-skills that are lacking or require enhancement in current social circumstances.

On the same matter, in Focus-group 1 discussion, a participant said of recognising needs;

Yes we may, but we may not recognise it immediately we have to look at the same child showing strange behaviour problem maybe attention seeking and then when you look deeper into this you realise hey this guy has a problem, is troubled, needs help, but immediately don't see it. We have to be perceptive as a teacher.

(ii.) Lack of basic values-education in the home negatively impact the behaviour and performance of the vulnerable child in school.

A lack of basic values education has been identified as a core deficit and major issue of contention in education. Certain socio-economic circumstances; unemployment, poverty and crime have contributed to moral decline (Prinsloo, 2007). In some homes, children are not taught the value of discipline and have little support, coming from single parent households or child headed households. Many participants empathised with the plight of the parent of the vulnerable child, but found that low levels of parental supervision significantly impacted school performance which reflected in a Focus-group 2 interview;

Parents work out, leave in the morning, come back late. No time to supervise children and check on them....Children are terribly neglected emotionally in terms of supervision.

In Focus-group 1 discussion, participants concurred that more responsibility should be taken by the parent to ensure proper skills and basic values are inculcated in school going learners;

I also feel to a large extent it is the abdication of the parent's responsibility. That results in a lot of problems in school, because the parent sends children to school and expects the teacher to do everything. Minister of all portfolios.

The idea of parental inclusion that strongly emerged within this research contradicts the work of White, Moss & Taylor (1992) which suggests that no evidence exists to unequivocally state that greater parental involvement in the lives of children offers superior benefits for children in their development and progression to adulthood. This is controversial. Many continue to believe in the benefit of a collaborative approach between school and parent.

The ideal of a collaborative approach strongly emerged in individual interview with participant "Flower":

It is a home and a learning problem. We do understand there are a lot of children who are challenged but put into main stream. At the end of the day parent and teacher must work hand in hand, in order for the child to learn and function.

This corroborates with the work of Izzo, Weissburg, Kassprow and Fendrich (1999) which examined the means in which parental involvement in childhood education impacts children's socialisation capability and academic performance in school. The findings of this study revealed that collaboration between the home and the school contribute to improved academic and social performance and correlated with improvement in overall learner functioning. This

also ties in well with the collegial model which encourages working together to achieve positive outcomes. In my opinion, parents must take responsibility and get involved in school matters.

(iii.) **Children experience a language barrier which affects teaching and learning.**

Within this research site, a challenge teachers and learners experience is communication within the classroom; language challenges as well as the distinct language of teaching and learning. Throughout the interview process, participants cited language as a basis for teaching difficulty. This is not primarily an issue with vulnerable children, but rather a factor that renders children vulnerable in a classroom situation. In Focus-group 2 participants paralleled this belief;

“I also feel language is a barrier” with another adding that *“language and culture issues”* served as a significant deficiency in their experience of the current learning and teaching process.

It emerged that challenges are experienced by teachers as a result of utilising English as a primary classroom teaching medium. Participant “Niki” in an individual interview reflects:

Not understanding the language; the English language that makes a child vulnerable in class because they are not used to being there. Being taught by somebody who speaks English and then they go home, you know.

Additionally, poor communication between home and school presents a significant challenge. Large classes in certain grades compound discipline problems, impair communication, and present teaching and learning challenges. Challenges include, but are not limited to, teaching vulnerable children. Some participants disagree with the notion that language is a significant cause of teaching and learning difficulty. Participant “Flower” in an individual interview mentioned, when asked about the issue of teachers experiences with the current instruction medium;

(It is) not a language barrier. We need to have maybe one level dropped down because they weaker learners. Listening skills. Listening skills. Reading skills. Maybe the attention (must be) less on their skills. You need to maybe form a different structured curriculum for them.

Certainly the language barrier needs to be addressed. Children who cannot understand or communicate will be frustrated and this will impact on discipline, learning and behaviour.

4.3.1.3. TEACHER EXPERIENCES OF SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS:

(i.) Support from stake- holders is essential

It emerged from responses during interviews that some participants felt they were not fully capacitated regarding support structures, provision and requirements for holistic teaching. When asked about support received from stakeholders, individually, participant “Tennelle” replied;

Not from many stake- holders. We do have maybe just once a year the topic’s addressed by management there are workshops, but if we are continuously looking at ways to improve and assist the learners then much more still needs to be done.

On the same matter in an individual interview, participant “Tenelle” indicated that measures are in place for care of vulnerable children as well as inclusion of community and other stakeholders;

We do have an HIV policy and a vulnerable policy and these learners are being taken care of; for example, we do have outside stake-holders coming into school and

addressing learners. In fact, just last week we had someone come in and identified learners and they were put into a programme.

Similarly in an individual interview, participant “Niki” gave an account of the channels that are followed to offer support within the research site;

Firstly we do our own investigation on the matter concerning the child and then we do counselling as teachers; some of us we do counsel the kids before we refer them to the next person who might be in charge. We do counselling, we talk to the kids before we can raise the matter up.

The same participant “Niki” in individual interview went on to say the existing support structure utilised in this research site;

We’ve got HODs in our school, we have our Grade-heads in our school. We have the Principal in school. Our Deputy-Principal is always available to assist so we do refer them to these people.

The discussion with teachers showed that teachers were not in agreement or fully capacitated on the issue of support for vulnerable children. Features of the subjective model surface, as it is evident there is inconsistency. It emerged that support from stake-holders was considered invaluable in cultivating support systems within schools. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological or Ecosystems Model applies; the child is surrounded by circles or spheres of support and emphasis is placed on the reciprocal relationship that exists between individuals and their internal and external environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). It applies to this study since it highlights necessity for involvement of parents, teachers, neighbours, community and all stake-holders. It presents a stance on emotional and behavioural challenges in school to help teachers appropriately manage vulnerable children, encouraging schools to utilise the community as a locus of support.

In an individual interview, participant “Niki” described support through collaboration;

I’ve seen one of the educators in our school. She had people that had supplied our school with shoes. And she went in every class or every grade to write down the kids’ names that are very much not able to afford school shoes. Also in our school, our kids do eat porridge in the mornings and then in the afternoon we get supply of bread like sandwiches from the NGOs.

4.3.1.4. TEACHER EXPERIENCES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FORMAL POLICIES AND PROCESSES IN MANAGEMENT OF CHILD VULNERABILITY:

(i.) Policies and processes in respect of catering for varied needs of vulnerable children should be clearly outlined and implemented in school.

The Department of Education clearly outlines policies, processes and procedures in respect of dealing with Learner Welfare and Support. However, it appears some participants at this site were not aware of them. In an individual interview, participant “Sitha” stated

I don’t think that there is much support given from government to cater for vulnerable children. I don’t think that us as educators, have the hundred percent support and the hundred percent knowledge and ability to cater for vulnerable children. Sometimes the problem is so deep, we have to get in psychological services. Social workers we may use, sometimes we even have to get the court involved and get the proper services to go and interview the family. Us as educators will not be able to go beyond a certain point because it is out of our jurisdiction.

