

EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN KWADABEKA, KWAZULU-NATAL

by

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DECLARATION

(i)The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.

(ii)This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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G. Msezane

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my late parents, my mother Thokozile Msezane (uMaMhlongo) and Phehlayiphi Albert Msezane (iNgagu), for raising me to be the man I am today, and for instilling in me the value and the importance of education. May their souls rest in peace.

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the schools of KwaDabeka Township in KwaZulu-Natal. This project explored the underlying reasons for and types of violence, as well as initiatives for violence prevention.

This is a qualitative study; therefore it is located within the interpretive paradigm. A case study strategy was employed in which qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, document reviews, and journals were used to collect data.

The findings suggest that besides ill-discipline and uncooperativeness by learners, criminals and thugs from outside schools pose a threat to the stability of schools. The findings also suggest that girls and young boys are victims of violence in schools. The research findings suggest that violence production in schools is shaped by socio-economic status of community where the school is in, as well as gender and masculinity.

Key terms:

School violence; violence; bullying; vandalism; corporal punishment; burglary; types of violence; sexual harassment; power struggles and violence; masculinity and violence ; lack of professionalism.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS-Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ANC-African National Congress

CJANPF -Child Justice Act National Policy Framework

CJCP -Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention

CSPV-Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence

CSVR -Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation

ELAA-Education Laws Amendment Act

GEM-Girls Education Movement

HIV-Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HSRC -Human Sciences Research Council

IRC -International Rescue Committee

NSVS - National Schools Violence Study

SACE -South African Council for Educators

SADTU -South African Democratic Teachers Union

SAHRC -South African Human Rights Commission

SAIRR -South African Institute of Race Relations

SASA-South African Schools Act

SCCFS -Safe, Caring and Child-friendly Schools

SGB-School Governing Body

TIMSS -Third International Math and Science Study

UNESCO-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF-United Nations Children's Fund

USA -United States of America

WHO -World Health Organisation

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EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN KWADABEKA, KWAZULU-NATAL

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION, KEY CONCEPTS AND THEMES

1.1 Introduction, key concepts and themes

This chapter introduces the issue of violence in schools, and presents the key concepts, themes and definitions associated with this problem. This section also focuses on the problem statement, the rationale and motivation underlying the study, as well as the significance/justification of the research. The research aims, objectives and questions are also stated.

The high level of violence in our schools reflects a complicated combination of past history and recent stresses – on individual, school, and community levels – in a society marked by deep inequities and massive uncertainty and change within school operations. (Vally, Dolombisa and Porteus, 2002, p.80)

The authors of the above statement admit to the prevalence of violence in schools, which is a reflection of the violence manifesting within our South African communities. This statement served as a catalyst for embarking on a study of the dynamics of violence in schools. As hinted at in the quote, violence in historically disadvantaged township schools is a recurring phenomenon. As an educator at a township school I encounter violent incidents virtually on a daily basis. Such acts of violence take place both within schools and in the community at large. Since schools are a microcosm of society, the violence that takes place on their premises mirrors that which is happening within the broader society (Eitle and Eitle, 2003). Media reports on violence in schools have become commonplace, with incidents being reported of stabbings (one learner stabbing another, a learner stabbing an educator) and rape (of schoolgirls by schoolboys or male educators), amongst others.

Violence is defined in different ways by different researchers. Greene (2008) defines violence as deliberate behaviour where the intention is to harm. Such an action can have far-reaching consequences for the victim. In this context, violence includes the use of force with the aim of hampering educational processes, by exposing educators and learners to an unsafe and insecure environment (UNESCO, 2010). On the other hand, the Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV, 1998)

states that violent behaviour is the result of a collision of behavioural patterns between individuals within certain social contexts (e.g., in families, schools and neighbourhoods).

Victims of violence may be physically, emotionally or psychologically scarred when they are subjected to it. Cecile (2009) views violence as the idea of repeated bullying of learners or a group of learners, which implies a deliberate intention on the part of a learner/group to cause harm to one of their peers. On the other hand, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2010) defines violence as any threat against educators or learners which disrupts or deters educational activities, or exposes educators and learners to risk within an environment that should be safe, secure and protective. Furlong and Morrison (2000) view violence as any action involving criminality and aggression, which succeeds in retarding a learner's scholastic development and learning. Many researchers define "school violence" according to their own perspectives, for instance, Furlong and Morrison (2000) view the term as exposing and reflecting a community's fears about growing youth violence and the manner in which it slows or impedes both learning and teaching in schools. The South African Bill of Rights, Section 12(1), states that everyone is entitled to live, study and work in an environment which is free from any form of violence (*Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 108 of 1996*). This means that learners are entitled to function within a violence-free environment, where they can learn without threat of violence and disruption. According to Furlong and Morrison (2000, p. 6), "school violence has some utility as a policy term because it reflects societal values that schools should be a special place of refuge and nurturance for youth. Acts of violence that threaten the security of schools attack a core value of our social system." It is for this reason that schools put measures in place to help curb violence. One such measure is the School Code of Conduct for Learners. Section 8(1) of the *South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996*, stipulates that schools, together with all the relevant stakeholders, must develop a code of conduct which will be acceptable to all. Schools are entitled to state and define what they regard as acceptable or unacceptable (see *Understanding Governance, Discipline and Codes of Conduct for Learners*). This means a code of conduct must be informative of what conduct and moral behaviour are expected of learners (Brunton & Associates, 2003). Schools must design their own codes of conduct in accordance

with their particular needs. Such codes must promote positive discipline and help to establish a violence-free environment which is conducive to teaching and learning (Brunton and Associates, 2003).

1.2 Problem statement

Violence is prevalent in schools around the world, affecting both developed and developing countries (Akiba, LeTendre, Baker and Goesling, 2002). A review of global reports strongly suggests that the issue of violence is of real concern not only in South Africa and on the African continent (Benbenishty and Astor, 2008). In local and overseas media, reports abound with incidents of violence against learners and educators. The South African media frequently report on the levels of brutality among South African learners, which appear to have reached new heights: learners carry dangerous weapons and have no hesitation in using them, they peddle and do drugs at school, they harass other learners and educators, and sexually harass their classmates and peers (see Naidoo, 2007, p.1; Wick, 2007, p.2; Maluleka, 2010, p.1; Mthembu, 2008, p.1; Serrao, 2008, p.1). Mestry, Van der Merwe and Squelch (2006) note that violence in South Africa has grown at an alarming rate post-1994. This finding is supported by Vally, Dolombisa and Porteus (2002), who state that by 2002, more incidents of violence in South African schools were reported than in Colorado in the United States of America (USA).

School governing bodies (SGBs), as the custodians of good governance in schools, have a legal responsibility to provide and ensure a safe and violence-free learning environment (Squelch, 2001). SGBs, together with the Department of Education (DoE) have put in place structures aimed at helping to curb or fight violence in schools, but with mixed results. Violence persists, despite legislation such as the *Education Laws Amendment Act, 31 of 2007*, being passed – legislation which allows schools to set up safety programmes to effect the searching of property and the seizure of illegal drugs and dangerous weapons. The burden of halting the scourge of violence seems to have been placed squarely on the shoulders of those stakeholders who are directly or indirectly associated with education (inclusive of SGBs in particular). SGBs invariably become stakeholders in this process, as the perpetrators of the violence tend to be learners, and the violence is frequently committed on school premises. This view is supported by the *South African Schools*

Act, 84 of 1996, which states that SGBs must “promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners” (Section 20) (1) (a). Therefore, in the light of the above views, the problem in schools is the violence that is rife. This Violence affects both learners and educators, thus disrupting the smooth running of schools. This therefore made me to want to know the causes of violence and those who are responsible for its cause and how it can be curtailed. Therefore I decided to embark on this study.

1.3 Rationale and motivation

Personally, I have worked as educator for a long time, in so-called ‘best-performing’ schools where discipline was emphasised and strictly observed, and where the attainment of good results was the main objective of schooling activity. I have worked also in ‘worst-performing’ schools, where little attention was paid to discipline and schooling processes. In these schools both learners and educators seemed oblivious of their actual respective purposes in being at school. Throughout my 28 years of teaching, I have witnessed serious instances of violence, both in those schools where discipline was emphasised and in schools where ill-discipline was rife. The violent acts which I witnessed were perpetrated by both educators and learners: there were incidents of bullying, drug abuse, sexual harassment and gender-based violence. I witnessed incidents where learners fought and injured each other. In their squabbles the learners would use knives, pangas, home-made sharp stabbing implements and even home-made guns. Some such conflicts were the result of a spill-over of skirmishes from neighbouring communities/villages into schools. In one incident an educator was stabbed, following allegations that he was in a love relationship with a schoolgirl. In certain instances outsiders would commit acts of violence on the school’s premises: I once witnessed people who did not form part of the school community chasing one other with guns – even brandishing AK47s. Since there was no security fencing at the school, it was easy for outsiders to gain unimpeded access.

As a member of the disciplinary committee at various schools, I attended numerous disciplinary meetings on topics related to fighting among learners, sexual harassment and the excessive use of corporal punishment. In my view, most

educators use corporal punishment as a form of discipline, completely disregarding the fact that corporal punishment was abolished in terms of the *South African Schools Act*, 84 of 1996. This type of punishment, rather than achieving the desired results, appears to develop violent tendencies among learners (Morrell, 1999). According to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC, 2008), learners who received corporal punishment later showed disruptive and harmful behavioural tendencies such as violence, bullying and disobedience. All the above occurrences helped persuade me to conduct this study.

Professionally, I am a member of South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) and served as a site steward for three terms. I believe the experience I gained from being a SADTU member and office bearer ultimately prepared me to conduct this study on violence in schools. During my time as a site steward, I attended workshops on conflict resolution, sexual harassment, and violence against women and children. The workshops empowered me in respect of how to deal with (and endeavour to solve) problems stemming from conflict among educators, and sexual harassment among educators and learners. In my view, this knowledge and experience helped me interact with the participants and enabled me to probe deeper into participants' views and perceptions. I have a cordial relationship with educators in neighbouring schools and am well acquainted with the geography and the dynamics of the neighbourhood in which the participating schools are situated. All of these factors facilitate my task of conducting this study.

It is not, however, solely the media's dire portrayal of violence in schools which encouraged me to embark on this research. An address by a Captain of KwaDabeka South African Police Services, on violence and drug abuse in our community, was an eye-opener in the sense that something needed to be done. This talk gave rise to intense and serious discourses on the subject of violence and drugs amongst my colleagues and friends. Debates and deliberations with my former fellow college student (now my supervisor), Professor Vusi Mncube of Unisa, also encouraged me to enrol for the M.Ed. degree. As a result I became part of Professor Mncube's project on violence in schools.

1.4 Significance of/justification for the study

This study will infer on the extent of violence in schools, and on the extent of the damage done to learners' progress and welfare. The aim is to uncover the diversified nature of the violence taking place in local schools. Since the participants of this study hailed from KwaDabeka, it is likely that the inhabitants of this area will be enlightened about the impact violence has on learners, teaching and learning in their schools. It will also shed light on the issue of whether being raised in this disadvantaged and criminally prone society has a bearing on an individual's tendency towards violence.

Akiba et al. (2002), state that in a study on school violence the focus is on learner victimisation. In the present study, however, the experiences and perceptions of both the perpetrator and the victim will be investigated. The study by Akiba et al. (2002) employs the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) database, which focuses on specific indicators of violence. The present study will, however, be based on the experiences and perceptions of the participants, rather than on statistics, which suits research of a more quantitative nature, such as that conducted on school violence in Alabama, by the State of Alabama Criminal Justice Information Centre (Wright, 2002). My study will be based on the views and perceptions of the research participants.

In this study the experiences of the participants will be produced using a variety of methods, in order to strengthen the credibility of the data produced. Since this is a qualitative study, qualitative methods have been used, such as semi-structured and individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations and documentary reviews.

1.5 Research methodology and research design

Research methodology is defined by Silverman (2000) as a manner in which a researcher studies a phenomenon. On the other hand Mason (2000) defines the research method as a logic a researcher employs to answer research questions. Therefore Research methodology, therefore, focuses on the entire process of gathering data and the methods used to gather those data, in addition to focusing on the kind of tools that must be used and the manner in which they should be used (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

Research design focuses on the objectives of the research and the purpose of the research (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). While Wiersma (1991) defines research design as a plan for conducting research, on the other hand Leedy and Ormrod (2005) refer to research design as a strategy that is employed by researchers in an attempt to solve research problems. The research paradigm of this study is interpretivism/ constructivism. Therefore this means that this study employed qualitative methods of data collection. A case study approach is employed where semi-structured interviews, observations, and document reviews were used as methods of data collection.

1.6 Research aims

This study forms part of a bigger Unisa project involving six provinces of the Republic of South Africa (KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Limpopo, North West and the Western Cape). The aim is to facilitate provincial comparisons of school violence through the generation of schools-based indicators of violence as well as security measures. To this end, a comparative framework was employed across the six provinces. This specific project focuses on the township of KwaDabeka, in KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore the main objective of this study is to explore the initiatives and strategies used to reduce violence in schools. This means that in identifying the dynamics of violence in schools, the project explores the underlying reasons for and the various types of violence, as well as initiatives aimed at prevention, with the intention of generating indicators which may inform a common framework for comparison within the nine provinces of South Africa.

1.7 Research objectives

There are three research objectives:

1.7.1. To elicit the perceptions and experiences of learners, educators and school governors about school violence;

1.7.2. To explore how wider structures such as gender, age, socio-economic status and ethnic/tribal division shape violence production within schools;

1.7.3. To identify the measures and initiatives taken by schools to promote a violence-free environment in schools.

1.8 Research questions

The research questions arising from this study are the following:

1.8.1. What are the perceptions and experiences of learners, educators and school governors about school violence?

1.8.2. How do wider structures such as gender, age, socio-economic status and ethnic/tribal divisions shape violence production within schools?

1.8.3. What measures and initiatives are taken by schools to promote a violence-free environment in schools?

1.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, certain key concepts, themes and definitions of violence were discussed. The problem statement and significance of this study were outlined, along with the research aims, objectives and questions pertaining to this work. In the next chapter the focus is on the theoretical frameworks.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: EXPLAINING WHY VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS HAPPENS THE WAY IT DOES

The preceding chapter introduced this research study, its aims and the research questions. In this chapter the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study are discussed.

This study is underpinned by theories of violence and non-violence, which include the following: social control/authoritarianism, the theory of deviance, and non-violence/non-cooperation theories.

2.1 Social control/authoritarianism

A basic premise is that schooling processes should be good and beneficial to learners; also, schools should be places of empowerment, where the minds of the learners are liberated (Harber, 2004). However, schools cannot be strongly associated only with educational freedom – they also have much to answer for in terms of the torture that learners suffer (Harber, 2004). Harber's (2004) argument is that violence happens in schools, and this implicates schools as the perpetrators of violence towards both learners and educators.

Harber (2001) argues that South Africa suffers the scourge of violence on a daily basis, and that this spills over into schools. This argument is supported by a report by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR, 2008), which states that only 23 per cent of South African learners reported that they felt safe at school. According to Harber and Mncube (2012), schools are expected to formulate and put policies in place, along with a learners' code of conduct, in an attempt to dissuade incidents of violence on the premises. These policies should aim to discourage fighting, drug and alcohol abuse and the use of vulgar language, and to prevent school property from being vandalised. This study explores the role schools play in curbing any form of violence on their premises.

Schools are a microcosm of society; therefore they reflect whatever happens within that society. This means the violence (in whatever form) which occurs in schools is a reflection of the violence manifesting within society as a whole. Schools are, therefore, unable to shield learners from violence and from the negative influences of

the broader society (Mncube and Harber, 2013). Harber (2004) argues that the violence occurring in schools is not only transported from society, but is also reproduced and perpetrated by the schools themselves – in so-called authoritarian schools. Not all schools are, however, vulnerable to the negative influences emanating from the broader society: some schools are well organised and managed, and their sound management empowers and enables them to put safety and security structures in place to protect and care for their learners (Mncube and Harber, 2012). Such schools are able to fulfil their educational mandate of teaching the children in their care.

In disorganised schools there is non-observance, on the part of educators, of their basic terms of employment (Mncube and Harber, 2013). Such educators frequently absent themselves from schools, for various reasons. Motala, Dieltiens, Carrim, Kgobe, Moyo and Rembe (2007) note that educator absenteeism contributes to the loss of valuable teaching time. Educators who arrive late and leave early have a negative impact on their learners, in addition to setting a bad example. Strikes, stay-aways, examinations, sporting events and municipal activities are cited as some of the reasons why educators absent themselves from work. Such actions negatively affect the progress and welfare of learners at school (Motala et al., 2007).

Harber (2001) and Fataar (2007) state that South African schools are plagued by various types of violence. This is attributed to the dysfunctionality of schools, characterised by low morale amongst educators, a lack of accountability, and learner absenteeism (Hunt, 2007). These factors have a bearing on the present study, which aims to establish the causes of violence within South African schools.

The Gulbenkian Foundation (1995) states that learners are increasingly becoming the victims of violence, rather than the perpetrators. The Foundation (1995) further notes that schools, instead of providing education and security to learners, instil violent behaviour and attitudes in them. Schools have therefore moved away from their perceived purpose of educating children – if that was their goal to begin with.

The question arises: What was the main purpose of establishing schools? History informs us of a long-held disagreement between an ideology which endorses education for control (where the end product would be workers who are obedient and non-rebellious) and an ideology which promotes assertiveness and critical thought

amongst school-leavers (Harber, 2004). One of the conflicting ideologies, according to Green (1990), sees schooling as intended to create a socially responsible, obedient and politically subdued citizenry by preparing and producing future workers who will submissively obey the organisation's stipulated values and codes of discipline. Such schooling provides social and political control of its population, so as to avert rebellion and social chaos. The state often undertook the massive duty of controlling and indoctrinating children to be submissive to the authorities (Green, 1990). However, controlling learners did not yield the desired outcomes, giving rise to institutions which were extremely violent and even more punitive in nature than the learners' own homes (Adams, 1991). In such authoritarian schools learners' rights, needs and feelings were disregarded, and learners and educators could not dispute or critically assess the authority of the school (Harber, 2004). Such schools bred rebellious and disobedient pupils, because rather than maintaining a stable learning environment, the schools perpetrated and perpetuated violence, significantly making it worse than the violence manifesting in society at large (Harber, 2004). Ross Epp (1996, p. 20) notes:

When we respond to violence in schools, if we respond at all, it is to the children who are violent. When a child forces another to do his or her bidding, we call it extortion; when an adult does the same thing to a child, it is called correction. When a student hits another student it is assault; when a teacher hits a student it is for the child's 'own good'. When a student embarrasses, ridicules or scorns another student it is harassment, bullying or teasing. When a teacher does it, it is sound pedagogical practice.

This reinforces the stereotype that educators are always right and learners are always wrong – a binary that may lead to rebellion and violence on the part of learners.

According to Harber and Mncube (2012), most types of schools are authoritarian rather than democratic. In such schools, harshness and repression are rife in varying degrees, depending on the setting (Harber and Mncube, 2012). Further, these schools decide on (or have power over) the curriculum, in terms of how and when it is taught. Learners have no input in terms of what they are to learn.

These schools' set-up resembles that of prisons, where inmates are constantly watched (Foucault, 1977), where there is neglect of their human rights and where they are subjected and exposed to violent mistreatment, with violence breeding further violence (Mncube and Harber, 2013).

According to Mncube and Harber (2013), violent behaviour is exacerbated by two social/psychological tenets of authoritarian schooling: the first is role modelling, where young people admire and imitate adults who are authoritarian and view it as normal to create and accept order. Learners assume it is normal to exercise authority over others, by employing violent means. The second tenet is that authoritarianism places the emphasis on obedience and the carrying out of instructions to the letter. Such compliance and respect for orders justify the violent actions of the perpetrators. Consequently, authoritarian schools are deemed vehicles for indoctrinating and controlling learners (Meighan, 1994). Harber (2004) argues that such schools perpetuate and escalate violence by dehumanising learners and educators. Haber (2004) differentiates between five dimensions of violence, through which a school dehumanises its victims and perpetrates violence:

- Corporal punishment. Albeit abolished in many societies world-wide, it is still applied in schools. Through corporal punishment schools endeavour to maintain order and discipline within an authoritarian context. Learners may view such violent actions as a way of forcing their own opinions/views/desires onto someone who is deemed weaker than them;
- Racism. Authoritarianism is often associated with racism in schools – authorities tend to overlook racist remarks in favour of maintaining the good name of the school. Such inability to challenge racism is viewed as perpetrating violence;
- Gender. Authoritarian schools emphasise obedience and submissiveness. Females, because of entrenched societal stereotypes, are expected to be submissive even when they are violated physically. Inaction on the part of the school authorities to combat violence against female learners is regarded as perpetrating and sanctioning gender-based violence;

- Stress, anxiety and testing. A school measures its successes and achievements through the results of its learners, who are constantly tested and undergo rigorous assessments. Subjecting learners to such treatment, i.e., treating them as commodities, causes stress and anxiety, and may result in physical breakdown;
- The militarisation of schooling. The regimen of strict discipline observed in authoritarian schools resembles that of the military to such an extent that some schools teach military values. This blatantly contributes to the reproduction of violence, in that a perpetrator learns at school the art of inflicting harm on others.

Harber (2004) argues that in authoritarian schools, educators perceive it to be their right to administer punishment. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002) notes that corporal punishment is still administered in 65 countries around the world. From the violent action of the educators, learners copy violence as a means of survival (Elbedour, Center, Maruyama and Assor, 1997; Human Rights Watch, 1999).

This study will explore the nature of violence in select schools, and how it could be prevented or reduced. As indicated, the research will be conducted by gauging the perceptions of educators, learners, SGBs and support staff.

2.2 Theory of deviance

Deviance is defined as non-conformity to a norm, or a set of norms which are received without hesitation by a significant number of people in a community or society (Giddens, 1994). Rock (1973) defines a deviant as one who occupies a special role which is recognised in the course of his/her interaction with others. He argues that if a person is not given the role of deviant, but is viewed and treated as such, s/he cannot be regarded as deviant (Rock, 1973). A deviant may be disturbed or merely distrustful (Rock, 1973). Thio (2010) avers that deviants provoke, garner disapproval, elicit anger and cause indignation. Rock (1973) categorises deviation as either primary or secondary: the former is the actual act of rule breaking, while the latter is when the rule-breaker makes adjustments to fend off the reactions which his/her act solicited. Rock (1973) adds that secondary deviation occurs when the rule-breaker commits acts that are socially unacceptable and go against the good

morality of the society, when the perpetrator's actions do not make sense. This links to the present study, which seeks to establish whether those who commit violence plan it, or whether they act on impulse. Giddens (1994) states that deviance is not only an act of individual behaviour, it may involve a group. In studying the patterns of violent behaviour, Osgood (1998) establishes that the use of illicit drugs might see an adolescent being rejected by his/her pro-social peers, so that s/he joins an anti-social peer group and participates in escalating violence. This is supported by learning theory which notes that deviant behaviour is not inherent but is learnt through imitation or reinforcement (Furlong, 1985). Children tend to imitate the behaviour of those in their midst – if it is violent and aggressive behaviour, they will learn it (Furlong, 1985). Osgood (1998) notes that violence peaks with age, while substance abuse may decline with age. Osgood (1998) further observes that more males become involved in violent behaviours than females. The present study aims to establish to what extent males are involved in gender-based violence in schools.

In scrutinising deviant behaviour, special attention is paid to conformity deviance – a type of behaviour that is acceptable if it perpetuates a certain social norm (Giddens, 1994). The promotion of such conformity that accompanies social norms occurs through sanctions (Giddens, 1994). Giddens (1994) defines sanctions as a reaction from others to the behaviour of an individual or a group of individuals, with the aim of ensuring compliance with a given norm. Sanctions can be positive or negative, which implies that rewards may be given for conformity, while punishment in whatever form may be inflicted for non-conformity (Giddens, 1994). Sanctions can be formal or informal: formal sanctions are found where there is an existing body of people/an agency whose task is to ensure that a particular set of norms is adhered to (Giddens, 1994). Informal sanctions have no such pre-existing 'enforcers'. According to Hargreaves, Hester and Mellor (1975), what some perceive as a deviant act is not necessarily deviant in the view of another social or cultural group, and as a result this can be labelled a relative phenomenon.

This study will endeavour to establish whether there are any policies, measures or initiatives in place to curb violence in schools in South Africa. SGBs are formal groups tasked with ensuring the adherence of school communities (inclusive of learners) to rules and regulations, in order to ensure good governance in schools. According to the *South African Schools Act (SASA)*, section 20 (1) (d), one of the

competencies of SGBs is to adopt a code of conduct for learners at schools. The implication is that, in a case where a violent incident occurs at a school, the SGB is expected to come up with ways of curbing such violence. Downes and Rock (1988) argue that agencies constituted for preventing deviance are often poorly equipped for the task they have to perform. Therefore, to capacitate SGBs there are programmes run by DoE entities. Often the competencies of the SGBs depend on the schools in which they function. These agencies tend to regulate rather than attempt to eliminate deviance; stabilisation seems to be preferred to elimination (Downes and Rock, 1988).

Anti-social behaviour (like violence) may be reinforced in a child's life, for instance when a parent does not respond when a child either does well or when s/he calls for attention, but does respond or take action when the child commits an aggressive or violent act (Furlong, 1985). Such actions on the part of parents reinforce antisocial behaviour (Furlong, 1985). According to Ritzer (2000), anti-social behaviour, where a deviant attaches his/her own meaning to actions, is grounded in certain basic principles: the first premise is that human beings have the capacity for thought. Individuals, because of their ability to think, act reflectively. The second is that the capacity for thought is shaped by people's interaction with others. The human capacity to think is shaped and developed in childhood through socialisation and is further nurtured via socialisation in adulthood. The third principle is that people learn meanings that shape their behaviour within society. The fourth is that through meanings people act distinctively and interact with others in a particular way. The fifth principle is that through their ability to interpret meaning, people are capable of formulating their own perceptions (Ritzer, 2000). Since one of the research questions endeavours to elicit the perceptions and experiences of learners, educators and school governors about school violence, this theory will assist in establishing what perceptions educators and learners have about violence and its permutations in schools.

2.3 Theories of non-violence

The main objective of the study is to explore the initiatives and strategies used to reduce violence in schools. For this reason it was considered important to tap into the theories of non-violence. Non-violence has been employed since ancient times,

when people sought to remove obstacles in their social lives (Kumar, 2010). For instance, if two parties were in disagreement with each other, community leaders would apply and encourage non-cooperation through non-violence in settling their disputes (Kumar, 2010). To emphasise that non-violence/non-cooperation is a centuries-old practice, Kumar (2010) states that the teachings and practice of Jesus Christ embody non-violent non-cooperation. For example, during Jesus' arrest at the Garden of Gethsemane, one of His disciples smote off the ear of the high priest's servant with a sword. Jesus reprimanded His disciple and warned that those who live by the sword will perish by the sword (Matthew 26, 51–52). The following individuals espoused non-violence: Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Martin Luther King Jr and Dr Nelson Mandela. It is the objective of this study to try and devise some means of reducing/curbing violence in schools, and to this end the section below offers examples of leaders who promoted non-violence in South African society during apartheid.

2.3.1 Mahatma Gandhi

One of the best-known proponents of non-violent protest is Mahatma Gandhi, who chose a non-violent path to counter atrocities and stand up against inhumanity, so as to ensure that ordinary people would have freedom and justice by promoting cooperation, harmony and love (Kumar, 2010). Gandhi began a campaign of non-violent non-cooperation to agitate for civil rights for South African Indians (Kumar, 2010). In his fight against racial and ethnic inequality, Gandhi embodied the *Sarvodaya* philosophy of ideal life – a peaceful way of fighting racial and social injustice (Randall, 2001). *Sarvodaya* gave birth to *Satyagraha*, a non-violent means of fighting and resisting oppression (Randall, 2001). Gandhi's philosophy requires full adherence to the principle of avoiding violence at all costs (Soyler, 2010). The philosophy of *Satyagraha*, or passive resistance, works towards change which generates power, i.e., an empowered way of life (Soyler, 2010). Kumar (2010) argues that Gandhi strove to promote the welfare of all, stressing that love occupies a permanent place in non-violent non-cooperation. Gandhi made it clear that non-violence should be embarked on as a last resort in voicing grievances (Bondurant, 1971). Bondurant (1971) further asserts that for Gandhi, non-violence had to be directed at the policies of an unjust system, rather than at those implementing it. Gandhi emphasised openness and honesty in achieving the goals of non-violent

protest (Bondurant, 1971). This coincides well with the aims of the present study, which emphasises the promotion of peace, welfare and non-violent behaviour among learners, and among learners and educators. Rather than wishing to punish or inflict violence upon their opponents, people should strive to establish friendships (Kumar, 2010). Gandhi's *Satyagraha* philosophy inspired other global leaders, such as Dr Martin Luther King Jr (Kumar, 2010).

2.3.2 Dr Martin Luther King Jr

Dr Martin Luther King Jr was a proponent of the American civil rights movement (Kumar, 2010). He was, at first, not impressed by non-violent action as a means of protest, viewing it as a form of cowardice (Randall, 2001; Kumar, 2010). Later, he saw great possibilities of achieving his aims in adopting non-violence in his fight for civil rights (Kumar, 2010). King subsequently declared non-violence as a suitable method for fighting for civil rights in America (Kumar, 2010). At Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, Martin Luther King Jr was influenced by Walter Rauschenbusch's notion that Christians should strive for Social Gospel in addressing the social ills and injustices bedevilling society (in this case, African Americans) (King, 1999). This provided King with a way of fusing God's love with the fight against social ills (King, 1999). During the Montgomery protest meeting he stated that justice is love that corrects and rehabilitates that which rebels against humanity (King, 1999). As a true believer in non-violence, King told fellow African Americans to lay down their weapons, because problems could not be solved through retaliatory violence (King, 1999), despite the fact that his house was bombed (King, 1999). Randall (2001) lists five themes of King's philosophy: the first is that violence is active in the presence of injustice, i.e., for non-violent action to be active and effective there must be injustice. The second theme is that vanquishing an opponent does not signify a victory. This is evident in the Montgomery bus boycott, where King advised boycotters to be friendly towards the enemy. The third is that non-violent protests were directed at the system, not the people driving the system. King viewed this as a fight of justice against injustice. For the purpose of this study, the documents published by the DoE (the system) will be scrutinised to determine whether or not they promote the curbing of violence. The fourth is that King espoused the value of unearned suffering, which is an undeserved and unwarranted suffering, manifesting when a person submits him/herself to suffering in the fight

against injustice. The last tenet is that non-violence should include spiritual non-violence. This is relevant to the present study, which aims to investigate the measures put in place to promote a violence-free environment.

2.3.3 Dr Nelson Mandela

Dr Nelson Mandela was a humanitarian championing children's education, and he was also known to advocate safe sex education (Mistry, 2002). Mandela, even after his death, is viewed as an international symbol of reconciliatory politics, and a champion of peaceful negotiation (Mistry, 2002). This was evident when he visited Mrs Verwoerd, the wife of Dr Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd, the 'father of apartheid', to have tea with her (Limb, 2008). The fact that Mandela wore a Springbok jersey during the Rugby World Cup in 1995 was seen as a gesture of reconciliation (Limb, 2008). In the early 1950s, the ANC embarked on a non-violent defiance campaign against the white government's pass laws (Mistry, 2002). Mandela and the ANC were influenced by Gandhi's *Satyagraha* principles of non-violence (Kumar, 2010), which the apartheid regime answered with brutal attacks. Following the Sharpeville massacre, Mandela called for an armed struggle, possibly as a result of the brutality he had witnessed (Mistry, 2002). In 1992, Mandela's call for peaceful protest against the apartheid regime and opponents of the ANC showed his commitment to a peaceful and violence-free society (Mistry, 2002). Mandela, in his first public address after his release from prison, called on whites to join blacks in shaping a new, democratic South Africa (Hendrikse, 1990), to promote peace and well-being among all its peoples. To entrench the notion of a man who believes in non-violence, it is appropriate to quote Mandela: 'Never shall one human being ever be oppressed by another human being on such beautiful land' (Mistry, 2002). In his acceptance speech of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway, on 10 December 1993, Mandela emphasised that power-mongers should not be allowed to block peaceful ways of solving problems (Asmal, Chidester and Jones, 2003). He rebuked President George W. Bush of the USA for planning to execute raids on Iraq (Mistry, 2002), thus reinforcing his belief that non-violence could even be implemented internationally. One of the research objectives of this study is to identify the measures and initiatives taken by schools to promote a violence-free environment. In this study, non-violence is seen as a tool and a way to achieve peace and harmony at schools, therefore one of

the objectives here is to try to devise some means of reducing or curbing violence in South African schools.

2.4 Conclusion

Different theories and theoretical frameworks underpinning this study were discussed. They are social control/authoritarianism; theory of deviance and non-violence theories. The social control/authoritarianism expounds that schooling processes instead of being beneficial to learners, breed and nurture violence. The policies that authorities put in place to control school communities produce negative response, which is non-observant, rebellious and violent. On the other hand the theory of deviance espouses the view that learners are deviant because they fail to conform to set of norms that are acceptable to the society. Such deviant behaviour may result to violent behavioural patterns which may hinder teaching and learning. The theories of violence were explored to establish strategies that may be used to reduce violence. The proponents of non-violence are Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Martin Luther King Jr and Dr Nelson Mandela. These individuals promoted non-violence approach as a tool to curb violence. In the next chapter, literature pertaining to violence will be discussed and reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE: THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

The theories and theoretical frameworks underpinning this study were discussed in chapter 2. In the present chapter, literature pertaining to violence will be discussed and reviewed.

3.1 Violence globally

Schools in the international arena display different 'behavioural' patterns, as is evident in a study of school effectiveness in 12 London schools (Watkins, Mauthner, Hewitt, Epstein and Leonard, 2007). In the aforementioned study it emerged that violence is prevalent in schools, but that schools remain silent on it. It also emerged that schools, albeit acknowledging that violence existed, were silent on race and gender violence (Watkins, Mauthner, Hewitt, Epstein and Leonard, 2007). In the USA it was established that in schools where there was cooperation and support among educators, learners also displayed cooperation and respect for the school (Watkins et al., 2007). In a 1990 study conducted in Chicago, on 340 secondary schools, Bryk et al. (cited in Watkins et al. 2007) noted that good behaviour was displayed in schools where there was a healthy relationship among learners, educators and other staff, solely because the adults displayed good interpersonal relationships. Sadly, not all schools are as well run, according to Gansle (2005): schools in the USA are experiencing significant and complex problems related to escalating violence. This is supported by Osgood (1998), who emphasises that the USA faces marked problems with youth violence. Drosopoulos et al. (2008) states that 80 to 90 per cent of adolescents report some form of victimisation (bullying), with ten to 15 per cent of middle-school learners being described as bullies. Gansle (2005) asserts that in the USA the source of schools-based violence stems from anger: students' anger is directed at others, and that anger leads them to engage in inappropriate behaviour. Violence may have long-term negative effects on students, and those effects manifest as poor performance at school, drug abuse, poor interpersonal relationships and health-related problems (Gansle, 2005).

The majority of incidents of violence in American schools are underreported (Schonfeld, 2006). The reason why not all such incidents are exposed, but only a

few are revealed, according to Schonfeld (2006), may be due to a lack of candour on the part of school administrators. Their lack of frankness and honesty may be the result of political pressure or may stem from a desire to avoid jeopardising their careers. According to Thio (2010), research in the USA and other countries shows a strong link between drug abuse and crime. Learners who abuse drugs are inclined to be violent and to commit crime. In support of Thio, Tolan (2007) states that easy access to firearms, along with constant drug and alcohol abuse creates fertile ground for violence to breed.

The extent of violence in American schools is significant: during the 1999–2000 academic year, an estimated 71 per cent of public schools experienced at least one violent crime, while in 36 per cent of public schools at least one violent incident was reported to the police (Schonfeld, 2006). According to Drosopoulos et al. (2005), 90 per cent of American students stated that they felt isolated, lost friends and experienced disruptions in their schooling and academic progress. Bullying (both verbal and physical) was prevalent in many American schools (Drosopoulos et al., 2005). Dunne et al. (2006) found that verbal abuse was frequently sexually orientated in nature, but that both educators and learners tended to resort to verbal violence replete with sexual innuendo. Other findings show that one in five American students is reportedly bullied, while over 150000 students skip school on a daily basis, to avoid being bullied (Drosopoulos et al., 2005). Drosopoulos et al. (2005) further reveals that cyber-bullying is gaining notoriety as a means of bullying – in fact, 20 to 40 per cent of students have been bullied on the Internet or via emails, in chat rooms or via cell phone messages (Drosopoulos et al., 2005).