On the same matter, one participant in Focus- group 1 stated:

There is a lack of knowledge of who supplies what service to these learners.

Furthermore, some teachers in Focus-group 1 state:

We “not qualified” to deal with children with special needs or challenges that vulnerable children present.

Within Focus-group 1 interview, it emerged that a participant felt there should be a distinction between the work of a teacher and that of a guidance counsellor;

There is absolutely nothing I can do about it, I cannot even cover the work. I cannot do it; my class with forty-nine learners. I can pick up so many things, but I can do nothing about it. I cannot do the job of guidance counsellors.

Planning and implementation for Psycho- social Support Services Support Services is guided by policy imperatives contained in The Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001), the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) Framework (2010) and the Provincial Strategy to develop schools as Inclusive Centres of Learning, Care and Support (March, 2009). This refers to learners who experience social, behavioural, psychological and other individualised barriers to learning and development. Although these frameworks and policies exist in our current schooling system, some participants have a vague familiarity with its contents. This is reflected in the following response from participant “Madonna” in an individual interview, when asked about policies that exist regarding the care of the vulnerable child;

I don't know, not sure of policies. They did introduce the White Paper to my knowledge. I'm not aware they did implement the White Paper. It's not fully functional. If they did they would have a programme structured for us. If they did we won't be complaining;

no excuse to say I can't deal with this child. If we attended the workshop we can't say we don't know how to deal with a child.

The Department of Education, however, is very clear on its stance in provision of support for special-needs and also support for orphans and vulnerable children. Additionally, according to the National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996), a teacher in this context is a professionally qualified adult who functions within the context of the following seven roles; a learning mediator, an interpreter and designer of learning programmes and a learning-area specialist, an assessor, a leader, an administrator and manager. A teacher may also be considered to be scholar, researcher and life-long learner.

Although some teachers feel unfamiliar with the contents of policies pertaining to the vulnerable child, in the group interviews it emerged that some participants were in fact knowledgeable of support structures that exist but felt implementation is deficient;

There is White Paper 6 which outlines what teachers are responsible for, where they include diversities of learners and vulnerable children. There is a policy but we not aware of it, but maybe we don't know the techniques and the strategies to handle and how to treat them.

4.3.1.5. TEACHER TRAINING AND EXPERIENCES IN EDUCATING THE VULNERABLE CHILD:

(i) Teachers are inadequately trained to cope with child vulnerability in schools

It is well documented by Oxfam (2000) that teacher competency and motivation levels contribute significantly to provision of holistic education. There is an outcry over limited training with regard to protecting learners, and thus teachers exhibit lack of confidence in managing vulnerable children in schools (Kay 2003).

One participant simply replied in Focus-group 1 discussion;

We (are) not qualified.

The teaching profession has come under significant strain and necessity for change in approach to classroom teaching in the advent of the HIV pandemic, increasing numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children in the classroom (Govender, 2004). A prominent theme that emerged relating to teachers coping mechanisms in response to an array of increasingly pervasive challenges within the schooling environment was that managing children's problems cause stress and has resulted in significantly high levels of teacher frustration.

This frustration was reflected by participant "Joeie" in an individual interview;

The teacher is frustrated. Most often, the teacher is reprimanding children. The teacher is frustrated, angry and cannot deliver lessons in anger....So what does the teacher do?

On the same matter, one educator relayed in Focus-group 2 interview;

It is a challenging issue, taxing emotionally in every way because we're now coming to that point of our lives where we're nearing retirement and you're expecting that it should be getting easier; unfortunately it's just becoming more difficult.

Teachers have curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular duties and administrative work. In response to these new challenges, many teachers are now feeling overwhelmed and inadequately trained and supported. In South Africa, challenges faced by teachers include poor training in how to manage vulnerable children in the classroom. Inappropriate attitudes, lack of consultation and communication, lack of understanding of cultural differences and language-barrier amongst teachers and management as well as poor co-operation from the school and

community are challenges for teachers (Wood, 2009). This has resulted in omnipresent demotivation, inability to cope and a sense of being overwhelmed, stressed and frustrated.

This is again reflected in a Focus-group 2 discussion;

You get demotivated basically when you make the attempt, you try and help the child and understand the child, be sympathetic. You just get frustrated it's like a slap in the face; you feel dejected, I tried and it didn't help. All the other things we have to do, marking, CAPS, then we have numerous meetings; that takes the mickey out of me, thirtieth year of teaching I cannot cope. Too much to do.

A participant corroborated the aforementioned response in Focus-group 2 similarly stating;

I feel the same way. For the first time in my life I feel very, very de-motivated and it's the first time in thirty years of teaching I am so de-motivated.

The situation has left many teachers feeling dejected and defeated and inadequate to cope with new demands of a new era of teaching. Friedman (1995) in a study relating to student behaviour patterns and its association to teacher instances of burnout cited disrespect, inattentiveness as significant contributors. A prominent theme that emerged is the feeling of hopelessness and frustration regarding the loss of control within classrooms. Participant "Joeie" reflected in this individual interview;

Most often children are aggressive, violent and don't listen. I hate going into those classes, these children do not listen, they backchat, work is not done, throw anything at you and you are at a loss you not allowed to retaliate. What are teachers expected to do to? Stand back and accept such behaviour? Teacher ends up screaming, upset.....Gets into trouble with management, child might run out, then calling the

parent. (You then experience) trouble with parent. No win situation, you don't know what to do to help these children.

Participant “Joeie”, in an individual interview, said;

You see negative behaviour most of the time, negative, disruptive behaviour in they do ...work is not done, books blank, just use books for scribbling or do things that distract other children, throwing stuff around the class.

When enquiry was made about the role of teachers in addressing such issues and for them to relay their experiences and outcomes in attempts to rectify the challenging situation it was apparent the difficulty they experience is extensive. A participant in Focus- group 2 said;

(There are) quick-fix solutions only for that moment, for that second or that moment. I'm bribing my children; I'm going to reward you with this if you are good today. It is so wrong. If you're good today, if no teacher complains, I'm going to buy you this today. What else are we going to do? We can't hit children, we can't shout at them. Obviously we are getting angry, we are getting frustrated.

Participant “Madonna” expressed in an individual interview;

It's not being addressed...it's just being pushed under the carpet. Being an educator I have met lots of learners who came through my class. When I brought it to the attention of my management that this child has a serious problem, this child should not be with me. In my personal experience, it is overlooked.

The collegial model definitely has implications; teachers working as colleagues to help vulnerable children. It emerges clearly that teachers are very honest about their experiences

with vulnerable children. Behaviour of vulnerable children tests, tries and challenges teachers. They acknowledge they have difficulty coping, are overwhelmed and at a loss.