However, in as much as violent crime in schools was reported, it was under-represented (Schonfeld, 2006), i.e., not all such violent incidents were made known to the public. Thio (2010) cites the Virginia Tech University massacre where 27 learners, four professors and an instructor were killed as an example of intense violence within the setting of a learning institution. The perpetrator in this incident was said to be a loner who suffered from severe depression and was diagnosed as mentally ill by a psychiatric facility even prior to the shooting (Thio, 2010). This implies that apart from the aforementioned causes of violence, mental illness also plays a prominent role in school shootings, as more than half of the shooters had experienced severe depression (Thio, 2010).

Gender-based violence is yet another type of violence that occurs world-wide. Usually it is perpetrated by learners against other learners, by educators against learners, and vice versa (Dunne, Humphreys and Leach, 2006). Male aggression (whether subtle or not so subtle) plays a major role in gender-based violence (Tolan, 2007). According to a study carried out in Ghana and Botswana (1998–2003), it is not only girls who suffer gender-based violence – boys do too (Dunne et al., 2006). Dunne et al. (2006) attribute gender-based violence which is directed at boys, to homophobia.

'Gender relations and boundaries within the institution are part of the hidden curriculum and learners' informal learning, through which feminine and masculine identities are constructed and reinforced' (Dunne et al., 2006: 78). For instance, in many schools, as punishment African girls would be expected to clean classrooms or toilets, while the boys would either clean windows or face no consequences or sanctions. Educators in the African context further institutionalise gender violence by enforcing rules and practices that differentiate between the genders. For example, certain subjects are deemed suitable for girls, not boys. Also, learner leaders frequently tend to be appointed from among the cohort of boys (Dunne et al., 2006). Girls especially tend to be subjected to sexual harassment by male educators and older men (Dunne et al., 2006). Some educators 'reward' their victims by treating them better than other learners, or by awarding them higher test marks, while older men ('sugar daddies') often shower their victims with gifts and money (Dunne et al., 2006).

Girls are expected to submit to various degrees of violence, for example, sexual harassment by boys and educators within schools (Dunne et al., 2006). When such incidents are reported, educators dismiss them as part of the growing-up process (Dunne et al., 2006). This is supported by the findings of Leach and Sitaram (2007), who state that in India, reported abusive behaviour is dismissed as part of growing up. Cultural constraints in that country prevent or actively discourage girls from reporting incidents of violence – especially sexual harassment (Leach and Sitaram, 2007). The researchers further note that education officials in India view harassment against girls as mere 'ragging' on the part of the male perpetrators, but those officials nevertheless concede that the levels of violence directed at girls are significant (Leach and Sitaram, 2007).

Schools-based violence may have political or religious motives, for example, in Afghanistan, on 13 August 2008, Jackie Kirk and three colleagues were gunned down (UNESCO, 2010). They had been involved in an International Rescue Committee (IRC) programme aimed at uplifting and educating girls on sexual abuse, exploitation and gender mainstreaming (UNESCO, 2010), and on improving educator practice.

In Pakistan, a chief of education in the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Islamabad office, Ms Percy So was gunned down on 9 June 2009 (UNESCO, 2010), thus depriving Pakistani children of a dedicated education worker. Violence in Pakistan and Afghanistan is politically and religiously motivated, with the military frequently being deployed to destabilise educational institutions, government officials and staff (UNESCO, 2010). UNESCO (2010) asserts that for the last three years, education has been under attack in 31 countries globally, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Thailand (January 2007–July 2009). During this period, in Afghanistan alone the number of attacks rose from 242 to 670, while in Pakistan 356 schools were wrecked or destroyed (UNESCO, 2010). In Thailand, school attacks rose sharply from 43 to 164, while in India more than 300 schools were damaged. Not only school infrastructure came under attack – teaching staff and learners were also targeted. UNESCO (2010) notes that the Scholar Rescue Fund, in a survey conducted on applicants and grant-holders, identified the following as motives for attacks against teaching staff and academics:

The first is political activities, where academics reject academic politicisation and urge political reform. The second is exposing crimes by government via academic papers to be presented in foreign countries. The third sees academics being targeted for their religious orientation or their research on minority groups. The fourth involves them being highly visible during times of conflict or because of research on culturally sensitive issues such as HIV and AIDS, and being targeted for this.

Learners suffered through similar attacks which hindered their educational progress – UNESCO (2010) notes that thousands of child soldiers participated in armed conflict in various parts of the world in 2008, after being abducted on their way to or from school. Parents, for fear of losing their children to violence, allow such learners

to stay at home (UNESCO, 2010). Sexual violence against schoolgirls and women is rife in conflict regions (UNESCO, 2010), and shows no sign of abating. According to UNESCO (2010), in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) there were 2 727 reported cases of sexual violence against children in 2008, and the acts of sexual violence were perpetrated by different formations of armed groups.

3.2 Violence in South Africa

Reports on violence in South African schools are an almost daily feature in local media. Harber and Mncube (2011) point out that South Africans are the most dangerous people in the world, and this character has a bearing on the violence happening in schools. Some of the most severe crimes against children occur at school, and are not only perpetrated by pupils against other pupils, but also by educators against pupils (The Real Truth, 2008). Burton (2007) argues that young people constitute a considerable percentage of both victims and perpetrators of crime. According to *Child Justice Act National Policy Framework* (CJANPF, 2010) several children were arrested each month in South Africa for various criminal activities in 2008. The CJANPF (2010) notes that an estimated 9000 to 13000 children were arrested every month, of which 48 per cent were released, back to their communities. Burton (2007) cites the possible causes of violence in South Africa as follows: first, there is exposure to violence at every level – in news, on television and radio, as well as in films, and this entrenches violent behaviour amongst children. This may be true since it is very easy for a child to imitate what s/he sees in the media because s/he may deem this to be normal. The second possible cause is that apartheid created a generation which believed that the only way to achieve change was through violence. Most people believe that in order to prove the seriousness of their intentions, they must embark on violent actions. The third cause may be related to the fundamental dislocation of society under apartheid, which resulted in a generation of parents who were products of abnormal and disintegrated family structures – as a result they lack the vital parenting skills required to raise morally upstanding children. This is supported by a Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV, 2009) study which found that institutionalised racism during apartheid helped internalise low self-worth among the oppressed, which led to resurgence in violence. The CSV (2009) reports that

children who are chronic delinquents probably grew up in negative families and had a negative school experience. This supports the notion that socio-economic challenges still play a major role in spreading violence in South Africa (Vally, Dolombisa and Porteus, 1999). Vally et al. (1999) argue that racial policies were implicitly applied by former model C schools, for example, through exorbitant school fees and exclusive admissions policies. This concurs with the findings of Harber and Mncube (2011), who note that schools play a part in reproducing socio-economic disparities.

The Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence (1998) asserts that learners with low socio-economic status 'transport' problems arising within their families and communities into schools. According to the CVSR (2009), children who grow up in families and schools which display negative tendencies also tend to display violent behaviour. These families tend to be poor and households are usually headed by single parents (CVSR, 2009). As a result, these children are easily influenced and affected by violence and negative tendencies within their societies. According to Wilson (2011), violence becomes an obstacle to the social and economic development of such children. The apartheid regime did little to address criminal activities in townships, hence the increase in crime and criminal activities among schoolchildren (CVSR, 2009). The level of inequality among racial groups in South Africa, in respect of employment, education and politics as a result of apartheid, resulted in oppressed people questioning their worth in this country and tending to resort to violence in fighting these disparities (CVSR, 2009). The present study will explore how socio-economic status shapes the production of violence in schools.

South African learners are exposed to violent crimes such as assault and robbery (Leoschut and Burton, 2009) and most children aged 12 to 21 are susceptible to committing violent offences or victimising others (Leoschut and Burton, 2009). Harber and Mncube (2011) ascribe such violence to the fact that schools reproduce violence instead of protecting learners from various forms of violence. Van Wyk (2008) argues, in support of the above, that educational settings do not shelter learners from violence, and may even teach them to be violent.

The National Schools Violence Study (NSVS), undertaken by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP), revealed that out of 12794 learners from both primary and secondary schools, 15.3 per cent had experienced some form of violence while

at school (Burton, 2007). Burton, Leoschut and Bonara (2009) cite the lack of education, truancy, disruptive behaviour at school and general school failure as factors that may lead South African youths to participate in criminal activities. Localised culture, which is distinguished by male-on-male violence, is another contributing factor in the spread of violence in this country (CSV, 2010). Mestry, Van der Merwe and Squelch (2006) found that bullying was the most common form of violence in South African schools, and they define bullying as a conscious and deliberate act that can be either verbal or physical, but sometimes both. Learners perform these acts to derive pleasure from another's misery (Mestry et al., 2006). Racial and ethnic differences may also escalate violence in South African schools (Vally et al., 1999). The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC, 2008) discovered, in its study, that subtle racism was at play in the prevention of integration in local schools. Drawing on the aforementioned, age, ethnicity and racism are significant predictors of violence in schools. This is supported by Brunton and Associates (2003), who state that educators and learners may have different views or buy into stereotypes about other ethnic groups, which may result in violence. Learners obey educators by virtue of their age, just as women are culturally expected to obey and serve (Nyawo, Sathiparsad, Taylor and Dlamini, 2006). Some educators abuse the fact that they are older than their learners to victimise them sexually and by meting out corporal punishment – they know the learners will submit to the educators' wishes (Wilson, 2011).

While gender-based violence affects both boys and girls, violence like rape impacts extensively and detrimentally on adolescent girls' physical and psychological health (Haffajee, 2006). Some children's games perpetrate rape, for example, the game 'Rape me, rape me', where children pretend to rape each other, escalate the problem (The Real Truth, 2008). These games often result in actual assaults being committed at school (The Real Truth, 2008). The Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005) reports that female learners suffer rape and physical assault at school, often at the hands of male educators who enter into sexually abusive relationships with them. Nyawo, Sathiparsad and Taylor (2006) state unequivocally that female learners experience gender inequalities from an early age, while male learners tend to be valued over female learners. According to Haffajee (2006), adolescent girls suffer sexual harassment and experience gender-based violence which can have a

devastating and life-long impact on them, in the form of poor mental and physical health, as well as poor performance at school. This is supported by Wilson (2011), who argues that in sub-Saharan Africa, 45 per cent of girls are prevented from attending school, while 40 per cent of those who register leave school before completing grade five. According to a study conducted in three South African provinces, 19 to 28 per cent of women have been physically abused and this includes schoolgirls (Haffejee, 2006). This is supported by Prinsloo (2006), who states that from 1999 to 2004, sexual harassment of girls was rife in schools, to the extent where 30 per cent of girls reported having been raped at school. Haffejee (2006) concurs, noting that 40 per cent of girls aged 17 and under were raped or sexually harassed between 1996 and 1998. The consequences of rape and sexual harassment are dire. A survey conducted by the University of the Witwatersrand's Reproductive Health Research Unit found that girls constituted 77 per cent of all youths who contracted HIV (Bhana and Epstein, 2007). These high rates of infection are found in informal settlements, where the majority of residents are poor and unemployed (Bhana and Epstein, 2007). Wilson (2011) labels this an indictment on South African society, on male learners and male educators whose actions cause vast numbers of girls to abandon their schooling. The extent of gender-based violence towards women and girls in the province of KwaZulu-Natal is such that more than one-third of girls aged 15 to 19 reported losing their virginity through forced sexually intercourse (Haffejee, 2006). Also, boys and male educators reportedly use intimidation and violence to force girls into submission (Haffejee, 2006), with educators in particular using their position of power to exert their authority over schoolgirls (Wilson, 2011).

Female learners tend to be seen as sex objects, rather than as boys' equals (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005). This explains their often poor participation in class and in school activities, as well as female learners' low scholastic success rate (Moletsane, Mitchel and Lewin, 2010). Moletsane et al. (2010) assert that many school environments are harsh, negative and life-threatening for female learners. Gender identities are controlled by males from their vantage point of control (Chege, 2006), and this affects girls' progress at school. Burton (2007) argues that girls who are perceived as arrogant and assertive, or who hold leadership positions and perform well at school, are likely to be victimised. Gender-based violence will be

further explored in this study, for the purpose of establishing how it shapes the production of violence in schools.

The impact of violence goes beyond physical harm (SAHRC, 2008). It results in deviant learner behaviour such as absenteeism, poor learning performance, high drop-out rates and high truancy rates (SAHRC, 2008). As regards the impact on teaching staff, violence is said to worsen educators' low self-esteem, forcing them to resort to dysfunctional coping mechanisms; it engenders absenteeism and also results in the inefficient execution of their teaching duties (Pahad, 2010). Learners and educators' experiences of violence will be examined in the sample chosen for this study, along with the effects thereof on the teaching and learning environment.

There are measures in place, instituted by various statutory bodies, to fight violence in schools. Wilson (2011) notes that an important measure in preventing violence is to make education accessible to all children – especially girls. In addition, education must be equitable across genders, so that psychological empowerment through education may be achieved (Wilson, 2011). Another recommendation she makes, is that violence – especially when directed at girls – must not be tolerated; girls must remain safe at school at all times. Prinsloo (2006) recommends that learners receive their education within a safe school environment which is free of danger, harm, harassment, humiliation or violence.

The National DoE amended the *Employment of Educators Act*, 76 of 1998 in the *Education Amendment Act* of 2000, Section 17(c), which empowers provincial departments to dismiss educators who have sexual relations with schoolgirls (Prinsloo, 2006). Prinsloo (2006) further states that the South African Council of Educators may remove an educator who is found guilty of sexual harassment or having sexual relations with a learner. This will be enacted through section 23(c) of the *South African Council for Educators (SACE) Act*, 31 of 2000 (Prinsloo, 2006).

In 2003 a movement was instituted by the South African Minister of Education for learners and communities to devise strategies to improve the quality of learners' lives (Wilson, 2011) – the so-called Girls' Education Movement (GEM). Wilson (2011) notes that this movement aims to fight gender inequality and advocates a safe learning environment in South African schools. UNICEF and the South African National DoE partnered to establish GEM across South Africa (Wilson, 2011). The

project was funded by Barclays, which donated 4.5 million rand to GEM and UNICEF (Wilson, 2011).

The DoE also legislated the *Education Laws Amendment Act*, 31 of 2007 (ELAA 31, 2007) as a measure to fight violence in schools. This law counters the popular view that the DoE does not have interventions in place to address the problem of schools-based violence. The law allows schools to conduct random searches for dangerous weapons and illicit drugs (ELAA31, 2007). Another measure which has been put in place is the *Child Justice Act [CJA]*, 75 of 2008, which is designed to provide young offenders who are entangled in crime with a way of breaking the vicious cycle and becoming law-abiding and responsible citizens (CJANPF, 2010). Instead of being sentenced, child offenders may be diverted to programmes which will provide rehabilitation and development, without imprisonment (CJA 75, 2008). The implementation guidelines for Safe, Caring and Child-friendly Schools (SCCFS, 2008) provide local schools with practical ways in which to promote a safe and violence-free environment (SCCFS, 2008). This document is an endeavour by the DoE which allows schools to self-assess their progress in providing a safe teaching and learning environment. This study will also look at the role played by schools and the DoE, in either curbing or perpetuating violence.

The constitution of this country bans corporal punishment; therefore it is a criminal offense to inflict corporal punishment as a means of curbing school violence (Vally et al., 2002). In 1999, the then KwaZulu-Natal education minister acted unconstitutionally and contravened education legislation by supporting the use of corporal punishment (Vally et al., 2002). No one is permitted to administer corporal punishment – to do so is to become liable to prosecution (*South African Schools Act*, 84 of 1996). The learners' code of conduct is one of the instruments that schools may employ to curb violence on the premises. If it is adopted by all stakeholders at a school, and clearly states the policies of the school and what learners are expected to do or not to do, it may well be an effective means of curbing schools-based violence. Section 8(2) of the *Schools Act* (1996) states that it is incumbent upon school governing bodies to draw up codes of conduct for learners. This study will explore whether schools and SGBs are able to contain violence at schools by enforcing this code of conduct.

3.3 Conclusion

In the review it emanated that violence was prevalent in schools worldwide. It is not all schools that displayed violence tendencies, however schools where there was cooperation and support among their educators, learners displayed cooperation and respect. However it is not all schools which are perfect and ideal. Some schools have learners who are prone to drug abuse, bullying, verbal abuse and sexual harassment. It emanated that male learners and educators were the main perpetrators of violence in schools. According to the literature review the socio-economic challenges play a major role in the escalation of school violence in South African schools. It is inferred that learners from low socio-economic status transport the problems from their families to schools. These learners, who are emotionally, psychologically and physically abused, are prone to violence. However to curb violence the Department of Education legislated and promulgated laws. One of these laws is *Education Laws Amendment Act, 31 of 2007* (ELAA 31). This law allows schools to conduct search and seizure of dangerous weapons and illegal substances. In the next chapter, the research design and methodology are discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the literature review. This chapter specifically focuses on the research design and methodology employed in the study. To begin, it is important to provide an outline of what research methodology is. Methodology is defined as the manner in which a researcher studies a phenomenon (Silverman, 2000). This is supported by Mason (2002), who defines research methodology as the logic a researcher employs to answer research questions. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) concur, stating that research methodology explains and gives the logic underlying the research as well as the techniques employed in the research. The researcher endeavours to understand the meaning that research participants attach to their environment (Welman et al., 2005). Mason (2002) adds that methodology underpins the way a research project is designed to answer and give meaning to the research questions. Research methodology, therefore, focuses on the entire process of gathering data and the methods used to gather those data, in addition to focusing on the kind of tools that must be used and the manner in which they should be used (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). This will help in the exploration and explanation of hitherto unexplained phenomena, and may clarify previously explained but misunderstood phenomena (Welman et al., 2005). According to the definitions given here, research methodology is therefore concerned with the methods of understanding and giving meaning to an environment. This study will attempt to interpret the meaning the participants attach to their environment, i.e., that of the school.

It was important to outline what is meant by research design, which is the focus of this chapter. Research design mainly focuses on the objectives of the research and the purpose of the research (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). It also focuses on the information that addresses the specific research questions and the most appropriate strategies for obtaining such information (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). Wiersma (1991) defines research design as a plan for conducting research, while Leedy and Ormrod (2005) refer to research design as a strategy that is employed by researchers in an attempt to solve research problems. On the other hand, Welman et al. (2005) define research design as a plan by which research questions are

formulated, and the way in which data are gathered to answer them. According to Welman et al. (2005), the researcher has to stipulate exactly what s/he sets out to do – the research design therefore tables the procedures the researcher will follow in conducting the research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

In the same light, Babbie and Mouton (2001) argue that research design is a scientific strategy of inquiring about something. They add that the research design has two main features (Babbie and Mouton, 2001): the first is that everything that must be discovered or researched must be tabled as clearly as possible; the second is that the best way of proceeding must be clearly stated. From the above definition it is glaringly obvious that in the present study, the research design will be a guiding beacon, due to the fact that in research design every strategy to be employed in doing the research must be stated. However, the process of research design should be spontaneous rather than rigid, and should occur during all stages of the research (Flick, 2008). The importance of research design cannot be overemphasised, since it encompasses the research paradigm, research approach, sampling, ethical issues, methods of data collection, research instruments and data analysis. The present study involved all these components of the research design.

Having defined and motivated the use of research methodology and research design, this chapter lists and discusses the research paradigm underpinning the study by looking at its ontology, epistemology and methodology. Here, a case study is described and discussed, along with the sample, ethical considerations, methods of data collection and the process of triangulation. Data analysis follows, paying particular attention to issues of quality research (reliability and validity), and also the sites and limitations of the study.

4.2 Research paradigm

Social scientists use paradigms to describe how they view and perceive the social world (Mertens, 1998). De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005) view paradigms as pattern by which scientists study the subject of their research, within the discipline of their interest. However, Babbie (2010) states that paradigms are fundamental frameworks through which researchers organise their observations and reasoning. Affirming the aforementioned, Whisker (2001) argues that a research paradigm is the

underlying set of beliefs about how research elements are pieced together to make meanings of research discoveries.

There are three main paradigms: positivism, interpretivism/constructivism and emancipatory critical theory (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Each type will be discussed below.

4.2.1 Positivism

The prevalent belief in this paradigm is that the social world can be studied in the same way as the natural world (Mertens, 1998). Researchers view scientists as observers of social reality (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), and argue that the social world can be studied by employing a value-free method of data collection (Mertens, 1998). The data stemming from the research in this study will be considered and thoroughly analysed. For the sake of clarity, several other terms will briefly be explained:

Ontology: Ontology refers to the nature of reality. The proponents of positivism hold that only one reality exists, and that it is the researcher's duty to discover that reality (Mertens, 1998). As a researcher I will dig deeper into the participants' responses to establish their intended meaning, i.e. their reality.

Epistemology: Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge. Positivists believe the researcher and the researched are independent of each other, and as such they do not influence each other (Mertens, 1998).

Methodology: Positivists apply quantitative methods, i.e., mathematical models, in order to discover reality and then analyse their data in a quantitative manner (Cohen et al., 2000). Natural scientists mainly employ quantitative methods via a fixed design approach (Robson, 2002). A quantitative approach implies the quantification of phenomena of interest, i.e. what is being researched (Robson, 2002).

4.2.2 Emancipatory paradigm/critical theory

This paradigm is influenced by various theories which are informed by, amongst others, critical theorists, feminists, participatory action researchers and Marxists – all of whom had as their purpose transforming and emancipating society at large (Mertens, 1998). The purpose of this paradigm therefore is to realise a society that is

based on equality, democracy, social justice and freedom (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

Ontology: Emancipatory ontology recognises multiple realities, much like interpretivism does (Mertens, 1998). Researchers employing ontology seek not to understand situations and phenomena, but to alter them (Cohen et al., 2000). Greater emphasis is placed on the influence of cultural, political, social, gender, ethnic, economic and disability values in the process of constructing reality (Mertens, 1998).

Epistemology: The relationship between the inquirer and the inquired is regarded as interactive (Mertens, 1998). Ideally, this relationship should be aimed at empowering the powerless (Mertens, 1998). Here, the purpose of the researcher is to redress inequalities and promote individual freedoms within an egalitarian society (Cohen et al., 2000).

Methodology: Researchers employ an array of methods in their quest for knowledge (Mertens, 1998). Critical theorists argue that caution should be exercised so as to avoid sexist, racist or biased results (Mertens, 1998). Mertens (1998) further states that research participants must be involved in the planning, conduct, analysis, interpretation and use of research.

The discussion of the above research paradigms aims to demonstrate the link between them and the paradigm used in this study. The paradigm underpinning this study is discussed below.

4.2.3 Interpretivist/constructivist paradigm: my location as a researcher

Owing to the nature of the stated research questions, this study, which is qualitative in nature, was located within the interpretive/constructivist paradigm.

Mason (2002) states that in employing an interpretive paradigm, researchers view people and the meaning they attribute to the world, as well as their perceptions, as fundamental data sources. On the other hand, the interpretive paradigm is related to hermeneutics, i.e., a theory of meaning that requires a detailed reading or examination of text (Neuman, 1997). As a researcher, I therefore had to undertake a detailed study of the participants' feedback, in an endeavour to find and expose meanings within the text. According to Whisker (2001), interpretivism focuses on the

ways in which meanings are made through relationships between people and things. This means that the researcher and the researched (participants) interact to interpret and expose the meaning of their interaction. This interaction can be deemed research.

No similar interpretation of reality can be forthcoming within the interpretive paradigm, since varying perceptions, interpretations and languages have different impacts on people's views of what is real (Bassey, 1999). As a researcher I was engaged with participants from different family backgrounds in two schools situated in KwaDabeka. Qualitative methods were applied to participants' responses (oral and written), with the awareness that the research could only be conducted by means of interaction between the researcher and the participants (Mertens, 1998). The learner participants were 14-year-olds in grade 9. These learners were chosen as participants because they are usually the victims of violent incidents.

Ontology: Ontology refers to the nature of reality whereby advocates of interpretivism recognise multiple realities (Mertens, 1998). According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006), the focal point of ontology is the nature of reality of that which is being researched. Advocates of interpretivism believe that reality is socially constructed (Mertens, 1998) and social construction of reality is a basic principle here (Robson, 2002). The aim is to understand the subjective world of human experience (Cohen et al., 2000). This means the researcher and the researched participate in creating their perceived reality (Huff, 2009), therefore the researcher's interaction with the participants is unavoidable. For this reason, the researcher cannot be separated from the phenomenon being studied (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004). In this study it was the participants who constructed their reality according to their own perceptions. Interpretivists believe it is the researcher's responsibility to understand a multitude of social constructions of meaning and knowledge (Robson, 2002). Here, questions were asked to interrogate and establish how respondents view the nature of their being, as well as the reason for their existence (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). In this study the nature of violence and why it exists was looked at in depth, by studying the responses of the researched. Research questions were not fully pre-constructed due to the potential multiplicity of existing realities (Mertens, 1998). In this study, the

researcher posed follow-up questions which were not pre-constructed, when a participant was interviewed. This was done in order to interrogate further views and perceptions about the phenomena under study.

Epistemology: Epistemology deals with the relationship between the researcher and the researched, which means it is the theory of knowledge which scrutinises the nature and origins of knowledge (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Epistemology also looks at the various ways in which knowledge can be obtained (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). In interpretivism, the researcher and the researched influence each other in that they are interlocked in an interactive process (Mertens, 1998). Here, a scrutiny of the information obtained follows the process of enquiry (Radnor, 2001). The information obtained in this study was subjected to scrutiny to establish the thought processes of the researched; in as far as schools-based violence was concerned. Based on these findings, the researcher endeavoured to understand the nature, causes and ways in which violence could be prevented in schools.

Information obtained from the participants was subjected to scrutiny and confirmability, to enhance objectivity (Mertens, 1998). This means that data can be accurately traced back to their sources. The values that influence the researcher were laid bare to the respondents, since the researcher was concerned with understanding of social context of the researched (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2006). It is important to view the researched/participants as the equals of the researcher, since the latter endeavours to attach meaning to the former's world (Radnor, 2001). The participants in this study were assured that they were on equal footing with the researcher as a way of instilling a sense of ownership in them. The purpose of this study was explained to participants with a view to entrenching the importance and value of this study.

4.3 Methodology

This study is qualitative rather than quantitative, since the research is underpinned by the interpretive paradigm. It is, however, necessary to briefly outline the quantitative methodology and positivist paradigm, since it will help to explain why a

qualitative research methodology was preferred in this instance, which is a methodology embedded in the interpretive paradigm. Positivists tend to favour quantitative methods. Researchers argue that the social world can be studied by employing value-free method of data collection (Mertens, 1998). This contrasts with the approach of the present study, in which the human factor played a major role in interpreting the data produced. This was because there were numerous instances of interaction between the researcher and the participants. Quantitative research focuses on a single reality, where the gathering of data involves measurement and statistics. This implies that the data are quantified. Silverman (2005) argues that quantitative research focuses on generalisability, which is achieved through statistical sampling procedures. Proponents of this paradigm hold that it is the researcher's duty to discover that reality (Mertens, 1998). From the outline above it is clear that quantitative methods involve the application of mathematical models, discovering reality through quantitative analysis (Cohen et al., 2000). Such methods, which are mainly used by natural scientists, involve a fixed design approach (Robson, 2002). In the quantitative approach there is thus a quantification of those phenomena of interest that are being researched (Robson, 2002).

Interpretivists use qualitative methods to extract an understanding of the social reality of the researched (Mertens, 1998), with research questions guiding the research methodology. According to Lichtman (2006), research questions in qualitative methodology focus on individuals, how they interact socially and how they view themselves within their environment. This research project employed a case study strategy, and thus used interviews, observations and document reviews as data collection methods. Huff (2009, p.183) defines qualitative methods as "concerned with identifying, perhaps comparing, the qualities or characteristics of empirical evidence, from easy-to-apprehend external appearances to internal, difficult-to-capture characteristics". Mertens (1998) argues that qualitative methods are applied with the understanding that research can be conducted only through interaction between researcher and respondents. By using the 'what, why and how' line of questioning, the researcher endeavours to expose a phenomenon in terms of what takes place, why and how it happens (Henning et al., 2004). In other words, the researcher tries to understand the world of the research participants and therefore the life experiences of each individual. The basic objective of qualitative research is

to understand the world through participants' perceptions and experiences. This augers well for the present study, where the aim is to elicit the perceptions and experiences of learners, educators and school governors about school violence.

According to Morrison (2007), a holistic picture of research can only be arrived at by considering the details. The researcher must therefore not only be involved, but must play a fundamental role in data production and the construction of realities (Lichtman, 2006). This is supported by Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010), who assert that qualitative research focuses on understanding a phenomenon by viewing the overall picture, instead of focusing on separate variables. In this study an attempt was made to understand the broader picture of how wider structures (such as gender, age, socio-economic status and ethnic/tribal division) shape violence production within schools. Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that qualitative research is not rigid and inflexible but evolving, and has an element of fluidity and dynamism which allows the researcher to employ various methods and instruments of data production in his/her study.

4.4 Research design: the case study

The present research employed a case study approach. Wellington (2000, p.91) defines a case study as "a detailed examination of one setting, or single subject, or one single depository of documents or one particular event". While Leedy and Ormord (2005) see a case study as an event that is studied in-depth for a definite period of time, it may also entail the process of interrogating an educational phenomenon in order to uncover what meaning it brings to a social setting (Somekh and Lewin, 2011). Mertens (1998) argues that a case study is one type of ethnographic (interpretive) research that involves an intensive and detailed study of the individual or group as an entity, by employing observations, self-reports and any other means. Since the present study is embedded in the interpretive paradigm, a case study was deemed the appropriate research approach. The purpose of a case study is to probe deeply and analyse intensively those multifarious phenomena that form the life cycle of a unit, with the aim of establishing generalisations about the wider population from which that unit was extracted (Blaxter et al., 2006). This study observed and probed educators, learners and SGBs about the dynamics of violence in schools. Case studies also deal with contemporary events as opposed to historical

research, which mainly deals with the events of yesteryear (Anderson, 1990) and this relate to how and why things happened. Robson (2000) identifies the following characteristics of case studies: first, strategy, i.e., an approach rather than a method which a researcher employs, such as observation and interviews. Second, a case study is concerned with research and all it entails, including evaluation. Third, a case study is empirical in the sense that it relies on collected data. Fourth, a case study is about a particular, specific case. Researchers are concerned with the possible generalisations that can be made from a case study (both how and why this can be achieved). Fifth, a case study focuses on a phenomenon, i.e., what is being studied, as well as its context, especially if the boundary between the phenomenon and its context is not clear. Finally, a case study is undertaken using multiple methods of evidence or data collection. All the above points, as outlined by Robson (2000), have been applied in this study, since the present research is embedded in the interpretive paradigm. This study relies on both the data collected and the generalisations made after analyses were conducted.

According to Creswell (2007) there three types of case studies: first, the single instrumental case study in which the researcher looks at a concern and interrogates it to arrive at in-depth insights; second, the intrinsic case study, where the focal point is the case itself, which may present a truly unique situation; and third collective or multiple case studies which focus on multiple sites, rather than a single site (Demetriou, 2009). In this particular instance a multiple site case study was used, since the present research focused on two sample schools.

The following advantages of case studies are drawn from Blaxter et al. (2006): first, case study data are drawn from people's experiences and practices, and are therefore strongly rooted in reality. In this study, participants' experiences and views were used to construct their reality about the phenomena under study; second, case studies allow for generalisation, from a specific instance to a more general issue; third, case studies allow the researcher to show the complexities of social life. Good case studies build on this to explore alternative meanings and interpretations; fourth, case studies can improve a data source, from which further analyses can be made. These analyses can thereafter be archived for further research work; fifth, since case studies build on actual practices and experiences, they can be linked to action and their insights contribute to changing practice; and sixth, since data contained in case

studies are close to people's experiences, they can be used more persuasively and are more accessible. This factor proved particularly beneficial to the present study, since participants were willing to participate, and did not need to be persuaded to share their views.

The disadvantages of case studies, in Blaxter et al.'s (2006) view, are: first, the complexity of a case study can make analysis difficult, because as a researcher probes deeper into a phenomenon an array of responses may be given, and this may complicate the subsequent analysis; and second, while contextualising aspects of a case may strengthen the case study, it is difficult to establish where the context begins and ends. Since the present study involved grade 9 learners, on occasion the data collected were unintelligible, and the context was difficult to determine. This meant that grade 9 learners sometimes did not produce meaningful responses, presumably due to a failure on their part to employ the correct terminology, or due to their erroneous interpretation of the question posed to them.

4.5 Sample and its description

Participant selection is the process whereby a researcher recruits individuals who will take part in his/her research project (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). This process is viewed as the major part of research. This is because a researcher has to select participants who are willing to participate optimal in the realisation of the research aims (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004). Henning et al (2004) argues that it is important for the researcher to get appropriate people who are willing to talk about their situations and what they do. Such people will be able to travel with the researcher towards more knowledge about the phenomenon studied (Henning et al, 2004).

Babbie and Mouton(2001) state that there are two types of sampling methods, they are probability and non probability methods. Probability method is used by quantitative researchers. This method is used in the selection of random sample. This random sample must be representative of the population it is drawn from. The non probability method is used by qualitative researchers. Most research situations need large samples for population representativity, and large sampling is sometimes impossible to administer therefore non probability method is appropriate (Babbie and

Mouton, 2001). This research applied non probability method of sampling because this study is qualitative and participants do not represent a large population. Henning et al (2004) and Babbie and Mouton (2001) mention four approaches to participant sampling. These approaches are theoretical sampling, snowball sampling, convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Theoretical sampling just like purposive sampling look for people who can assist the researcher achieve his/her the aims of his/her research project. According to Henning et al (2004) both theoretical and purposive sampling can be adjusted to accommodate snowball sampling. This sampling allows a researcher to interview participants who are available at a time in point and others will be interviewed when they are available. Convenience sampling is applied whenever is convenient for the researcher to interview participants. This may happen when for example at a point where people pass at a certain time of the day to study a certain characteristic of those people. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) the sampling method is risky and has less ground for generalisability. This study applied theoretical and purposive sampling since participant who might assist in realisation of the aim were recruited.

Two schools were chosen for this study, as a multi-site case study was deemed preferable to a single instrumental case study. The aim was that choosing two schools would provide more insight and greater in-depth knowledge of the dynamics of violence in schools. Both high schools are situated in KwaDabeka Township. Their proximity within a specific geographic area provided a wide view of participants' perceptions of violence. According to Herriott Firestone (1983, in Yin 2009), the data produced from multiple cases are usually considered to be more convincing, hence the selection of two sample schools. The schools are Impunzi High School and Mkhonzi Secondary School, these are not their real names; for ethical reasons pseudonyms were used to protect their identity and their integrity.

4.5.1 Impunzi High School

The co-ed Impunzi High School is located at KwaDabeka Township, a semi-rural area. Impunzi has an enrolment of 1362 learners, and a staff of 38 educators. School fees payable at Impunzi amount to R400 per year. Most people in the surrounding community are unemployed and survive on government grants. Some learners are orphans who either live with their grandparents or head up households. Within their community, most children encounter or are affected by violence in some form on a

daily basis. The majority of children in the community, and by extension in the school, have committed some form of delinquency. I selected this school as my sample school since a number of children in this school have experimented with drugs, especially *wunga*. I got hold of this information when I was deliberating with my colleagues from this sample school. Violent incidents have occurred or have been witnessed at this school. Furthermore this school has been selected because I am well acquainted with the geography in which it is situated, being an educator in one of the neighbouring schools. I hoped to obtain unqualified support from the educator staff of this school, given that as neighbouring schools we, as the teaching staff, interact on a regular basis.

4.5.2 Mkhonzi Secondary School

The co-ed Mkhonzi Secondary School is also located in the semi-rural KwaDabeka Township. Mkhonzi has an enrolment of 1277 learners and a staff component of 42 educators. School fees payable at Mkhonzi amount to R350 per year. Most people in the surrounding community are unemployed, surviving on government grants. Some learners are orphans who live with their grandparents, while others head up households. Most of these children encounter or are affected by violence in some form on a daily basis. The majority of children in the community, and by extension in this school, have resorted to some form of delinquency. I selected this school as my sample school since a number of children have experimented with drugs, especially *wunga*. I knew this information because I am an educator in this school. Violent incidents have occurred and reported to educators. Moreover I have also witnessed violence at this school. Furthermore this school have been selected because I am particularly well acquainted with the geography in which it is situated, being an educator at this sampled school. I hoped to receive unqualified support from my fellow educators at the school. The following table summarises the background of the sample schools in this study.