Since teachers “act in loco- parentis” and as such are expected to support children in need, the experiences of teachers needs to be explored further and strategies put in place.

4.3.2 THEME 2: THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN MANAGING VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

In analysing data emerging from this theme I sought to establish what teachers perceived their role to be in managing vulnerable children in school.

4.3.2.1 TEACHER EXPERIENCES IN IDENTIFICATION OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Department of Education guidelines on support structures for learners at public schools include screening, identification, needs-assessment and provision of support to ensure maximum participation in the learning process considering learners who frequently experience barriers to education. Participants understood the concept of vulnerability and concurred such learners are in the current school system. This is reflected in the following excerpt from an individual interview with participant “Sitha”:

Vulnerable is a broad topic in my opinion because a learner could be affected by many aspects in life in our fast-moving technological life and any of those circumstances can make a child vulnerable for example; financial stress, verbal abuse relating to that it could make the child vulnerable, disorientated in the classroom if a child is lacking nutrition. If a child is being abused physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially the child can be vulnerable if a child is being bullied or if a child is having some learning difficulty in the classroom.....abuse or neglect. In single- headed homes with,

single parents or guardians a child can also be vulnerable where the child has to take on too much of responsibility, unable to do any sort of classwork or homework or projects the child will be vulnerable in the classroom because the child is in the class unprepared and makes the child anxious. Anything that parents and guardians do in front of the child- if it's an argument or a verbal conversation that is not pleasant will make a child vulnerable. That can happen in the classroom as well as in the home situation.

Teachers are perfectly placed to identify possible learner vulnerability; they spend six to seven hours a day with children. Every class at this research site has children who experience some form of vulnerability. Teachers acknowledged the need to be able to identify children with challenges early as it prevents problems from escalating. Participant “Joeie” said:

Identifying these children is very, very important. Also most often you find these are children lacking nutrition lacking clothing, shelter. These children may be referred to charitable organisations to be given a role in society maybe also assist, given tasks in society, make them feel worthy. Also NGO's can come in and play a role assist them wherever they needed; uniforms, shelter, food, nutrition advise them and also try to get them involved in the community.

In the light of the above the eco- systemic model is relevant since various stake- holders may be roped in to provide support.

Furthermore, one participant in Focus-group 3 said the following;

Right at the beginning of the year you should know your children. Your investigation should be done right at the beginning of the year, so that you know where the child is coming from the problem and obviously you anticipate what problems are to come and

be prepared to help with social organisations colleagues amongst us who can help those children even us we can help them

Amidst all challenges, it is incumbent upon teachers to ascertain whether the child has a behaviour, learning, social, emotional or psychological problem. The importance of identification of vulnerability is highlighted in the following response in Focus-group 3

So often we're screaming at the child in the class only to realise that that poor child must go home wash, clean, cook and do everything and your homework is the last thing on that child's mind ...these are young children with adult responsibilities. Our task is to get into their lives, know where they coming from, to make their lives comfortable; wherever we can assist we need to be as educators to assist them with their homework, projects, assignments and all of that.

Teachers felt an obligation to identify aberrant behaviour patterns that may suggest vulnerability. Participant "Sitha" in an individual interview said the following of identifiers of vulnerability;

There are characteristics to look out for. I'm a PSW educator; that's Personal and Social Well-being educator; so when I discuss certain issues; about family or bullying, or any forms of neglect or lack of love, the child will become introverted, the child will feel uncomfortable and not respond to those topics. A child also could be very hyper-active in the classroom behaving unsociably and the child may feel as though they don't fit in.

In discussion of teacher experiences what emerged, was introspection. Participant "Madonna" in an individual interview described skills for teachers to have to identify vulnerability;

I have to be a good listener in order for me to understand my learner because when I interact with him he is speaking about his problem. A teacher has to have good listening

skills. You can't understand anyone's problem if you don't listen. You can't draw conclusions, you can't assume. Assumption is very bad.

4.3.2.2. TEACHER ROLES IN FACILITATION OF HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

(i.) Teachers must emphasise values-based education in schools

According to what has emerged, it is believed that socialisation and value-based education which ought to begin in the home is neglected or lacking. In order to establish a positive culture and climate of teaching and learning values-based education is important. Banks (2010) stated aptly, the uniqueness of both teachers and learners and necessity for considering these as important determinants of education.

Participant "Sitha" highlighted values based education in an individual interview;

The challenge that the teachers have is that we have to instil values in our learners in the classroom, we have to instil a right education on how to deal with children who are vulnerable...So now we need to educate our learners that they have to have compassion, tolerance, love, acceptance, appreciation for your other child's personalities, appreciation for their culture

Similarly, in Focus-group 2 it was agreed to focus on issues of hygiene and basic value systems

We have to focus weekly or on a bi-weekly basis on instilling basic hygiene with the children and everyone must do it....then go on to good values; honesty, then good values, responsibility, respect and everybody must pull their weight... I always believe (if) you respect yourself and then respect others.

The concept of moral leadership also focuses on values, beliefs and ethics of leaders in a position to influence learners. Parents and all teachers jointly must promote positive values so children fit into society. In addition the cultural and collegial models are also relevant.

(ii.) A positive culture of teaching and learning in school must be established

There must be establishment of a support system and positive culture of teaching and learning.

Participant “Sitha” in an individual interview said;

You support these children. You also give advice to children who are treating these vulnerable children negatively, you teach them how to accommodate the vulnerable children- show some compassion, tolerance, respect, appreciate that child for maybe the problem the child is having is beyond the child. Love all the children.

An essential role of the teacher is to create a learning environment where the child may learn well and without reservation in order to progress; teachers must attempt to know and understand the individuality of children where possible.

Participant “Tennelle” said, in an individual interview, of benefits of establishing strategies to cope;

Definitely there will be greater benefit if we can understand and know what is expected of us and the manner in which to assist them. And also what strategies are in place in which way the learner is in need. If we have programmes in place where we know what the needs of the child are, it will definitely assist us.

(iii.) Teachers must play a pastoral care role in schools

A prominent theme that emerged includes the need for teachers to offer support to the vulnerable child. Participant “Niki” in an individual interview said the following;

Let's be sensitive to issues. Let's look at issues and just say it is important. Let's take every issue as important even though you think some issues are safe. Let's not apologise for anything. Truth needs to be told. It must be told. Let's be honest to learners at all times about life itself. Let's be mothers, let's learn to love these kids, if you see as a teacher maybe this child is not getting any love at home. Let's be mothers. Let's show that we really care about them so they'll open up to us. As teachers.

Similarly, participant “Tenelle” in an individual interview said;

We can support them...by instilling positive behaviour into them and not picking on the negative things they do, for example if someone is distracting the class, don't you think it's better if you pay attention or ask questions on the lesson to draw attention away from negative behaviour to make them feel welcome in the classroom.