Table 1: Background information on the case study schools

School	Impunzi High	Mkhonzi Secondary
Rural/Urban	Semi-urban	Semi-urban
Enrolment	1362	1277
No. of teachers	38	42
School fees	R544 808@ R400/child	R446 950@ R350/child
Dept allocation/yr	R1 089600	R1 089600
Total income	R1 634408	R1 536550
Total expenditure	R930500	R860300
Municipal rates	R14000	R11500
2011 matric pass rate	48%	83%
State of the buildings	Dilapidated	Reasonable/renovated less than ten years ago
School ownership document	Yes	Yes
Size of buildings	Reasonable	Reasonable

4.6 Ethical considerations

Consent was sought from all participants, i.e., learners as well as the parents of the learners sampled (see Mertens, 1998; Somekh and Lewin, 2005), in order to avoid working with unwilling participants. The confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of the respondents were respected (Mertens, 1998; Robson, 2002), in order to protect participants from unnecessary exposure, while ensuring their unqualified commitment to the study. If, for any particular reason, a participant wished not to continue with the programme, that decision was respected. Permission from the educational authorities, i.e., the DoE, was sought beforehand (see Somekh and Lewin, 2005), so as to legalise and authenticate the study, since schools fall under the jurisdiction of the DoE. Data collected in the form of interviews or tapes were stored in a safe place (Somekh and Lewin, 2005), not only to protect participants but also for future use, as a point of reference for future studies. Feedback to participants, especially when required, was provided for their comments and for them to verify the accuracy of the data used (Somekh and Lewin, 2005).

4.7 Methods of data collection

For issues of data validation the principle of triangulation was employed, i.e., the use of more than one method of data collection. Triangulation may also refer to using more than one category/stakeholder participant when collecting data. Often a third view or standpoint is sought in order to cross-validate data collected on a single issue (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). The use of more than one method of collecting data, in this study, ensured triangulation (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). The most commonly used methods of data collection in qualitative studies are interviews, observations, documents, diaries and other sources (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This study employed interviews, observations, document reviews and journals, to ensure triangulation.

According to Briggs and Coleman (2007), triangulation involves the researcher comparing many sources of evidence, in order to determine the accuracy of the data produced. According to Burgess (1982) as cited by Hitchcock and Hughes (1993) this is also known as a multi-method or multi-strategy.

Interviews with and observations of participants were conducted to ascertain whether what they said was consistent with what the researcher observed. The so-called 'punishment book' (now called the learner correctional register, which records serious infringements of the school's code of conduct) and the SGB minute book were reviewed with a view to verifying the consistency of the findings, as obtained from the participants.

4.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

Data can be produced through different means which are suitable to different studies (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Interviews are a form of deliberation between researcher and researched (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This research method entails the researcher asking questions in anticipation of obtaining the desired response from the interviewee (Robson, 2002), by using interviews which are structured, semi-structured and/or unstructured (Robson, 2002).

This research project focused on the experiences and insights of the participants, which is the main reason why mainly qualitative approaches and interviews were used to 'get under the skin' of the greater organisations involved (i.e., the schools). A qualitative approach, with the use of semi-structured interviews, was used since the

perceptions and opinions of the participants were sought. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to examine the dynamics of violence in schools, as well as the possible measures which may be employed to try to curb it; and to determine whether SGBs use effective tools in their attempts to reduce violence in schools so as to promote equal access to education for all. Mertens (1998) contends that interviews allow for the intimate, repeated and prolonged involvement of the researcher and the participant, which enables the researcher to get to the root of what is being investigated. Rubin and Rubin (as cited in Arskey and Knight, 1999, p.33), suggest that semi-structured interviews are a way of uncovering and exploring the meanings underpinning people's lives, routines, behaviours and feelings.

Like the structured interviews, semi-structured interviews have pre-constructed questions, yet they allow room for flexibility when the need arises (Robson, 2002). The researcher has the opportunity to probe interviewees' perceptions, because s/he can choose which questions to prioritise, alter and pose in a specific order and all of this can help overcome the challenge of interviewees anticipating questions (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Somekh and Lewin (2005) state that semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to become party to unexpected information being revealed.

The advantages are the following: interviews are a flexible and adaptable way of obtaining information (Robson, 2002). They offer a short-cut in seeking answers and provide a means of switching from one method of questioning to another (Robson, 2002). Interviews also offer insight into the interviewee's perceptions (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). In interviews, face-to-face interaction occurs between the researcher and participants, which is an advantage over questionnaires (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

The disadvantages include the fact that interviews tend to waste time (Robson, 2002). They require thorough preparation, which may take time to complete (Robson, 2002). Also, interviewers may impose their own ideas on the interviewee (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). Interviewers do not always have time to ponder their own responses and to plan their next line of questioning or a follow-up question (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). As a result they may make hasty decisions,

disregard valuable information and may even reveal their personal views to participants (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

It was very difficult to obtain the requisite permission to conduct this study in one of the schools. The principal of Impunzi High, which is one of the sample schools, gave permission for the study. He suggested to me who to look for and where, as I was not completely familiar with the school. I had difficulty locating the educators, who proved to be uncooperative: they did not want to organise either the learners or a conducive place for me to conduct interviews. The educators reluctantly agreed to take part after much imploring and coercion. Finally, the laboratory was organised as an interview room. I would later find out that it served as a staffroom for some male educators; hence I subsequently experienced occasional interruptions during face-to-face interviews.

I had individual interviews with a number of stakeholders from the two sample schools. Table 2 gives an overview of the individual interviewees:

Table 2: Individual and focus group interviewees

Participants	Number of participants at school A (Impunzi High)	Number of participants at school B (Mkhonzi Secondary)	Total
Principals	1	1	2
Educators	1	1	2
Governors	1	1	2
Support staff	1	1	2
Focus group	10	10	20

The two focus group interviews with learners comprised both perpetrators and victims. There were ten learners in each focus group.

4.7.2 Observation

Observation is a way of recording the actions of the researched (Robson, 2002). Radnor (2001) states that recording what is viewed is regarded as an observation, as long as it is done for research purposes. According to Best and Kahn (2003), observation involves documenting details of behaviours, events and the contexts surrounding those events and behaviours. In simple terms, observation involves the process of observing behaviour: the researcher sits back and watches the action as it plays itself out in front of him/her (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). S/he also makes notes of whatever is worth noting because it catches the eye (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). There are two types of observation: participant and structured (Robson, 2002). Participant observation is primarily used in qualitative research (Robson, 2002), because the processes are unstructured and flexible (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Structured observation, on the other hand, is frequently linked to a quantitative style of research (Robson, 2002).

For this study, observations of those students identified by the school as problematic were conducted in both formal and informal settings over a three-month period. Two to three educators were trained to conduct observations in that school on a daily basis, on behalf of the researcher. As primary researcher I did two observations per school, employing different strategies for observation. Robson (2002) argues that through observation the researcher is able to experience what happens in the real world. With this in mind I followed the same class around for a whole day, to observe their behaviour with different teachers; I also observed a class at different times during the day. I spent time with learners outside the classroom, and spoke to them and to educators after lessons to elicit different perspectives on certain events which unfolded.

I observed each school on three separate occasions: I visited Impunzi High early before the school began, so that I would have time to observe the learners and the school surroundings with minimal interference.

The advantage of such an observation is that it directly focuses on the desired phenomenon, for which one has to watch and listen (Robson, 2002). According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), one advantage of observation is that information is collected within a natural setting which, in this study, was the school. In collecting

data in a natural setting it is possible to capture the natural behaviour of participants. People often say they are doing one thing, when in actual fact they are doing the complete opposite (Radnor, 2001) – for this reason, observation helps to eliminate any ambiguity. Through observation, reality is exposed (Radnor, 2001) because observation places the researcher where things are happening.

The disadvantages include the fact that observations are not easy to do and may pose significant problems (Robson, 2002). It is impossible to record every aspect of what happens during an observation (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), as there are few recording devices at the disposal of the researcher in the field (Radnor, 2001). A researcher may interpret an action or interaction without checking his/her observations with the researched (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

I now expatiate on documents as they were an alternative tool of producing data in my study.

4.7.3 Documents

Documents are records which are written and kept by those individuals who participated in or observed an event (Best and Khan, 2003). This is supported by Bell (2006), who argues that a 'document' refers to a person's writing on any physical object. Documentary reviews add value to interviews and observations (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). In the present study a review of documents was done to corroborate the information uncovered during the interviews and observations. If, by chance, the data produced in this way seemed to contradict other data, the researcher would dig deeper for more information and this, to improve the trustworthiness of the data produced. A document is an unobtrusive means of collecting data, because it does not 'react' to the researcher (Robson, 2002), i.e., what you see and read in the document is what you get, and the written or printed document cannot be interrogated for a response. Documents are important because they reveal other viewpoints which may not have been exposed during interviews, in questionnaires or under observation.

Amongst the advantages, according to Robson (2002), is that documents are non-reactive in that they do not change. They can be used for cross-validation, so as to support (or counter) the information at hand (Robson, 2002). Fitzgerald (2007) argues that documents can expose valuable information with regard to the context

and culture of institutions. They allow the researcher to read between the lines of official conversations and allow for triangulation through interviews, observations and questionnaires. Documents promote innovation and creativity on the part of the researcher (Robson, 2002). Somekh and Lewin (2005) state that documents can be studied and scrutinised for their immediate content, content over a period of time, and for the value that different perspectives add to research.

Amongst their disadvantages is the fact that it may be difficult to locate the person responsible for a particular document (Robson, 2002). Also, the assumption that all people involved made equal contributions in drawing up a document might be incorrect (Robson, 2002). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) argue that documentary content does not readily give the researcher a perspective on the social world of the researched. In trying to make sense of the contents one has to consider grammar and the ambiguity of the language used by the reader (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). This means it is the writer who readily understands the content and the context of the document, whereas subsequent readers may find that difficult.

Permission to review documents was sought from the principals in advance. At each school I was granted one opportunity to peruse these documents, subject to confidentiality considerations. The principals told me in no uncertain terms that these documents were for my own consumption and were to be used solely for research purposes.

For this study, various types of school documentation were scrutinised, including the School Code of Conduct, the punishment book/learner correctional register, and the SGB minutes. The learner correctional register, which is homogenous to all schools, features columns showing the name of the culprit, the type of offence committed, the type of punishment/correctional measures and the date the offence was committed. This document was viewed to ascertain what types of punishment and disciplinary action were recorded for which transgressions/offences. The documents were scrutinised at both sample schools, i.e., Impunzi High and Mkhonzi Secondary. Researchers take what they can from such documents (Robson, 2002); therefore the data produced through reviewing the aforementioned documents is usually used to verify research findings. Due to the nature and sensitivity of certain documents, I was only allowed to peruse them in the principals' offices. The only documents I was

permitted to make copies of, were the schools' codes of conduct of learners at both schools.

Teacher and learner journals: reflective journals formed part of the data production in this study. Two educators and learners (members of the focus groups in each school) were trained on how to keep a reflective journal. The grade 9 educators who participated in the study taught Life Orientation as a subject. They were chosen because the focus groups comprised grade 9 learners. Also, given the nature of their subject, Life Orientation, such educators were easily approachable to learners, who tended to consult them whenever they experienced problems. Both educators and learners wrote down their observations, experiences, feelings and emotions on a daily basis. What they observed would later be triangulated with the data gathered by the researcher.

4.8 Data analysis

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), data must be organised in detailed form and must be categorised. Data must be interpreted in single instances, but patterns must also be identified. In addition, data must be synthesised and generalisations must be made.

Transcriptions of interviews were coded. Units were clustered to form common themes. I summarised and validated the data for each interview; where desirable I modified it (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Data collected (especially from interviews) were transcribed and analysed following Giorgi, Fisher and Murray's (1975) phenomenological steps. A transcript was read for an overall sense of the interview (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005), and to identify any hidden meanings. Redundancies were eliminated to arrive at the meaning of each unit, and the remaining units were related to one another (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). The language of the participants was transformed into the language of science (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). All insights into a description of the entire experience of leadership were synthesised (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

4.9 Issues of quality research

Data collected must be tested for trustworthiness, before being accepted. Reliability and validity must be tested to guarantee the trustworthiness of the findings (Robson, 2005).

4.9.1 Reliability

Anderson (1990) defines reliability as consistency in measurement, while Wellington (2000) views reliability as ability to judge a test, method or tool in terms of its consistency in obtaining the same results, if applied to different settings, by different researchers. If a test or method delivers dissimilar results, then the test is not reliable (Anderson, 1990). According to Robson (2000) and Mertens (1998), reliability is the dependability and stability which arise from a measurement. Robson (2000) cites various factors which may affect reliability: first, 'participant error' – conducting research at a time which is unfavourable for the participant will affect reliability, for example when the participant is ill; second, 'participant bias', which is when the participant aims to please the researcher, thus rendering the study or research inauthentic; third, 'observer error', which is when a researcher tries to make an analysis when tired or overstretched, then s/he is bound to make mistakes; and fourth, 'observer bias', which is when a researcher consciously or unconsciously derives from the data any ratings, results or analyses that favour or work against a certain possible outcome. In this study, research was done when conditions were conducive for everybody, so as to avoid the reliability of the data being brought into question.

4.9.2 Validity

Validity is the degree by which a method or test measures that which it intends to measure (Wellington, 2000). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) define validity as the extent to which the designed instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Blaxter et al. (2006) view validity in terms of whether the methods engaged actually relate to the phenomenon being explored. Since this study is based in the interpretivist paradigm, qualitative methods were employed.

Wellington (2000) cites three important points about validity, as it applies to research: first, a researcher can never be precisely sure of meeting the requirement of validity, but can only claim that his/her method is valid; second, any discussion about validity rests on the basis of a definition of that aspect being measured; and

third there is the problem of internal validity in research. Researchers can only know reality through observation and measurement, but how can they know for sure that their observation and measurement correspond to reality? (Wellington, 2000). It is therefore only a researcher's and a participant's perceptions that we employ to judge reality (Wellington, 2000).

To ensure the validity of the data gathered, prior to the interviews I put the learners at ease by explaining to them their importance in this study. Participants were informed that they were at the same level with the researchers, i.e., in a relationship of equals. Observing the focus group during school hours, especially during break time, allowed me to establish the genuineness of the participants' responses (McNeill, 1990). Documentation was checked before hand for authenticity, accuracy and compliance with the constitution of South Africa and with the *South African Schools Act* (Anderson, 1990).

Robson (2002) differentiates between internal and external validity. Internal validity is when the measurement used to obtain results, if repeatedly used, delivers the same results (Robson, 2002). This is also referred to as the truthfulness of responses and the accuracy of records (Anderson, 1990). According to Mertens (1998), internal validity is similar to credibility. The idea is that the researcher should use as many strategies as possible, so as to table evidence from a multiplicity of sources and therefore strengthen the credibility of the research. External validity is referred to as generalisability (Anderson, 1990; Robson, 2002). This is when the outcome arrived at in research, from a small sample, is the same as the outcome of a large-scale sample, obtained in a different setting (Robson, 2002). Mertens (1998) views external validity as the degree of generalisability and the likelihood of transferring the outcomes of the research to other situations. The outcome of a study should be tested to determine whether it is representative of a wider population.

4.10 Limitation of this study

I am a full-time teacher and I am required to meet the conditions of my employment. This became a hindrance during my studies, in terms of meeting my study obligations. My dedication to my study proved to be unattainable, because of my professional workload. I circumvented some of these work-related problems by

arranging with colleagues with whom I share the same subject to stand in for me when the need arose. I encountered challenges in terms of obtaining permission to conduct my research in schools, in that some potential participants were initially unwilling to participate, but eventually agreed.

4.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, multiple definitions of methodology employed in this study are discussed. One of them defines methodology as manner in which the researcher studies a phenomenon, whilst the other defines research methodology as the logic a researcher employs to answer research questions. Research paradigms are discussed in this chapter. They are viewed as the fundamental frameworks through which researchers organise their observation and their reasoning. This study, as it is qualitative, is embedded in the interpretive/constructive paradigm. In this paradigm, researchers construct and endeavour to expose their interaction with the researched. Hence qualitative methods of data collection are employed.

The case study as research approach is employed in this study to explore deeply and analyse the interaction of reality with the researched. Sample is discussed in this chapter to give insight into what types of schools they are and what type of community they are in. Methods of data collection as well as ethical considerations are discussed. Semi-structured interviews, observation, document reviews, data analysis and issues of quality research, such as reliability and validity are discussed. Lastly limitations of this study are discussed. In the next chapter, the findings of this study will be analysed and discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the research design and methodology employed in this study. This chapter outlines and discusses the findings of the study. To this end, data produced through semi-structured interviews, observations and document reviews were analysed. The data that was collected (especially from interviews) were transcribed and analysed following Giorgi, Fisher and Murray's (1975) phenomenological steps. That was done to identify any hidden meanings the participants were inferring to. The following phenomenological steps that were used are the drawn from Giorgi et al (1975): First, the data should be read to obtain the overall sense of the phenomenon of interest. Second, the researcher must make sense of the phenomenon that is being studied. Third, In order to make sense of the data the entire transcript must be read. Fourth, the transcript of the data collected must be thoroughly read in order to identify hidden meaning that depicts different aspects of the phenomenon being studied. Fifth, the researcher must identify and make clear and unambiguous the importance of aspects of the phenomenon being studied. Sixth, the general structure of the phenomenon studied must be formulated and clearly articulated.

The aim of this research was to elicit the perceptions and experiences of learners, educators and school governors about school violence; to explore how wider structures such as gender, age, socio-economic status and ethnic/tribal divisions shape violence production within schools; and to identify the measures and initiatives taken by schools to promote a violence-free environment.

The findings and presentation of data will focus on the research questions as they are listed in chapter one:

1. What are the perceptions and experiences of learners, educators and school governors about school violence?
2. How do wider structures such as gender, age, socio-economic status and ethnic/tribal divisions shape violence production within schools?

3. What measures and initiatives are taken by schools to promote a violence-free environment?

5.2 Stakeholder experiences of violence in schools

5.2.1 Ethos, the values and the principles of the school

The view held by all the participants in this study is that their schools value learner education, and that their schools are disciplined. They allude to the fact that despite such discipline, they are not really safe on the premises. The participants pointed out that they do occasionally experience ill-discipline and uncooperativeness within their schools.

The principals attested to the fact that their schools were disciplined and that both staff and learners valued education. Both principals stated that their schools prioritised the interests of learners, but acknowledged that certain factors work against those interests. The principal of Impunzi High said:

We always talk about hard work and we always try to talk about quality learning and education, of course there are factors that operate against that. We do experience some ill-discipline and uncooperativeness among learners.

School principals generally endeavour to deliver quality education to learners. I observed that the principals tended to punish those learners found causing chaos when they did their rounds in the morning, to check whether teaching and learning were occurring in the classrooms. This was corroborated by the journal entry of one learner who witnessed the principal of one of the sample schools punishing learners who were making a noise in class one morning. Despite such disciplining, and attempts to portray their schools as good, certain factors work against this. Principals fail to report that crime and violent incidents happen in their schools. This is what Schonfeld (2006) refers to as an underrepresentation of violent crime. The principals did acknowledge that some learners are undisciplined and uncooperative. Besides these problems, criminals and thugs from outside schools pose a threat to the stability of the schools.