Among the many roles played by teachers, is the role of pastoral care and creation of stability in the learning environment so that the child feels safe and secure to learn and progress. This was viewed by many participants as individuals and groups as a priority. In Focus-group 1 it was said.

They need a good role-model, somebody they can look up to. They have so much responsibility.

The concept of servant leadership is highlighted here in the responses of teachers. Service includes cultivating, protecting and empowering others by through active communication in an attempt to learn about others needs and aspirations (Yukl, 2006). On the issue of servant leadership and the pastoral care role of teachers, participant “Niki” had the following to contribute in an individual interview;

You'll get to know what's going on with the child eventually they'll be able to be free with you and tell you what is going on; might be at home, might be at school. It won't matter home or school because you here like a mother.

4.3.2.3. RECOMMENDATION FOR PROVISION OF SUPPORT AT SCHOOL LEVEL.

(i.) Empowerment of teachers through knowledge of policies, laws and rights affecting children is important.

It is clear from responses in this body of research that not all teachers are familiar with procedures, policies and processes relating to school- based support of children with challenges. Limited training with regard to provision of quality education for vulnerable learners has come to the fore and it has been documented that teachers exhibit lack of confidence in managing vulnerable children in schools (Kay 2003). This sentiment was echoed in the statement of participant “Madonna” in an individual interview, with a clear call for empowerment of teachers made;

We have to have to be trained. Workshops, a lot of intense training. If you want to be a chef, you got to be trained. You have to learn, got to train and learn to be a chef.

Likewise with us as well we can't just jump in there and say now I want to be a social worker or psychologist. We got to go through a process and training to get there.

Workshops...education to deal with what is out there.

Participants were receptive to the idea of training, but an element of frustration emanated. Participant “Flower” said the following in an individual interview;

Teachers are not psychologists, and getting into every child's mind can be a task. Especially as I said we have quite a number of learners in class. If we have five children

who have a problem and all of them don't have the same problem and it stems from home and we feel it is a learning disability. Some kids don't want to speak to you about what's going on at home say maybe it's difficult. I can't be a psychologist and a teacher.

Several teachers were completely unaware of policies, whilst some exhibited a limited understanding. A minority were aware that there were policies, but they had not implemented them. Some participants attempted to create means to empower themselves in terms of school-based support of vulnerable children. Addressing management vulnerable children with negative, inappropriate behavioural manifestations, participant "Tennelle" recommended:

Set process and procedures in place. We now also started detention programme at our school. This takes place every Thursday. The learners are now trying to conform to the school rules.

It emerged that teachers need to be empowered through staff development workshops, mentoring and professional development initiatives. Many participants, although open to training and empowerment, displayed reservations regarding their responsibilities, capabilities, capacity and skill set to cope with the vulnerable child. This again shows a need for the collegial model and eco-systemic approach. This was reflected in the Focus- group 1 discussion;

Based on the policy I feel, have a staff development programme, give us steps to follow should we encounter these children. We can lend an ear, hear the child out. But we can't go further.

(ii.) Communication between home and school must be viewed as important

Communication between parent and teacher is essential to provide mutual support for vulnerable children's needs in the best possible way. One participant in Focus-group 3 said;

(You) have to have the support of the parent as well

(iii.) Barriers to learning need to be addressed by teachers

Teachers acknowledge vulnerable children are further challenged by barriers to learning. The chronicity of the issue of child vulnerability and its pervasive effects in the teaching and learning environment is described by participant “Joeie” in an individual interview;

It happens every single year. Every year you have a group of such children in every class. You find that always two or three children will be always out of control and will not listen to teacher and they make your visit to the class absolutely miserable and you feel you cannot do your work. You do your best, but sometimes you feel like you just want to sit and cry. You do your best but you left in the situation where you know the work has to be done. You get that in all classes but you just need to cope which is a challenge to us.

Although many participants identified barriers to learning as a significant issue of contention, they empathised with the plight of the vulnerable child in Focus- group 3 discussion one said;

Look at our children; imagine what they go through at home see their fathers abuse their mothers, alcohol, not having meals at night go to sleep without food, look at their collars. When you ask them they feel so bad; I learnt not to ask them not to ask them. You can see that.

Additionally, in an individual interview with “Jet”, what strongly emerged was the fact that in order to address barriers to learning teachers must offer support and build relationships;

I think it's all based on the relationship we have with the young people. We have to build relationships based on understanding and trust, getting to know the child; take time in getting to know the child itself.

4.3.2.4. CURRICULUM BASED INITIATIVES

(i) Inclusive Education Principles in schools

Inclusive education describes a framework to deliberate on diverse needs of learners. It was formulated and has been expressed as policy; Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). Herein, inclusive education is stipulated as an entity required in every school to ensure early identification, support, programming and monitoring of learners. Teacher experiences are to be elicited, documented and incorporated into development of policies that govern the care of the vulnerable child. Additionally, the principles of Inclusive Education must be adopted to ensure that every child is catered for.

According to studies by Wildeman & Nomdo (2007), the application of established inclusive education policies has proven to be stagnant. This sentiment was highlighted in an individual interview

Then again we go back to White Paper 6; no learner should be excluded; to include, (this is) the reason why the Department of Education brought that, that's why they called it inclusive education; they wanted equality. So if we had a programme where we were taught well to deal with all these things I'm sure we will work well include them in the daily running of our school.

Similarly, on the issue of departmental involvement in the matter of inclusive education to accommodate child vulnerability, participant "Flower" said the following in an individual interview;

Education department is to help these children. They want it to be inclusive schools, they want the children to be in the mainstream. We need to have some form of

help...Maybe we need them in senior and foundation- phase; maybe they need to bring in remedial teachers where on daily basis after lunch, these children get remedial work done. We need to have some form of that there. We cannot do remedial work and teach at same time. That's like splitting yourself in half.

On the same matter, participant “Tennelle” in an individual interview positively described means in which curriculum may be adapted to accommodate interests and needs of the vulnerable child;

For example in Maths if they don't understand you can do one to one, or work as fluid grouping or fluid- teaching. Also involve them in other codes where they can display some of their talent and where you would be able to see, for example, chess, playing games, game of chess, something that they like can get them to conform to rules you can get them to pay attention and performance level will increase.

Providing for the needs of children through curricular, co- curricular and extra- curricular programmes of the school is highlighted in an individual interview with “Tennelle”;

To make them feel part of the class and not to isolate them or to not use punishment with them- to look at the needs and maybe address needs of these learners especially if they are educational needs or barriers to learning.

A prominent body of information that emerged was that, in the opinion of participants there exists a gap between policy and implementation. This refers one to the eco-systemic model.

4.3.2.5. NETWORKING WITH VARIOUS STAKE-HOLDERS OR SERVICE-PROVIDERS, FORGING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS WHICH CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE CHILDREN WILL BE BENEFICIAL.

Within this research, it emerged that involving stake-holders to deliver services to improve the plight of vulnerable children may be beneficial to learners and the school. In an individual interview with participant “Joeie”, the following emerged;

I think it is important first of all to identify these children. I strongly feel we need to contact with either foster parent or parent, make them aware and ask them what do they intend how they want to help, refer them to social workers refer them to medical help they need....The teacher plays an important role to get all role-players involved. Teacher to identify and refer to seek help from various avenues.

According to Wood (2009), in South Africa, poor co-operation from the school and community are notably challenges for teachers. Importance of inclusion of various stakeholders in holistic management of vulnerable children emerged in Focus-group 3 interview;

We need to identify. Identify, seek outside help.

Corroborating with the above, one participant in an individual interview added;

There is a wider spectrum. They need to get lots of people from NGO"s, other organisations. They also play a major role. It is very important to get as many people involved as possible.

Participant “Niki” aptly described a positive approach to provision of support and care for the vulnerable child in an individual interview;

Let's be the support structure for these kids, let's show them that we here and we care for them because we like twenty I don't know how many hours we here like seven hours we here with them . We like parents to these kids. Let's learn to love them, show them we love them; to ask them, I'll make an example. For example morning so and so, how are you? How was your day when you went home? Did you eat this morning? Like showing some interest in the child and you'll get to know what's going on with the child eventually they'll be able to be free with you and tell you what is going on might be at home, might be at school. It won't matter home or school because you here like a mother.

Operation Sukuma Sakhe, a “whole government” approach and initiative calls for schools and communities to work together. Participant “Lina” reflected the need for networking

It's about socialisation...getting parents involved. Seeking help from others who can support the teacher. Support for teacher so that support systems put in place to assist the children but also through helping the teacher as well.

Participants in Focus-group 3 highlighted and agreed on networking to get support;

Get local religious leaders; counselling people from community to come in and help. Reach out to the community they will respond.

Similarly, in a focus-group interview, the need for psychologists and guidance counsellors emerged;

Remedial Education and Psychology as ways of helping the child. We need guidance counsellors at school.

Psycho-social support services are guided by Education White Paper 6. In agreement participant “Madonna” said the following, in an individual interview:

Each and every school should have a qualified psychologist on the premises right and an occupational therapist as well....We want the child to develop and learn in order for a child to develop holistically.

In my opinion solutions may not always lie on the outside; as teachers we can try to make the best of what we have and work within our constraints. There could be, within the institution, teachers who are qualified in counselling, remedial education or inclusive education or teachers who have knowledge and expertise which could help in supporting vulnerable children.

This refers me to the Eco-systemic model, the theoretical framework which underpins my study. Several of the recommendations made by the participants relate well to research by Weare (2005), which amplifies the centrality of total (systemic) approaches in school-based interventions for children. Again, this approach appropriates significance to Bronfenbrenner's "Ecological or Eco-systems Model" outlining the reciprocal relationship between people and their internal and external environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The necessity for involvement of parents, teachers, neighbours, community and all stake-holders as described by participants is relevant. A participant described potential positive outcomes of adequate support for the vulnerable child in an individual interview; "Niki" said;

If they are well managed, we are grooming them. They are growing. They will be parents one day. We are teaching them lessons about life.

The above statement emphasises the fact that the ultimate aim of education is to lead children to become responsible citizens and productive members of society.

4.4. CONCLUSION

The South African Bill of Rights states everyone has the right to be free from all forms of violence, not to be treated in a cruel, inhumane or degrading way. It upholds the dignity of all people. In addition National Education Policy requires school authorities to establish an education system in which democratic principles, human rights and the spirit of respect, protection and nurturing prevail.

Initially this study described the vulnerable child as a child in need of support. However, it emerged that the majority of teachers see these children as disruptive. Transformation and a change in mind-set of teachers is necessary. It is a matter of great concern that teachers' experiences have led them to construct vulnerable children as being problematic and not as children "in need of support". It emerges that teachers experience challenges and clearly need support in managing vulnerable children. Additionally, it becomes apparent that teachers are not managing; they are demotivated, frustrated, overwhelmed and disillusioned. Teachers are very honest indeed, about the challenges they are experiencing. Clearly they are finding it difficult to cope with the management of vulnerable children in school.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“In order to solve problems, we need to dig at the roots.” Anthony J. D'Angelo

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses three issues. Firstly, there is a summary of the entire study. Secondly, conclusions are drawn based on findings. Thirdly, recommendations are presented on the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in school. These recommendations mark the end of this chapter.

5.2 SUMMARY

In this study I sought to determine “The Role of Teachers in managing Vulnerable Children in school”. I examined this around issues which render children vulnerable. As outlined by my research questions I sought to establish what the experiences of teachers are with vulnerable children in school and what role teachers can play in managing them. This study was driven by my experiences and observations for 33 years regarding experiences teachers have with vulnerable children in school.

In Chapter One I presented the background to the study, expressing that after the advent of democracy in South Africa demographics of schools changed. Multi-cultural classrooms became a reality. Children were rendered vulnerable as a result of social and economic changes. The rationale and motivation behind the purpose of this study was that I have an interest in the well-being of vulnerable children in school and the role of teachers who educate them so I investigated teachers’ experiences with these children, using one school as a research site. Since child vulnerability in school is on the rise it is necessary to examine the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children. As indicated by the research questions, I sought to establish what the experiences of teachers were with the behaviour of vulnerable children and to enhance knowledge on the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in school. In

definition of concepts vulnerable children were described as those who experience social, emotional, physical and psychological challenges as a result of a myriad of factors which render them in need of support. Limitations of the study was presented.

In Chapter Two I presented a review of literature related to the study. I conceptualised vulnerability to mean a child who is in need of support as a result of poverty, illness, neglect, family fragmentation, abuse or some sort of deprivation. Management in this context refers to the means by which teachers cope with the challenges presented by vulnerable children. In literature the key issues that emerged were those of identification, assessment of needs and support. Reference was made to the South African constitution, White paper 6 and other theories or models, for example the collegial model and Abraham Maslow's needs theory. I positioned my study in the light of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological or Eco-systems theory. Finally I presented leadership theories and models which will improve practice i.e. help teachers in their role in managing vulnerable children in school. What came out strongly in the literature is that teachers play a vital role in the support of vulnerable children in school.

In Chapter Three I explained the research design and methodology of the study. Having established what literature presented I positioned the study as qualitative. I located the study in the interpretive paradigm since I sought to understand people's experiences in their natural settings. The data generation instruments used were 7 individual, semi- structured interviews and 3 focus- group interviews. Each had a set of questions which made up the interview schedule. Participants were teachers who taught Grade R to Grade 7.