The educators who participated in this study stated that their colleagues are disciplined and have an excellent work ethic. They noted that the staffs are always

ready to educate learners who lack discipline, and who have a tendency to resort to violence or abuse drugs. An educator from Impunzi High said:

According to me the educators are disciplined, and always on time for work. On the other hand learners are undisciplined due to their backgrounds. Their behaviour sometimes gets out of hand. We can have the ethos, they usually drag them down.

In general, the educators are disciplined and arrive on time to discharge their duties. Their work ethic is strong. Some learners, however, fail to conform to the norms/set of norms laid out by schools (Giddens, 1994); they are ill-disciplined and their moral standards are low. This was confirmed by my observation of learners arriving late. I was present one morning at the gate with the deputy principal who monitored late-comers. One learner smelled strongly of dagga, and when asked he said that some boys from the other school had forced him to smoke it. When asked why he had not reported them to the police, because a police station is situated nearby, he said it would be impossible because he could not identify them. It was not only learners who arrived late – some educators also did. They did not show any remorse for this – one could see from their actions that they were used to being tardy.

Meanwhile, the SGB chairmen of the schools who participated in this research viewed their schools as disciplined, and believed that they (the SGBs) have a good relationship with their educators. They stated that only a few learners displayed ill-discipline and tardiness. In light of the aforementioned view, the chairman of the SGB from Impunzi High said:

The staff and the governing body get on very well. There is a healthy relationship between the SGB and the educators. Learners do not comply very well with school rules. Some learners come late at school and some are always involved in drugs and misbehaviour.

The SGBs of the schools concurred with other participants that they have a healthy relationship with their educators. They also agreed that some learners do not comply with basic rules, like being on time for class and behaving like learners. The SGBs' observations, of learners not complying with basic rules, concurs with the findings of Furlong (1985), that teachers tend to interpret learners' behaviour as either good or

anti-social. This concurs with my observation of learners displaying unruly behaviour towards their fellow learners and educators.

It is not only the principals, educators and SGBs who said good things about their schools – the learners also had positive responses. They highlighted that their educators are readily available to offer assistance whenever it is required. A girl from Mkhonzi Secondary stated:

I like the fact that our educators are able to give us advice and offer guidance, especially to those who take drugs. When there is learner who has been abused the educators investigate and try to find the cause and the reason for that particular learner to suffer abuse.

Learners in the sampled schools agreed with the other participants that their schools are good. They stated that they received assistance with their problems (experienced at school and at home). When reviewing the SGB minutes, it appeared that HIV/AIDS is prevalent among learners, and that their parents are also affected by it. The SGBs discussed plans to help learners affected by HIV/AIDS. This is supported by Bhana and Epstein (2007) that the high rates of HIV/AIDS infection is found in the informal settlements where, where the residents are poor and unemployed. Bhana and Epstein (2007) state that 77 percent of all the youths who are HIV infected come from these informal settlements. What also became clear is that some learners experience violent incidents like rape, along with drug abuse, both at home and in school. The help learners received at school counters Van Wyk's (2008) argument that educational settings do not shelter learners from violence. In the present sample, the schools were seen to provide shelter and guidance for learners subjected to incidents of violence.

Learners did not like everything about their schools; in fact, there was much that they did not like. The learners raised concerns about the manner in which educators conduct themselves in front of learners. Some learners raised a shocking point: they stated that the abuse they suffered at the hands of educators drove them to drugs. Some learners decried the division of learners into groups or gangs. A girl from Mkhonzi Secondary School attested to this:

You cannot concentrate if you are afraid of a teacher, you cannot learn properly because the teacher is always scolding you, you just hold your

breath, and by the time he leaves the class, you find that everything he was teaching did not have an impact on you.

A boy from Mkhonzi Secondary said something revealing as a result of being scolded and called names by educators: he explained that 'this makes other learners to start taking drugs to try to ease the abuse they are receiving from these teachers who ill-treat them'. Backing other participants on what they do not like about their school, a boy from Impunzi High said:

What I don't like here at school is that mostly, learners are divided into different groups. Let's say maybe you had a quarrel with someone from a different group, that someone will go and call his group and tell them that he had a fight with you. They will come and attack you on behalf of their friend, and then a fight will ensue.

Learners experience disturbing tendencies at school: educators who are supposed to be role models and mentors to them were found to perpetuate violence against learners. Scolding as an act does not perpetuate violence, but learners' reaction to it can be violent. I observed that educators applied corporal punishment freely, despite it having been abolished in the Republic of South Africa in terms of the *South African Schools Act*, 84 of 1996. Fighting among groups is commonly experienced by learners. These incidents underpin Harber's (2004) argument, namely that the violence occurring in schools is not only transported from society, but that schools themselves reproduce and perpetrate such violence.

In conclusion, the participants in this study endeavoured to portray their schools in a positive light. They created the perception that their schools run smoothly, and that the educators' work ethic is very good. This supports the notion that schools should be places of empowerment, where the minds of the learners are liberated (Harber, 2004)

Some participants put forward the view that the educators are disciplined and are always in time to discharge their duties, but it has been established that the learner participants witnessed disturbing tendencies among educators at their schools. Educators who are supposed to be role models and mentors were found to perpetrate violence against learners. That should not be so, however the contrary is true and is supported by CSPV (1998) when it states that violent behaviour is the

result of a collision of behavioural patterns between individuals within certain social contexts. Educators scolded and treated learners in a manner that is unbecoming. Although participants did not reveal that hard-core crime and violent incidents happen in their schools, they did acknowledge that learners are undisciplined and uncooperative. Many learners do not conform to a norm/set of norms determined by schools, on the contrary, they are ill-disciplined and their moral standards are low. Some learners do not comply with basic rules like being on time for class and behaving like learners. It emanated that learners also dabble in the drugs culture. According to participants drugs are the source of violence in schools; hence fighting among groups is common among learners. Besides learners being ill-disciplined and uncooperative, criminals and thugs from outside school pose a threat to stability within schools. These innuendos by participants suggest that violence in schools is alarmingly severe, than merely being prevalent.

5.3 The nature and types of violence in schools

5.3.1 Physical attacks

All the participants indicated that they had encountered violence and violent behaviour on the school premises. There were fights among learners, and weapons were used. The participants stated that in some instances educators were assaulted by learners. The principals who participated in this study enumerated different kinds of violence and different causes of violence. The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary said:

We do experience a couple of physical attacks among learners, in fact just yesterday two boys were fighting and one went to his class and came back with a knife but he was apprehended before he used it. I still have that knife here. He kept it somewhere. The issue of knives and fighting, that one is very common.

The principals confirmed the prevalence of violence in their schools. The school principals vindicated the findings of The Real Truth, which was that truly severe crimes against children occur at schools (The Real Truth, 2008).

Assaults and fights are included in such violent behaviours. In supporting the principals' views, an educator from one sample school noted in her journal that two

boys were brought to the principal for fighting, with one boy having been stabbed. Educators who took part in this research referred to the types of violence they personally experienced and/or encountered at school. Some of the incidents they referred to cannot be branded violence: it may be the reaction of the victim that is violent, which leads to the incident being referred to as violent. Stealing a bag when the owner is not aware of it is not a violent act, but the steps taken by the victim may turn violent.

The educator from Mkhonzi Secondary's response, in shedding light on the intensity of the violence experienced in schools, was the following:

Just yesterday the president of the Representative Council of Learners attempted to stab another learner in grade 12. I am told that there was an altercation between the two in class. This fellow 'klapped' the president across the face. The president reached for his bag and took out his knife and attempted to stab this fellow. The first deputy was there, and he calmed the president down.

Fighting can happen without dangerous weapons, but the thought of fighting someone without weapons is discouraging. Often, being armed encourages someone to fight. In support of the latter view Tolán (2007) states that easy access to firearms, creates fertile ground for violence to breed. In support of the latter view, I observed a fight between two boys where one was stabbed with a pair of scissors. Their fight was motivated by one boy not wanting to pay for a loose cigarette. This view was corroborated by entries in the learner correctional register, in which incidents such as fights between learners or the use of weapons are logged. Therefore, weapons are a catalyst to fighting, which means if weapons are not as readily available, there will be fewer fights. In a school setting, many a fight has broken out precisely because of the fact that weapons are at the disposal of the warring parties.

While the SGB chairman from Mkhonzi Secondary said there were no physical fights or assaults which she observed at her school, the SGB chairman of Impunzi High said:

We do have incidents of fighting. A case in point is the one that was tabled in the SGB meeting where a boy stabbed the other boy for stealing his cell

phone. The stabbed boy was found guilty of theft and the other was found guilty of using a weapon, they were both suspended.

Some participants are not comfortable revealing that violence does take place in their schools, yet others do not hesitate to bring that information out into the open. This action by the SGB is supported by Schonfeld (2006), who states that the majority of incidents of violence are undercounted by officials and stakeholders. Not all such incidents are therefore exposed, but only a few are revealed as they happened, which Schonfeld (2006) suggests may be due to a lack of candour on the part of school administrators.

Incidents of learners fighting and assaulting one another on the school premises were observed by support staff at the schools participating in this research. A support staff member from Impunzi High said: 'Yesterday there was a learner who stabbed another learner with a bottle because they were fighting.' This is supported by a member of the support staff from Mkhonzi Secondary, who said:

We experienced numerous incidents of fighting. Some stab each other over some quarrel. There was a boy who stabbed the other boy. The fight emanated from gambling so this boy refused to pay the money due to the other and the fight ensued.

Support staff, which form part of the school establishment, observed and encountered several instances of learners fighting among themselves. Osgood (1998) argues that violence peaks with age. High school learners are at a critical stage of their growth, which may explain why there are so many fights between them, and why they use weapons during fights. While schools may be deemed safe by others as stated by SAIRR (2008) that some South African learners felt safe at schools, nonetheless schools are unable to shield learners from violence and from the negative influences of the broader society (Mncube and Harber, 2013).

According to the learners who participated in this study, fights, robberies, muggings and the use of weapons were prevalent in their schools. They stated that the source of most of the fighting, robbery and muggings could be traced to drugs. This is supported by a learner from Mkhonzi Secondary who said:

I think that there are clashes between those who smoke *wunga* and those who do not smoke it, because those who do drugs want money from other people to buy *wunga*. One day here at school there was a fight between the *wunga* smoker and a non-smoker, and the *wunga* smoker stabbed the one who does not smoke. He wanted money to buy *wunga*. He was craving for it and he desperately wanted it.

Fights among learners at school are mainly started by learners who abuse drugs. When they crave drugs they try to rob other learners of their money and belongings. According to Thio (2010), research in the USA and other countries shows a strong link between drug abuse and crime. Learners who abuse drugs are inclined to be violent and commit crime.

5.3.2 Bullying

Bullying was cited by all participants as occurring in their schools. The participants identified boys as the culprits who victimised younger boys and girls. By contrast, it was established that girls were the perpetrators of cyber-bullying. Like all participants, the principals who participated in this study believe that bullying is rife in their schools. They revealed that young learners are often targeted by bullies. This is supported by the principal of Impunzi High who said:

Cases where learners bully others are frequently reported. It is the young boys and girls who suffer bullying. The bullies are usually the older boys, especially those who do drugs.

While the principal of Mkhonzi Secondary cited cyber-bullying as reportedly occurring, and said that learners used it to insult other learners and educators, he added:

We had one case, where one incident of cyber-bullying was reported. There was this website called toilet where a group of girls, from this school, use it to write about learners and even some educators. These girls, I heard, they insulted other learners and other educators.

The school principals view bullying as one of the scourges of the violence bedevilling their schools. According to Furlong and Morrison (2000) any bullying involves criminality and aggression that retard the development and learning of learners at

school. The defenceless, especially young boys and girls, are victims of bullying. Some learners practise cyber-bullying by writing and disseminating obscene messages insulting other learners and educators. The educators who participated in this study reiterated what the principals said about bullying being prevalent in their schools. They also stated that boys are bullies and girls are victims. The educator from Mkhonzi Secondary said:

Bullying is one of the common types of violence that happen in our school. Mostly boys in particular bully other boys and girls as well. But girls unfortunately are always victims.

It is evident that bullies target younger learners – young boys, but girls in particular. In support of these educators I observed an older boy pushing and shoving a young girl. When I inquired, the girl said the older boy had wanted to take her money by force. It is evident that girls mostly fall victim to bullying, while boys are the perpetrators (Osgood, 1998). Usually, it seems, they want to extort money to buy drugs. Schools are duty bound to protect young boys and girls before irreparable damage is done to them. Victims might believe that the only way of being feared at school, or having power over others, is by becoming a bully. Violence could breed further violence. Educators view bullies as rude and disruptive at schools, because they make classes unmanageable and teaching difficult.

However, the learners who participated in this study said that they experienced harassment from their fellow learners. They concurred that learners in the lower grades were bullied by those in the higher grades. Often bullying is motivated by money – the bullies extort money to buy drugs and satisfy their craving. A learner from Impunzi High reinforced the prevalent view about bullying:

Bullying happens in lower grades, where some boys want other learners' money by force. The young learners especially those who are newcomers at school are normally bullied. They are robbed of their money by the older boys. They also pay money to older boys on demand. If they do not pay they are beaten.

The learners affirmed that bullying in schools is the result of boys wanting to buy drugs. A learner noted in her journal that she had observed one boy taking another's money by force. Bullies deliberately extort money from younger learners, and often

harm their victims if they do not get what they want (Greene, 2008). Sadly, victims are forced to obtain money somehow if they do not have it.

5.3.3 Verbal abuse

The participants in this study are of the opinion that verbal abuse is widespread in their schools. They stated that not only learners use vulgar language, educators have also been heard swearing at learners. Other participants revealed that they had been victims of verbal abuse. Support staff from both participating schools reported that they had experienced episodes during which vulgar words were uttered in their presence. These staff said they also suffered insults directed at them by learners. Affirming this, the support staff member from Mkhonzi Secondary said:

Learners are very rude to us, they do not respect us, and perhaps it is because we are not educators. They use vulgar language in front of us. When one tries to scold them about the kind of language they use, they do not care. It hurts because we are like their parents.

The support staff participants further stated that they had heard educators using vulgar language and they were disturbed to hear adults swearing at children. A support staff member from Impunzi High said:

It is disturbing when an adult, especially an educator, uses vulgar and swearing language. Educators here at school swear to learners on a daily basis.

The support staff often hear and encounter educators swearing at learners – rather than being role models, those educators perpetrate violence (Harber, 2004). Support staff, as adults and parents themselves, are disturbed by educators' foul language, and by learners bad-mouthing educators. The support staff feel alienated because they are not educators, yet they believe they deserve respect from learners because they are like parents to them. According to Ritzer (2000), people convey something about themselves in the manner in which they behave. Therefore, by using vulgar language, learners are perceived (by support staff) as rude and lacking in respect for other people.

Several learners who participated in this study, in support of the support staff indicated that vulgar language is prevalent in their schools. The learners admitted

that it is not only learners who swear and use vulgar language, but also educators. A learner from Mkhonzi Secondary reported:

I do not like it when a teacher calls me names and swear at me in front of the class. Some teachers poke fun at learners and insult them about their looks. It makes one feel useless and undignified.

Learners deem educators to be their role models. It kills learners' spirit when educators behave in a manner that is improper. Educators' use of vulgar language could generate negative attitudes in learners, both towards educators and the process of education, to the extent where learners may fail their grades. Gansle (2005) asserts that in the USA, the source of violence in schools is anger, but for learners, anger is not the sole motive for violence, it is also engendered by the bad behaviour and foul language of educators. The learners felt that because of the humiliation they suffered, some learners might develop violent attitudes towards both educators and other learners.

Verbal abuse is another way of perpetuating violence in schools. It manifests in class in the presence of both educators and learners. It also manifests outside of the classroom, where girls and young boys are usually victimised. This is supported by the principal of Impunzi High's comment:

I do not know how many times the cases of verbal abuse have been reported to me. One boy who called a certain girl names was suspended for two weeks. He said he was just teasing the girl but the girl did not take kindly to that. He really uttered insulting words to that girl.

School principals should take note that verbal abuse can lead learners to act violently, and even educators cannot escape being victimised. The aim of schooling, at the beginning, was to control and indoctrinate children to be submissive to the authorities (Green, 1991), however, learners are no longer controllable and submissive to authorities, they do as they please and speak as they like.

The educators who participated in this study concurred with the principals that vulgar language was uttered freely by learners in their schools. They reported that learners even use vulgar language towards their educators. An educator from Mkhonzi

Secondary stated: 'The learners are rude and they shout at educators and call them names. They use bad language when responding to educators.'

According to the educators, verbal abuse not only targets educators – learners also bear the brunt of it. An educator at Impunzi High recorded in her journal that she observed a colleague using demeaning language towards a male learner. This lack of manners and the use of vulgar language may cause the relationship between educators and learners to deteriorate. Violence could also be transported from schools to communities, and may even ignite gang wars. This goes against the perception that schools are vehicles for indoctrinating and controlling learners only (Meighan, 1994), however schools also provide a perfect place where violence is incubated and spread to the wider community. Some learners who are victimised may report incidents of abuse to relatives and friends – the schools' authorities have no power to prevent that.

The use of vulgar language was also observed by the chairmen of the SGBs of the participating schools. The chairmen further observed that learners lack respect and do not care who hears their tirades. The chairman of Mkhonzi Secondary's SGB noted:

Discipline is problematic at this school, especially vulgar language. The school governing body has held numerous disciplinary sessions involving vulgar language. Learners easily use vulgar language when interacting with one another.

The SGBs are the custodians of schools, ensuring that the institutions function properly and that there is good governance. They view vulgar language as deteriorating the moral fibre of the school, and realise that it can lead to violence if such behaviour is not curbed. It is not clear, from the SGBs' reports, where learners learn this vulgar language. I observed that in schools learners (and educators) use rude and crude language with impunity. According to Ritzer (2000), people learn the meanings and symbols that shape their behaviour from their society, so the learners could have learnt such language through interacting with those members of society who use foul language and speak recklessly.