In Chapter Four there was data presentation and discussion of findings. Two main themes were presented, namely;

Teachers experiences of vulnerable children in school

The Role teachers can play in managing vulnerable children in school The Critical questions which guided the research were:

How do teachers experience the behaviour of vulnerable children in school?

What can be said to be the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in school?

Responses of participants were cross-referenced with literature and tied in with the ecosystemic theoretical framework. Analysis of findings was followed by discussion and presentation of data.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Findings emerge from data generation and analysis.

In examining teachers' experiences with vulnerable children in school it is clear that a significant contingent of teachers within this research site appear to be challenged by the behaviour of learners. They are overwhelmed and frustrated by their experiences with children who display a lack of respect, lack of interest in schoolwork and present discipline problems. Many teachers describe children as fidgety, causing distraction and disruption in classes. There also seems to be limited consistency in the way teachers are equipped to manage these children.

Several teachers appear to be unfamiliar with clauses within the Institution Level Support Team Policy. Additionally, teachers have difficulty in enforcement of the Code of Conduct of the school. As a result of this, many teachers feel ill equipped to effect policies or positive change in the school. Teachers advised that they often receive little or no support from stake-holders in coping with challenges presented by vulnerable children. Teacher experiences imply that policies and processes catering for vulnerable children are not clearly outlined and if they are, they are poorly implemented. Inadequate teacher-training and experience in managing

vulnerable children leaves teachers feeling stressed. Many teachers appear to be not familiar with policies, procedures and processes which must be followed in managing vulnerable children in school. Special needs of children are not always catered for in the manner outlined by the Department of Education. It also emerges that teachers do not distinguish between learning and behaviour problems. They appear to be unaware of the fact that children may not be removed from a school if they have behaviour problems and that special needs schools cater for children with very specific problems.

Emerging issues related to the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children, show that not all teachers are empowered regarding policies. Teachers must be empowered. It is clear that teachers are not always able to identify learners with some form of vulnerability and need support from parents and stake-holders to ensure optimal teaching and learning take place. Networking, school-community collaboration and stake-holder involvement is lacking. Teachers need assistance from guidance counsellors, psychologists and stake-holders who can cater for the many and varied needs of vulnerable children so that they are better managed. Advice and support for teachers in their role of managing vulnerable children will also be of benefit to both teacher and child.

In analysing teachers' experiences with vulnerable children in school, teachers express inability to complete work as planned. They feel overwhelmed and frustrated. Basic requirements are not met, values-education is neglected and schoolwork is left incomplete, compromising academic progress. Teachers prominently express frustration, being overwhelmed and some are evidently despondent. They become demoralised, stressed and even sick. It emerges that within this research site, teachers closely associate behavioural and conduct disorders with child vulnerability. This association cannot under any circumstances be generalised, but rather emerges as a prominent feature and contentious opinion.

Teachers claim to be stressed and frustrated because they have large numbers of children in class. Teachers have lots of administrative work. They are inundated with work in addition to curricular, co- curricular and extra- curricular work. Language is also identified as a barrier in teaching and learning. The lack of co - operation from some parents adds to the challenge. Lack of support from stakeholders and the wider school- community is cited as a further challenge to teachers in their role of supporting learners with some form of vulnerability,

In examining the role that teachers play in managing vulnerable children in school there are certainly many challenges. It emerges very clearly from this study that teachers should play a pivotal role in the management of vulnerable children in school, since teachers act “in loco- parentis”. In addition, according to the National Education Policy Act (27 of 1996) the teacher plays 7 key roles in the school. However, in my study it emerged that some teachers were not managing in this role for numerous reasons. Large classes, a heavy workload and diverse needs of learners seem to have a negative impact on teachers’ attempts at managing vulnerable children. Since many feel they are not trained adequately, they consequently have difficulty identifying children with some form of vulnerability.

Teachers are expected to play many and varied roles in catering for needs of vulnerable children. It appears that all teachers do not jointly take on the full responsibility of catering for vulnerable children in the same way and this creates a problem of poor discipline within the school. Existing school-community partnerships are not effective in addressing issues of vulnerability. Teacher roles additionally include communication between teacher, parent, child and stake-holders. According to teachers, values-education needs further attention and barriers to learning need to be addressed. Several teachers at this site do recognise that they play a pivotal role in pastoral care, but admit that they need to be equipped to deal with issues.

A significant learner complement within this research site experience some challenge which renders them vulnerable. This vulnerability manifests in various ways. Teachers “acting in-

loco- parentis” are in the best possible position to manage these vulnerable children in school. However, it emerged that more should be done to improve the way in which they are managed, in terms of identification, assessment of needs and offering support. Low levels of parental input and involvement was identified as major shortcoming in management of the vulnerable child. In addition there is not sufficient evidence to indicate that teachers are able to determine exactly what the root causes of problem behaviour are, and why children behave the way they do. Furthermore, teachers were not clear about what type of support or intervention strategies could be adopted.

Provision of support is subsequently a challenge, especially since vulnerability of children as a result of challenges they face through neglect, abuse, physical, social or psycho-social problems, poverty and psychological or behaviour problems, manifests in the classroom as attention- seeking behaviour and even bullying.

Socialisation of children in the home, from an early age is lacking; clearly values- education is lacking. A possible consequence of this may be that many children break school and classroom rules, lack respect, are rude and behave inappropriately. They need to be taught good values, beginning in the home, then continued reinforcement throughout their schooling career.

Family fragmentation has resulted in situations where there is the absence of parents in many homes. This means there is no supervision, control or authority in the home in the case of child-headed households or where guardians” care for children. Many children have to carry out adult responsibilities. They are perhaps, overwhelmed. Children’s frustration manifests negatively in school. It is therefore necessary for teachers to manage such behaviour more effectively.

There is also a perception that managing vulnerable children is the function of the Life-Orientation teacher. Schools are to develop strategies to ensure that all teachers are to cater for

children in an inclusive environment with due consideration of all challenges experienced at each site.

Issues of inclusivity and diversity are a challenge which adds to child vulnerability as well as present challenges to teachers. In a multi-cultural classroom language is a barrier to learning. The role of the teacher is important in addressing the language barrier as well as other barriers to learning. The role of the teacher in managing vulnerable children in school is important also because children must, as far as possible, be retained within the school system until they complete their education.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the conclusions I have drawn based on findings, I make the following recommendations;

1. The teacher must get to know each child well; know the home background, medical history and needs of the child. The teacher must listen carefully and be discerning enough to be able to distinguish between a learning problem and a behaviour problem. There must be a relationship of mutual respect, trust and openness. The idea of “servant leadership” is advocated.
2. The teacher has an imperative role to play in the education of the vulnerable child. It is important for teachers to create a safe, nurturing and optimistic climate; an affirmative, constructive teaching and learning environment to ensure productivity; one in which children feel physically, socially and psychologically safe and secure, bearing in mind White Paper 6 and one in which attempts are made to implement the principles of inclusive education and cater for diverse needs so that the environment is conducive to optimal learning.

3. Teachers must create a caring environment. A positive attitude to learners must be adopted. Children must be praised, encouraged and teachers must acknowledge effort, progress and achievement.

4. Teaching strategy may be defined as a plan of action to achieve outcomes. During the process of teaching and learning various attitudes of teachers and learners become evident. Teaching strategy must be adjusted. Constructive teaching and learning must take place. Every child in the class must be catered for through multi- level teaching, straddling, adjusting of teaching methods, methodology, and use of varied resources and teaching materials. Curriculum and Assessment programmes must be differentiated and adapted to cater for all children.

5. Teachers must adopt a strategy of assertive discipline and be innovative in applying alternatives to corporal punishment to establish positive discipline. Establishment of orderly work procedure is necessary. In cases where learners are disruptive, teachers must be observant enough to determine if it is because children are not fully engaged. Teachers must be committed to make a positive difference in support of children rendered vulnerable through challenges and barriers.

6. Teachers must be good role-models; caring, patient, compassionate, respectful and show empathy and love. Teachers must not judge learners nor should they victimize or stigmatize groups or individuals.

7. All teachers should be empowered to be able to identify children who display behaviour and attitudes which suggest that they experience some form of vulnerability. There must be screening, identification assessment and support of such learners. Teachers should also be able

to identify reasons for vulnerability displayed. All types of intervention should be considered in order to support learners.

8. Teachers should aim for holistic development of children which can only be achieved if children, especially vulnerable children are managed through provision of a curriculum which includes aspects such as sport, art and crafts, music, dance, drama, handwork since a child who is not academically inclined may be very good in the arts. Teachers must be aware of strengths, weaknesses and interests of learners as expressed through performance in curricular, extra-curricular and co- curricular activities in order to offer appropriate support to those experiencing some form of vulnerability.

9. Teachers have a major role to play promoting a spirit of Ubuntu, since this alludes to the school's role in social responsibility. In addition Ubuntu philosophy encompasses inclusion and caring, thus embracing values enshrined in the South African Constitution.

10. Teachers must be supported through empowerment through seminars and workshops. Support at school-level must be ongoing and viewed seriously so as to ensure that teachers' roles in managing vulnerable children are enhanced. This will contribute to quality teaching and learning.

11. Teachers and management members must empower themselves by reading, attending workshops, conducting research and through professional development programmes which will promote better understanding and thus enable better management of vulnerable learners in a more effective way. Teachers should instead of being despondent and de- motivated, use these challenges as an opportunity to teach and correct behaviour. When teachers take on the responsibility of offering support to vulnerable children they create the opportunity to get to

know learners better and also to develop as teachers. This will create a positive classroom climate conducive to teaching and learning.

12. Teachers must endeavour to forge closer school-community collaboration and network systems. Community stake-holders who may be able to offer services or support to children, for example, religious leaders, local businesses, clinic, library and religious organisations should also contribute to developing sustainable relationships with schools in their communities. Building partnerships, human and other resources must be prioritised by school planning teams.

13. Home-school relationships are to be reinforced. Communication with parents is vital. Parents are to be encouraged by teachers and management staff to get involved in school activities. Parenting- skills programmes may be conducted to empower parents and a stronger relationship must be developed between the school and parent.

14. Schools should strive to be centres of educational excellence. Provision must be made for adequate care of vulnerable children even in resource constrained- settings and challenging school environments. Teachers must endeavour to work within the constraints they have and not be deterred by the various contextual factors which may present as barriers to learning.

15. Values-based education should be carried out by all teachers in school and not restricted to Life- Orientation teachers only. This will positively impact on the school culture and climate and indirectly on school performance. Children must be taught about respect, dignity, good manners and sound attitudes and values.

16. The School-based support team should carry out its functions as per department requirement so that needs of children experiencing challenges are met. The Principal as

chairperson of the School- based support team must evaluate and monitor the School-based support team to ensure positive intervention and support is offered. Policies, processes and procedures outlined by the department must be adhered to so that children in need of care and support are provided for. Screening, identification, assessment and provision of support are essential. The school must engage the services of counsellors, psychologists, social workers and other support services if possible.

17. The Code of Conduct of the school must be enforced by all teachers in a consistent manner. The Code of Conduct of a school should be relevant, practical and should take into account the school culture, climate and ethos. It should be reviewed at least annually. This will help teachers manage vulnerable children more effectively.

18. The communication and language-barrier is a priority to be addressed in the classroom. Programmes must be implemented to improve language and communication. Teachers must find innovative ways to work around the language- barrier through code-switching, use of resources, encouraging reading and improving language.

19. Transformation in schools is essential in order to cater for ever-changing demands and challenges in a diverse society. Education is the most powerful tool for transformation. School management and teachers require a shift in mind-set. Management teams and teachers are to work as a cohesive unit on all levels; From National, Provincial and Departmental level, and within schools. This is necessary to embrace diversity and cater for children with varied needs in the best way possible. The difficulties faced by teachers, and subsequent dissatisfaction due to difficulty coping in the current educational environment ought to be addressed with management teams to enable teachers to manage vulnerable children in an appropriate manner to develop responsible citizens who will be productive in society.

20. School Governing Bodies must ensure that schools cater fully for needs of children as outlined in the South African Constitution (1996), Education White Paper 6 (2001) and the South African's School's Act 84 of 1996 as amended. The Bill of Rights states that "everything must be done in the best interests of the child."

21. Teachers should be aware of principles of Batho-Pele to enhance standards of service-delivery. This will ensure access to services and provides feedback on service-delivery, especially in the case of those who are vulnerable and are in need of care and support. School Governing Bodies, management teams and teachers should also ensure that they are offering appropriate support to learners in an effort to cater for needs of vulnerable children.

22. Teachers must strive to fulfil the 7 roles of teachers as outlined in the National Education Policy Act (no. 27 of 1996); specialist in a phase, subject discipline or practice, learning mediator, interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials, a leader, administrator and manager, a scholar, researcher and lifelong learner, assessor and a professional who plays a community, citizenship and pastoral care role. This will enhance the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in schools, improving the standard of education, making a valuable contribution in leading for diversity and creating schools of excellence in which, given the appropriate education and opportunity every child will achieve optimally to his or her God-given potential.

"IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD" (African Proverb)

"SERVICE TO HUMANITY IS SERVICE TO GOD"

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

ETHICAL CLEARANCE: UNIVERSITY OF KWA-ZULU NATAL

APPENDIX TWO

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION**

APPENDIX THREE

LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

APPENDIX THREE

PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

19 January 2015

Attention: The Principal

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Lynette Denyse Hoosen. I am a student in the Master of Education Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am expected to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research. The title of my study is: **The role of teachers in managing vulnerable children in school: evidence from one school.**

The study aims to explore teachers' experiences with vulnerable children. Based on the evidence found within the study, the conclusion will aim to make recommendations on how these children may be effectively managed (or supported). All permanent, qualified teachers employed at the school will be invited to participate in the research.