5.3.4 Theft

Most participants in this study highlighted theft as a recurring problem in their schools. Theft has a negative effect in as far as learners' education is concerned. Criminals from outside the school are often responsible for burglaries and the theft of school property. Apart from the aforementioned, learners also steal from one another. Educators from the schools taking part in this research helped identify the types of violence encountered in their schools, yet some of the incidents which they classified as violence are, in fact, not indicative of violence, but entail the victims' reaction which may be violent. As mentioned before, stealing an eraser without the owner's knowledge is not in itself an act of violence, yet the owner's discovery and subsequent retaliation against the perpetrator may take a violent turn, which gives the appearance that the theft is a violent act. To illustrate, the principal from Mkhonzi Secondary stated:

Theft is very common in our school; we even took a decision to expel a couple of learners who were terrorising the school by stealing. We created the record book for them, went through the processes and it was after the end of the year that we gave them no-return with their reports. We were targeting those learners who came to steal at this school.

In the same vein, the principal from Impunzi High said:

We do have reported cases of theft at school. We have cases where calculators and back packs were stolen. The painful thing is that the bags were stolen with schoolbooks inside. A learner whose bag was stolen was traumatised, he or she had to start afresh and compile schoolwork.

School principals have found that those who steal others' bags sell the stolen goods so that they can buy drugs. According to Burton and Leoschut (2012), property-related crimes, of which theft is one, are rife in South African schools. The examples they cite include a learner's family being involved in criminality, or learners being exposed to delinquent peers. All schools' stakeholders should therefore come up with ways of fighting theft on the premises, because theft traumatises learners and disrupts their learning. Learners might become violent and the matter could be taken further by outsiders wanting to take up the fight. The task of fighting violence in

schools might be daunting for other stakeholders, so they need to be empowered by the DoE and its agencies (Downes and Rock, 1988).

The educators who participated in this study stated that theft is one incident which invariably leads to violence. According to them, branded bags tend to be targeted. The educator from Mkhonzi Secondary indicated: 'We have kids stealing from other kids. Normally the bags with brand names and calculators are stolen.' The educator from Impunzi High confirmed what was said by the educator from Mkhonzi Secondary: 'Theft is rife in school; they (learners) even steal bags.'

Bags and calculators are prized. The SGBs from the participating schools conceded that their schools' learners are often guilty of theft. They admitted that bags and cell phones (mobile phones) were frequently stolen. The chairman of Mkhonzi Secondary's SGB stated: 'Stealing of other learners' property is rife at school. We attend many cases involving theft.'

The chairman of Impunzi High's SGB confirmed what was said by the chairman of Mkhonzi Secondary's SGB: 'Pick-pocketing and stealing happens in this school. Cell phones (mobile phones) and school bags especially are most stolen items.'

The SGBs are concerned about the level of theft in their schools: this was evident in one of the SGB meetings at Mkhonzi Secondary, where one of the items on a recent agenda was 'Theft in our school'. It is the duty of SGBs, together with the school management team, to put forward strategies aimed at preventing theft.

The learners who participated in this study confirmed that some learners stole. They added that sometimes theft was motivated by sheer jealousy or the coveting of other learners' belongings. A learner from Impunzi High said:

I stole the other learner's new calculator because I was jealous and it was expensive. I did this because the owner treated me badly before.

A learner from Mkhonzi Secondary said: 'Drug abusers steal copper handles from classroom windows and sell them in scrap yards.'

Some learners steal anything of value from their classmates, and the learners in this study revealed that jealousy is a motivating factor. However exposure to violence at every level – be it on the news on television, on radio or in film – entrenches violent

behaviour in schools (Burton 2007), and which might motivate learners to steal. During my observation a case was brought to the principal's office of two boys who had fought over a calculator. One boy allegedly stole and hid the other's calculator, but denied that allegation and this gave rise to a fight. The allegation that the other boy stole the calculator was never proven. Learners stated that sometimes the motive behind a theft is revenge. Theft may disrupt the normal schooling process if learners who are victims of such thievery are traumatised. Schools are therefore duty bound to protect learners from this type of victimisation.

5.3.5 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment was identified in the course of this study as a one form of violence which is prevalent in schools. The consequence of sexual harassment is that it can impede a learner's scholastic progress – in fact, it can be so traumatic to a victim that s/he may leave the school or abandon their education.

The majority of participants indicated that rape was the most common form of sexual harassment. Learners suffer rape on school premises and on their way to school. The principals of the participating schools agreed that sexual harassment happens in schools and also en route to and from school. The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary said:

We have a child last year, who suffered an attempted rape by a taxi driver. That girl was on her way to school when this happened. Fortunately she was able to jump out of the taxi and ran.

The principal of Impunzi High noted:

I think this boy was trying to make sexual advances towards this girl, he was rejected and I think he did not take kindly towards the rejection. He then resorted to power.

In the main, boys sexually harass girls. The act of sexual harassment attacks a girl's dignity. Harber (2004) argues that to understand the role the school plays in perpetrating and escalating violence, one needs to understand the inhumane and dehumanising way in which the school mistreats its community of learners.

The educators from the participating schools concurred that sexual harassment occurs in their schools, and added that boys are the perpetrators. The educator from Mkhonzi High stated:

Yes, sexual harassment does happen. A boy was reported to have kissed a certain girl without her consent. On being asked why he did that, the boy said he was just playing. He was warned not to repeat that again. Some girls reported to have been touched inappropriately by boys.

The educators confirmed that they are aware sexual harassment happens in their schools. According to Haffajee (2006), gender-based violence like rape has a devastating and detrimental impact on adolescent girls' physical and psychological health. According to educators, boys either try to kiss girls or touch them inappropriately. They explained that such harassment could have an adverse effect on a young girl's mental health and her progress in school.

The support staff who participated in this study alluded to learners having been sexually harassed at school. They pointed out that some educators are guilty of sexually harassing young girls. A support staff member from Mkhonzi Secondary reported: 'I have witnessed educators touching girls in a manner that was sexually suggestive.' Another support staff member from Mkhonzi Secondary noted:

There was a case where there was an allegation that an educator has impregnated a learner but the story was found to be not true. We are not sure whether the girl's parents were on the side of the educator since they insisted that the story was not true.

The support staff stated that some educators sexually harass schoolgirls to the extent that they impregnate them. In corroborating this view, one entry in the minutes of the SGB of Mkhonzi Secondary shows that an allegation of an educator impregnating a female learner was discussed. The support staff members voiced the opinion that the perpetrators view female learners as sex objects who are not equal to boys (see also Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005).

Learners who participated in this study stated that not only educators were guilty of sexual abuse; their fellow male learners also harassed girls sexually. A learner from Mkhonzi Secondary stated:

A certain educator told me that he wanted to marry me. I told him I cannot because I was too young and I wanted to continue with my studies. He said he will wait for me until I finish my studies. I reported him at home. My mother said as much as she likes to report him to school management she was afraid to do so. She feared that the teacher might hate me, fail me or ill-treat me.

A learner from Impunzi High concurred:

Yes sir sexual harassment does happen in the classrooms. Some male learners touch the girls' private parts, especially when a girl is scared of that particular boy.

Learners suffer sexual harassment at the hands of people who are supposed to be their role models and mentors. Moletsane et al. (2010) assert that the school environment can be harsh, negative, and even life-threatening towards female learners. Learners are afraid to report such incidents, for fear of being victimised. This is supported by the findings of Leach and Sitaram (2007), who state that reporting abusive behaviour especially sexual harassment is dismissed as part of growing up. Some learners do sexually harass other learners, especially by touching them inappropriately. As confirmation of some of the participants' views, I observed boys attempting to forcefully kiss girls, while some girls were inappropriately touched on their backsides. It appears as if the entire school environment is colluding against female learners.

5.3.6 Vandalism

Vandalism is rife in schools. Classroom walls and toilets especially are covered in writing which insults both learners and educators. Such graffiti can have an adverse effect on learners, especially if they are the subject of these writings, as it can harm their self-esteem. Vandalism can also take on extreme forms, such as the destruction of school property and in some cases buildings may be burnt down in an arson attack.

The principals who participated in this study indicated that some learners go to extremes when vandalising school property. The principal of Impunzi High said:

I have already pointed out the school has been relatively unstable in the past years and the most recent event have been the torching of the administration

block. There is also vandalism, which is in the form of graphics on the walls, here at school.

The principals concurred that graffiti was the most common instance of vandalism in their schools. Learners use graffiti to inflict harm on others (Harber, 2004). A learner stated in his journal that he had witnessed a boy breaking a window-pane in his class. An entry in the learner correctional register noted that a boy was punished for writing on a classroom wall. The principals, with regret, conceded that they had also borne the brunt of that most extreme form of vandalism, arson, on their premises.

The educators who participated in this study concurred that vandalism was prevalent in their schools. They stated that buildings were stripped. The educator from Impunzi High recalled:

There was once a problem in 2006 where the learners were dissatisfied with some issues and violence took place. Learners burnt the school to lodge their dissatisfaction.

The educator from Impunzi High added:

People from outside school came in here and stole the doors, the wiring system and the taps, I don't know whether it was the members of community or it was our learners that committed that crime.

The educators confirmed what was said by the principals, namely that learners took to burning the school as a form of protest. This is confirmed by the Human Sciences Research Council (2008), which states that South Africa has a deep-rooted history of violence as a means of protest.

The learners from the schools which participated in this study stated that graffiti was one of the most common forms of vandalism, and that their fellow learners used graffiti to insult one another. They added that drug abuse may have led certain learners to vandalise classrooms. A learner from Mkhonzi Secondary reported:

It is the tendency of some students to write graffiti on the walls of the toilets. When you arrive at the toilet you find your name written on the wall, including insults about what you are and the shape of your body.

The learners reported that their schools bore the brunt of vandalism, but added that their fellow learners became the victims of vandalism when it comes to graffiti. Insults are often scribbled on the walls of toilet cubicles. The cause of vandalism, especially graffiti, can be attributed to learners' exposure to violence at every level, in various types of media (Burton, 2007). On the other hand learners perform these acts to derive pleasure from another's misery (Mestry et al., 2006).

The learners voiced their opinions on what drove vandals to damage school property. A learner from Mkhonzi Secondary claimed:

It is the *wunga* that makes them to be wild and steal copper handles from classroom windows and sell them to scrap-yards.

The support staff concurred with other participants that vandalism does take place in their schools. They confirmed the presence of graffiti and nasty writings about learners in the ablution areas. One support staff member from Mkhonzi Secondary alluded to graffiti he had seen in school toilets, saying: 'Learners insult others by writing about them on the toilet walls.'

The support staff view vandalism as a serious issue, in particular the meanness of the graffiti which insults other learners. They concur that learners are out of control, and do as they please (see Green, 1991). Personally, I observed that the infrastructure at Impunzi High was in a state of disrepair. The walls behind the school had a lot of graffiti on them. Most of the classroom windows were broken, and some doors were missing. As a result, learners were exposed to the elements – not a situation which is conducive to teaching and learning. The SGBs of the participating schools indicated that in their meetings they discussed many issues, one of them being vandalism. Many discussions were related to how they can fix infrastructure that has been vandalised. The chairman of the SGB of Impunzi High said:

The state of the school is discussed to establish whether is there any case of vandalism where something needs to be fixed or repaired.

The chairmen of the SGBs acknowledged that their schools are often vandalised. They deemed it their duty to repair and fix what has been damaged. What the SGBs did not establish, is the reason why their schools are being targeted. According to

Thio (2010), vandalism stems from perpetrators who are angry about what is done at schools, and this is one way of displaying their disapproval.

5.3.7 Corporal punishment

All participants in this study, with the exception of the principals, alluded to the fact that corporal punishment was administered in their schools. There is no reason why the principals of the participating schools did not mention corporal punishment in this regard. This is testimony to the fact that the majority of incidents of violence are underreported. Indeed, not all violent incidents are exposed, but only a few are reported – something Schonfeld (2006) suggests may be due to a lack of openness and honesty on the part of school administrators.

The educators who participated in this study explained that they prefer corporal punishment as a method of exercising discipline over learners. Such utterances are shocking, since corporal punishment has been abolished from South African schools. The educators supported their arguments by saying corporal punishment is a quick and effective way of disciplining learners. They further consolidated their argument by stating that corporal punishment is the African way of disciplining youngsters. The educator from Mkhonzi Secondary explained:

Corporal punishment is the fastest and [most] effective way of disciplining a young African child. Yes we use it, but without intention to assault. But we are aware it is not permissible.

The educator from Impunzi High echoed this statement:

They adopted the style of the whites, that you make a learner to kneel down but at the high school level how is it going to help you to tell the learner to kneel down. It won't help you. As Africans we know that when the child is wrong you punish him/her by beating him up. It's against the law but you make a learner understand that what he or she did was wrong and you ask a learner whether he or she will take punishment. If a learner agrees punishment will be meted and if a learner disagrees no punishment will be administered.

It is evident that educators prefer corporal punishment as a way of disciplining learners, deeming it quick and effective, and true to the African way of maintaining

discipline. Educators may not be aware that from their violent actions, learners copy violence as a means of survival (Elbedour, Center, Maruyama and Assor, 1997; Human Rights Watch, 1999). Educators deliberately contravene the law by applying corporal punishment, since they are aware that it has been abolished under the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. According to Kumar (2010), educators should not wish to punish or inflict pain on their learners ('their opponents'), but should rather approach them as a friend. Although learners are not the educators' opponents, it is imperative that the educators cease meting out corporal punishment. The educators participating in this study revealed that they know they are breaking the law, but explained that they ask the learners' permission before caning them. Through such actions the educators are sending out the wrong message, namely that it is permissible to break the law. Corporal punishment is prohibited, regardless of the circumstances. Educators should always bear in mind that contravening the law constitutes a criminal offence.

The SGBs from the participating schools conceded that their schools mete out corporal punishment, but stressed that it was not inflicted as a matter of course. The SGB representative from Mkhonzi Secondary said:

We don't use it [corporal punishment] that much, but as parents we use it only to scare and show learners the right direction not as means to inflict pain or injury.

The SGB members alluded to the fact that when their schools resort to corporal punishment, they do not do so lightly, and that it is used not to inflict pain or injury, but to discipline and show learners the correct way. This thinking on their part contradicts the view of Martin Luther King Jr, who argued that non-violence should include non-violence of the spirit, i.e., non-violence should be part of every person's life (Randall, 2001). Resorting to corporal punishment (i.e., violence) is not the correct and acceptable way of disciplining a child.

The learners who participated in this study admitted that their schools inflict corporal punishment, and that they do in a number of ways. They reported that plastic pipes were mainly used to mete out punishment. A learner from Mkhonzi Secondary explained:

Sir, we are afraid to report these teachers who use pipes to punish us because one may be abused by a teacher, and perhaps fail his or her subject.

A learner from Impunzi High concurred: 'Corporal punishment is practised too much here at school. A pipe is used for corporal punishment.'

There was another dimension to the issue of punishment: rather than corporal punishment, some learners said slapping/'klapping' was used. Slapping a child is tantamount to assault. One learner from Mkhonzi Secondary said:

'Klapping' is very common here at school. There are some teachers who are really good in 'klapping'; they are very good in using it as a form of punishment. They 'klap' you as if they are fighting with you. A child is supposed to be spanked, I do agree with that, but a child should be spanked with a stick, not be 'klapped', that is not right, sir.

A female learner from Impunzi High concurred:

When you fail to do your homework, you know very well that you will be 'klapped', instead of being punished by a pipe. Even my mother does not 'klap' me.

Learners stated that corporal punishment was practised in schools, and that plastic pipes were used as an instrument to mete out punishment. They admitted to being afraid to report the matter, even though they knew corporal punishment was outlawed. The latter statement supports the argument of The Gulbenkian Foundation (1995) that learners are increasingly becoming the victims of violence, rather than the perpetrators. Another dimension that emerged from learners, in respect of punishment, pertained to slapping. What emerged from this study is that parents also use corporal punishment, and some permit educators to inflict corporal punishment on their children. Such permission is unlawfully granted, given the fact that corporal punishment is prohibited in South Africa. Slapping is a form of assault; hence learners view educators as fighting with them. Mncube and Harber (2012) view those schools that allow educators to treat learners with this kind of punishment as allowing violence to be reproduced in their schools, rather than protecting learners from various forms of violence. What is disturbing is that learners are slapped for not doing their homework. Using this type of corporal punishment as a form of discipline

contravenes the school codes of conduct of learners, which schools themselves draw up. When I reviewed Mkhonzi Secondary's code, it read: 'Every learner has a right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhumane or degrading manner. Corporal punishment shall not be administered and learners shall not be locked up in solitary confinement or detention.' It is ironic that educators disregard this stipulation and act with contempt towards the very instrument that has been devised to help them maintain discipline.

The support staff members from the participating schools stated that late-comers are sanctioned by means of corporal punishment. They also stated that for all other transgressions committed by learners, corporal punishment would be meted out. One support staff member from Impunzi High said:

Yesterday there is a learner who stabbed another learner with a bottle because they were fighting. The perpetrator was disciplined accordingly; he was beaten with a pipe.

A Mkhonzi Secondary support staff member noted: 'There is a lot of late coming at this school. Late-comers are beaten by educators using sticks as their punishment.'

The support staff observed that corporal punishment is the punishment of choice, regardless of the type of offence. Any action where educators use violence to curb violence cannot work, because violence is bound to produce violence. According to the *South African Schools Act*, 84 of 1996, corporal punishment was abolished and no one is permitted to administer it. Anyone contravening the law is liable to prosecution, but from what I observed at both schools, late-comers receive corporal punishment, in gross violation of the *Schools Act* and the constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

In conclusion, the nature and types of violence mentioned by the participants in this study are physical attacks, bullying, verbal abuse, theft, sexual harassment, vandalism and corporal punishment. Physical attacks involve pushing, shoving, kicking and actual fighting, where dangerous weapons are employed. What emanated from this study is that most fights at school involve dangerous weapons, especially knives and scissors. It appears that the availability of weapons in the school setting encourages fighting among learners. Therefore, weapons are a

catalyst to fighting, which means without recourse to weapons, fighting amongst children would not occur as frequently, nor would it be as violent.

Schools experience a wide range of bullying, and this has an adverse effect on learning, since bullies have a tendency to disrupt the learning process. Cecile (2009) views violence as the idea of repeated bullying of learners or a group of learners, which implies a deliberate intention on the part of a learner/group to cause harm to one of their peers. The main victims of bullying are young girls and boys. Victims in some extreme circumstances leave the school because of the bad treatment they receive from bullies. It is the duty of the school to protect learners from bullies and to provide a safe environment for teaching and learning to occur.

Verbal abuse is also prevalent in schools. This involves the use of unpalatable language such as swearing, insults, and vulgar or derogatory language aimed at others. This is corroborated by evidence from the journal writing of a learner from Impunzi High:

A teacher called us fools because some of the learners did not participate in a discussion and he was very angry.