There will be semi-structured, focus-group interviews. Each group will have 8 participants. There will be a maximum of 3 groups. All matters of ethics, confidentiality and procedural correctness will be observed. Participation will be voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any point with no consequences or penalties. Notification will be issued in advance and there will be no disruption to teaching responsibilities and other employment duties. Cognizance will be taken of the school teaching and learning times and all protocols will be observed in an effort to be non-disruptive of any employment duties.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names of participants. Research will be collated and conclusions drawn accordingly.

The ultimate aim of such research is to present findings and make recommendations on the research topic which will enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

For further information on my research my supervisor may be contacted:

Prof. V. Chikoko 031- 2602639

In addition, I may be contacted

E-mail : lynettehoosen@gmail.com

Your positive response will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

L.D. Hoosen (Mrs)

Student: University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

Master of Education Programme: 2015

APPENDIX FOUR

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX FOUR

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

25 February 2015

Dear _____

My name is Lynette Denyse Hoosen. I am a candidate in the Master of Education Programme at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirement I am expected to conduct research.

Permission to conduct the study has been granted by the Department of Education.

I hereby invite you to participate in my study. The title is: The Role of teachers in managing Vulnerable Children in School: Evidence from one school.

The study will include all educators. There will be focus-group interviews. Three teachers will be interviewed individually. You may be one of three teachers selected for both. Names of participants will not be divulged. The interviews will take approximately one hour. Information obtained will be used strictly for research purposes only.

For research purposes, I kindly request permission for the tape recording of interviews conducted. Confidentiality will be observed. Participation is voluntary. You may withdraw at any point. There is no monetary benefit for participation in the study. However, the study will be of great benefit in our effort as educators to manage vulnerable children better.

Please sign the attached Declaration Form stating you agree to participate.

Thank you

DETAILS OF RESEARCHER: Mrs. L.D. Hoosen

DETAILS OF SUPERVISOR: Prof. V. Chikoko (University of Kwa-Zulu Natal)

The Research Office may be contacted on:

Mr. P. Ximba (HSSRES UKZN research office) Tel. 031-2603587

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX FIVE

PARTICIPANT DECLARATION FORM

APPENDIX FIVE

PARTICIPANT DECLARATION FORM

I _____ (PARTICIPANT), hereby agree to voluntarily participate in research.

I, hereby inform Lynette Denyse Hoosen of my consent to participate.

I understand that the topic being researched is: **THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN MANAGING VULNERABLE CHILDREN: EVIDENCE FROM ONE SCHOOL.**

I further understand that:

1. My participation is purely voluntary
2. I may withdraw from the study at any point if necessary, without any penalties or any negative or undesirable consequences.
3. All my responses will be treated in a highly confidential manner
4. Anonymity will be observed
5. All information in respect of research to be conducted will be divulged in advance

I fully understand the purpose and consequences of my participation in this study.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: _____

SIGNATURE : _____

WITNESSES : 1. _____

2. _____

DATE : _____

APPENDIX SIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

APPENDIX SIX

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

SCHEDULE OF SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. WHAT DOES VULNERABLE CHILD MEAN?

1.1 Define the term “VULNERABLE CHILD”

1.2 What circumstances or issues render a child vulnerable?

2. IDENTIFICATION OF THESE LEARNERS?

2.1 How do these children behave in class?

2.2 What are negative effects of their behaviour?

2.3 What do these children do in the classroom?

3. MANIFESTATION OF BEHAVIOUR IN CLASSROOM

3.1 How does vulnerability manifest in the classroom?

3.2 How is negative behaviour managed in classroom?

3.3 What effect does the behaviour of vulnerable children have in the classroom?

4. ROLE OF TEACHERS IN MANAGING VULNERABLE CHILDREN

4.1 What does the teacher do when children display negative behaviour?

4.2 How can teachers support these children?

4.3 Describe the challenges teachers experience in managing vulnerable children?

5. SCHOOL’S POLICIES REGARDING VULNERABLE CHILDREN

5.1 What policies does the school have in place to outline management of vulnerable children?

5.2 How are needs of these children addressed?

5.3 What processes or procedures are followed in dealing with vulnerable children?

6. ROLE OF TEACHERS IN MANAGING VULNERABLE CHILDREN

6.1 What can be said to be the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children?

6.2 Is there any form of support available to teachers?

6.3 What are the benefits of managing these children well?

6.4 What strategies can teachers adopt in managing vulnerable children?

7. EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN MANAGING VULNERABLE CHILDREN

7.1 What are the benefits of addressing the issues of vulnerability in the classroom?

7.2 Describe any negative experiences you've had in managing vulnerable children?

7.3 Describe any positive experiences you've had in managing vulnerable children

8. WHAT CAN BE SAID TO BE THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN MANAGING VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL?

8.1 What can teachers do to better manage vulnerability in the classroom?

8.2 What are the benefits of addressing the issue of vulnerability?

SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

FOCUS – GROUP INTERVIEWS

1. DEFINING TERM ‘VULNERABLE’ CHILD/ CHILDREN

1.1 What do you understand by the term “vulnerable child?”

1.2 What are the situations or issues which render a child vulnerable?

1.3 Would you agree that we daily encounter children who face challenges which render them vulnerable?

2. PREVALENCE OF ISSUES THAT RENDER CHILDREN VULNERABLE

2.1 What are the circumstances or challenges which render these children vulnerable?

2.2 Are there many children in school that experience some form of vulnerability?

2.3 How would you rate the prevalence of issues that render children vulnerable?

2.4 How would you list these issues in terms of highest to lowest prevalence?

3. MANIFESTATION OF VULNERABILITY IN THE CLASSROOM?

3.1 How do you identify these children in class?

3.2 In what ways does the vulnerability manifest?

3.3 How does this behaviour affect classroom teaching and atmosphere?

3.4 What are the needs of these children?

3.5 How does negative behaviour as a result of vulnerability impact on the school as a whole?

4. SCHOOL'S POLICY OR APPROACH IN HANDLING VULNERABLE CHILDREN

4.1 Does the school have a policy which outlines how vulnerable children should be managed? If yes, briefly outline the policy.

4.2 What strategies can teachers adopt to manage these children more effectively?

4.3 Describe any positive experiences you have had with such children?

4.4 Describe any negative experiences you have had with such children?

4.5 What can teachers do to enhance their role in supporting vulnerable children?

5. THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN MANAGING VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL?

5.1 What should teachers do when children with some form of vulnerability are identified?

5.2 What can be said to be the role of teachers in managing vulnerable children?