This is an indictment on educators who verbally abuse learners: their utterances could have a negative impact on those they are tasked with teaching. Whilst (UNESCO, 2010) defines violence as any threat against educators or learners which disrupts or deters educational activities, or exposes educators and learners to risk within an environment that should be safe, secure and protective, however Learners could become hardened and cynical due to the humiliation suffered when bearing the brunt of an adult's vulgar language. Learners could even develop a violent attitude towards educators and other learners. Resentment could foster a negative attitude in them towards educators and education in general. Vulgar language is divisive and destroys the moral fibre of a school. It can lead to violence if such behaviour is not curbed.

The scourge of theft is mainly perpetuated by those with a dependency on drugs. The perpetrators mainly steal school supplies. This could lead to violence, since the matter could be taken up by vengeful outsiders, if left unresolved. Schools and their SGBs should therefore come up with strategies to prevent theft from happening on their premises.

Sexual harassment is perpetrated by boys, with girls as the victims. The latter view supports Dunne et al. (2006) as they argue that girls especially tend to be subjected to sexual harassment by male educators and older men. This is one way in which boys prove their dominance and masculinity. Boys especially tend to showcase their power over girls, whom they perceive as weak. Educators have a mandate to teach and mentor learners towards responsible adulthood, yet some educators abuse their position of power to sexually harass girls, which plunges those girls' school careers into turmoil and disarray. This is corroborated by a female educator from Mkhonzi Secondary who, in her journal, noted an instance of such abuse of power on the part of one of her colleagues:

I witnessed male educators sexually harassing a female learner today. It was in the afternoon. He asked this girl to carry his books to his office. I happen to see this educator touching this girl in a sexually suggestive manner. The girl screamed and he released her from his grip.

It is not only educators who abuse learners sexually: learners also abuse fellow learners in this way. Learners, especially boys, tend to commit violent acts in the absence of educators. Corroborating this view is a learner from Impunzi High, who wrote in her journal:

It was the last period and the learners were alone. A male learner suddenly started to touch a female learner in very unbecoming manner. The boy was enjoying what he was doing and the whole class laughed not realising that the girl was offended. She broke down and cried.

Leaving learners unattended provides them with an opportunity to experiment with unsavoury and objectionable deeds, which may result in violence. It is the duty of the school, through its educators, to ensure that learners are safe in class and are well supervised. Learners, frequently girls, tend to be emotionally and physically victimised by the very people they trust. Those learners lose their trust and faith in male educators, and this could mark the beginning of a power struggle between educators and learners.

Vandalism, such as graffiti, reflects deterioration in the culture of respect for other individuals and for school property. It also displays the community's lack of care for schools and public property. Stripping parts of a school building to sell to scrap yards

and other community members is evidence that communities are at the root of the rot and violence manifesting in schools.

Many educators, through their actions, perpetrate and produce violence in schools. Schools prefer corporal punishment as a way of administering discipline, as noted in the responses of those learners being questioned about the forms of violence they experienced and how it affected them. When learners were asked about the types of violence they had experienced, the majority made mention of corporal punishment. This is an indication that educators are responsible for inflicting violence on learners.

It is disturbing to note that educators are the main perpetrators of violence in schools, since such action on the part of educators contravenes the law, as noted previously. In the schools under study, it appeared that there is a deliberate disregard for the law on the part of educators. Instead of deriving positive results, corporal punishment has been shown to harden the attitudes of learners towards educators, and this could lead to further conflict and violence in schools. According to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC, 2008), learners who received corporal punishment later showed disruptive and harmful behavioural tendencies such as violence, bullying and disobedience.

Educators are evidently the main proponents of violence, which they perpetrate through corporal punishment; however parents frequently encourage educators to use corporal punishment in disciplining learners. In examining the SGB minutes of Impunzi High, it transpired that the principal had conveyed to the SGB the gravity of inflicting corporal punishment, noting that it was illegal to punish learners by caning them. The parents disregarded the principal's warning, instead unanimously agreeing that in their school learners would receive corporal punishment, thus giving educators the power to administer such punishment whenever the need arose.

5.4 Causes of violence

5.4.1 Gangsterism

All the participants in this study agreed that gangsterism is one of the factors shaping violence in their schools. Girls are usually victimised by boys. The participants stated that often victimised girls would report the perpetrators to their brothers, who would

come to school and exact vengeance. They also pointed out that when a fight broke out between two learners their friends would pitch in, in support.

The educators confirmed these statements, agreeing that victimised girls reported the perpetrators to their brothers, who would retaliate on their behalf. The educator from Mkhonzi Secondary stated:

There was a girl who was hit by the others; she reported the matter to her brothers. Her brothers came to school to avenge their sister. The boys who were perpetrators called their friends and the fight ensued between the two groups. The fight even spilled into the community because the two groups lived in different parts of the township.

Educators viewed gangsterism as prevalent in schools. They stated that such thuggery originates in schools when learners solicit help from their siblings to settle disputes. This was confirmed by the principals of the schools which participated in this study – they indicated that victimised learners' siblings rallied round and came to school to deal with the perpetrators. The principal from Impunzi High noted:

We had learners going out at break time to try and get their siblings that are older brothers, to come and deal with the perpetrators. We are trying to stop this because we don't want outsiders to come and fight with learners inside school premises.

The principals view gangsterism as the outcome of learners reporting their victimisation to their relatives and friends. Schools, instead of controlling learners as mentioned by Meighan (1994), promote gangsterism through their failure to take action.

However, the learners who participated in this study were of the opinion that there are different groups of learners at school, and when two learners from different groups quarrel, the groups end up fighting each other in support of their members, which often sees the fight escalating and spilling over into the community. The latter view is supported by an entry in the learner correctional register of one of the sample schools, which stated that four boys, who used to be friends, were punished for fighting. This was corroborated by a learner from Impunzi High:

What I don't like here at school is that mostly, learners are divided into different groups. Let's suppose you have a conflict with someone from a different group he or she will go and call his group which will fight you and your friends.

The learners conceded that gangsterism is prevalent in schools, due to the fact that learners align themselves with different groups. They reported that when two learners fight, the fight is often taken over by the friends of the fighting learners.

The support staff members also acknowledged that gangsterism inspired violent incidents in their schools. One respondent from Mkhonzi Secondary stated:

An incident that I remember is when two boys came to school and went straight to class of a boy who robbed their young sister of her money. They beat and stabbed this boy, fortunately the wounds were superficial.

The support staff observed that one form of gangsterism involved boys from outside the school coming onto the school grounds to avenge their friends and siblings who had been victimised at school. According to Rock (1973) these boys, by coming to avenge their siblings commit acts that are socially unacceptable and go against the good morality of the society.

When I was doing observation at Mkhonzi Secondary I noticed that during break pupils from a neighbouring high school, as well as individuals who were notably no longer learners, entered the school grounds. When I inquired from other learners why these boys come to the school, I was told that they visit their friends who were the school's troublemakers. This was corroborated by a learner who noted in her journal that two thugs came to school during break and rebuked a certain boy for having quarrelled with their brother; fortunately they did not harm their victim. Such actions produce deviant behaviour in that siblings or friends are roped in to help learners fight their battles (Giddens, 1994).

5.4.2 Drug abuse

Participants cited drug abuse as prevalent in their schools, and viewed drugs as the source of most incidents of schools-based violence. Drugs like *wunga* and *dagga* were mainly abused. The participants believed that the availability of these drugs explained why a great number of learners do drugs. This was supported by a learner

who noted in her journal that she saw a male classmate giving something to a boy from another class. She suspected that it was drugs because her classmate had twice been caught smoking dagga in the toilets. The principals confirmed that learners in their schools do drugs. They perceived drug abuse as the root of all evil, and as the driving force behind the violence in schools. As the principal from Impunzi High explained:

We have a problem with this drug called *wunga*. Learners are hooked on this drug. We had incident where a boy was caught selling it. On investigating him and trying to establish for whom was he selling this drug, he refused to tell us. We called his parents to try and coerce him into telling us who his boss was, we failed. We had no other option but to expel him.

Drug abuse is a scourge which many principals have to contend with. It is evident that much of the violence that takes place in schools is attributable to substance abuse. According to Rock (1973), secondary deviance (in this particular case, drug abuse) happens when the rule-breaker does not have the presence of mind to act in a moral way, or to say no to drugs. The educators participating in this study mentioned drugs as prevalent in instances of violence, or the cause of violence. The participants named *wunga* and dagga as the drugs most frequently abused by learners. The educator from Mkhonzi Secondary said:

We told are that the learners buy this *wunga* from the people who get it from town in Durban. There are people out there who are selling this. They have merchants who collect this *wunga* and sell it to the youths in townships and to learners in schools. One is informed that this *wunga* is a combination of Vim, Rattex, ARVs [antiretrovirals] and some other dangerous substances. They put all these together to form this highly addictive drug *wunga*. *Wunga* is a very huge problem here at school.

The educator from Mkhonzi Secondary added that drug dealers come up with novel ways to make drugs available to learners:

Some learners sell muffins which are laced with dagga. They mix dough with dagga, bake that and sell to learners. At some stage the girls became sick and hysterical. The girls were taken to the clinic where it was discovered that they had eaten muffins spiked with dagga.

Educators, as adults who interact daily with learners, view the presence of drugs as disruptive in schools and also in learners' lives. *Wunga*, which is the drug of choice in the sampled schools, is highly addictive, made from poisonous chemicals, hence the strange behaviour of learners after having smoked it.

The SGBs, as the custodians of good governance, cited drugs as a problem in schools. They identified *wunga* as being readily available. It transpired from their comments that drug lords use learners to sell the drug. The SGB members also reported that drug abuse prompts learners to steal – learners use the money they earn from selling stolen goods to buy drugs and ease their cravings. Supporting this notion was the SGB chairman from Impunzi High, who said:

Drug abuse is a serious issue in our school. We are inundated with cases involving drug-induced violence. *Wunga* is a problem in our school. There are learners who were expelled for selling this drug. It was established that they sell it on behalf of a certain drug dealer. Besides this drug we experience the case of vandalism. One boy was caught stealing window panes. When asked why he did that he said he sells them so that he could buy *wunga*.

According to the SGBs, drug abuse is a menace to their schools. Gansle (2005) argues that violence may have long-term negative effects on students, and those effects manifest as poor performance at school, drug abuse, poor interpersonal relationships and health-related problems. Therefore learners who sell drugs on behalf of drug lords make it difficult for schools to establish a drug-free environment. The main culprits are drug dealers, because they transport the problem from the community into the schools. They also teach learners to deal drugs, thereby destroying many learners' futures. One afternoon a boy was brought to the principal's office by a male educator who had caught him giving something to another boy in the toilets. Upon examining that substance it was found to be *wunga*. The problem of drugs is noted in the SGB minutes, where the case of a boy who was caught with drugs was discussed. This indicates that sometimes schools are a breeding ground for extreme and punitive forms of violence, more so than at learners' homes (Adams, 1991).

The learners who participated in this study reported having experienced the impact of drug abuse. They stated that boys who take drugs lack respect, and become

confused or crazy after taking illegal substances. A learner from Impunzi High, in response to a question about the things he did not like about his school, noted:

Wunga, which is a drug, is a problem at this school. People from outside the school enter the school to sell *wunga* and to smoke it with their friends, and seems like every boy at school is drug seller, this because there are many boys who sell dagga and *wunga*. That is what I do not like about this school.

The learners, like all the other participants stated that drug abuse was one of the main causes underlying incidents of violence. They observed that learners who take drugs lose their self-respect and become rude towards other people, especially educators. They also become rebellious and disobedient (Harber, 2004).

5.4.3 Alcohol abuse

Alcohol abuse is a concern for most participants in this study. They expressed alarm about a liquor store being situated near their school, which means learners have easy access to alcohol. The participants explained that what troubles them most is the relative age of those learners found to have consumed alcohol; they are mainly in the 14-to-16 year age bracket.

The chairmen of the SGBs of the participating schools, in concurring with the views of the other participants, raised concerns about learners' alcohol consumption. The chairman of the SGB of Mkhonzi High said:

There has been an incident where learners engaged in alcohol consumption. It was a school trip to a neighbouring school and some of our learners were caught consuming alcohol. They were boys and girls of between 14 and 16 years of age and the majority of them were in grade 9.

The SGBs view with concern the fact that alcohol abuse is rife in their schools. What is most disturbing is the age of learners who drink. According to Furlong (1985), children tend to imitate the behaviour of those in their midst, if it is violent and aggressive behaviour, they will learn it. This means that learners who abuse alcohol learnt to do so either from their peers, or from members of their community.

The principals of the participating schools were extremely concerned about the bottle store located near their school. They reported that learners return to school after break, having consumed alcohol. The principal of Impunzi High said: 'The school is

situated next to the bottle store. When it is break time some of our learners go to bottle store and they abuse alcohol.' Alcohol, like drugs, is a problem in schools because it destroys learners' future prospects and nobody can concentrate on learning while under the influence.

The educators of the participating schools confirmed that alcohol abuse was prevalent in their schools, and were equally troubled by the proximity of a bottle store to their schools, as it provided learners with easy access to liquor. An educator from Mkhonzi Secondary reported:

We have a challenge also because between fifteen and twenty metres from school there is a bottle store. In this place there are people who sell drugs and *wunga* in particular. During break our learners go there pretending to buy something to eat from the shop next to the bottle store yet they want access to these drugs. Besides drugs some take a chance of abusing alcohol. They come back from the break drunk.

The educators viewed alcohol abuse in their schools as a threat to learners. An educator from one of the participating schools noted in her journal that she had caught a male learner reeking of alcohol and sent him to the principal's office to be disciplined. Some educators noted that learners become violent and are unable to learn effectively after having indulged. Learners who do not drink are not safe from those who abuse alcohol. Cecile (2009) states that drunken learners may harm others intentionally. Schools are obliged to create a safe environment for learners, where they can learn without fear of being victimised.

Although the support staff from the schools participating in this study condemned the proximity of a bottle store to their schools, they lamented the fact that it is also a drugs den. A member of the support staff from Mkhonzi Secondary said:

There is a store with a bottle store across the road. The learners go there during the break time to buy food. They come from these stores smelling [of] alcohol, some even drunk.

While at Mkhonzi Secondary, in the presence of support staff I observed learners gathering at the bottle store across the road during break. Some learners confessed to me that certain learners do drink liquor during break time. The SGB of one of the

participating schools noted in the minute book the members' concerns about the proximity of the bottle store to the school. Selling alcohol to underage learners retards their learning. Since many of the learners who abuse alcohol come from disadvantaged communities, this supports the notion that socio-economic challenges still play a major role in the spread of violence in South Africa (Vally, Dolombisa and Porteus, 1999).

In conclusion, the causes of violence, as listed by participants, were gangsterism, illegal drug abuse and alcohol abuse. The Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence (1998) asserts that learners with low socio-economic status 'transport' problems arising within their families and communities into schools.

Therefore gangsterism in schools is the result of learners reporting their victimisation to their siblings, relatives and friends, and soliciting help from them. Apart from outsiders coming onto the school premises to avenge their relatives and friends, gangsterism was also the result of learners aligning themselves with different groups and fighting each other's battles. It is important that schools put structures in place to allow learners to report their victimisation, rather than expecting friends and relatives to retaliate on their behalf. Such structures should be able to deal with outsiders coming onto the school's premises with ulterior motives.

Further findings suggest that drugs are easily and readily available in schools, because of drug pushers selling drugs on behalf of drug lords. The drug problem is transported from communities into schools, via those who abuse drugs. Drug abuse promotes ill-discipline, rudeness, rebelliousness and disobedience in schools. The latter view supports the argument by SAHRC (2008) that drugs result in deviant learner behaviour such as absenteeism, poor learning performance, high drop-out rates and high truancy rates.

In addition, the findings point to acute alcohol abuse in schools, which is exacerbated by the proximity of liquor outlets to schools. The most disturbing trend in schools is the age of the learners who abuse alcohol – they are mainly between 14 and 16 years of age. This is an indictment on peer pressures and societal influences which these learners fall prey to.

Gambling is another scourge that can easily spiral into violence. During interviews it was not named as one of the causes of violence, yet it was observed that some

fighting among learners stemmed from disputes related to gambling. An educator from Mkhonzi Secondary, in support of this view, noted:

Two boys were brought to the principal's office because they were caught fighting. They were playing dice and they robbed each other, then the fight ensued.

Schools, together with members of the community, should put in place structures aimed at curtailing gambling, especially on school premises.

5.5 Structures shaping violence reproduction within schools

5.5.1 Socio-economic status of the school community

Participants in this study are of the view that what happens in schools is influenced by what is happening in society. This means violence in schools is inspired by violence in the surrounding communities. Educators and learners are robbed by thugs in their own neighbourhoods. The participants reported that schools are broken into almost on a daily basis. This is supported by the principals of the two schools under study, who put forward the view that violence in schools is influenced by events in the surrounding communities. The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary said:

We do have a serious problem about breaking in schools, but it normally happens at night. Thugs would come in and break into the school and steal a couple of things. Our school has been adversely affected by that for ... I think we've got about 13 reported cases with case numbers. Computers have been stolen...also other facilities that were donated to the school by companies like Dimension Data, like projectors have been stolen.

Because schools are a microcosm of society, they reflect whatever happens in society. This means some of the violence occurring in schools is a reflection of the violence taking place in the wider society. Although Harber (2004) argues that schools reproduce and perpetuate violence, violence is also transported from the wider society into schools. My observation supported the principals' comments that schools are frequently the targets of burglars. I observed that all the buildings, including classrooms, had burglar-bars at the entrances, doors and windows, which

suggests that the schools had, in the past, experienced break-ins. The schools resembled prisons, rather than learner-friendly institutions.

However, the participating educators at the two schools reminded me that their schools are situated in disadvantaged areas. Unemployment and HIV/AIDS are rife in the community, hence the prevalence of single-mother-headed families, and grandparent-or child-headed families. The educators pointed out that the community is crime and drug-riddled. Supporting this view is the educator from Mkhonzi Secondary, who noted:

Mkhonzi is a humble school located in an environment where most people are unemployed and ravaged by a scourge of HIV/AIDS endemic and epidemic as well. Most of learners here come from single parent headed families where grandparents and mothers are breadwinners. There are learners here in the school who head families. The school is also situated in an area dominated by a high level degree of abuse of substance like dagga. There is this drug called *wunga* which impacts negatively to the whole community.

The educators believed the location of their schools made them particularly susceptible to crime and violence. As pointed out before, children tend to imitate the behaviour of community around them, if it is violent and aggressive, they will learn it (Furlong, 1985). The socio-economic status of a community also has a bearing on learners' behaviour. According to the educators, schools in disadvantaged areas are prone to experiencing problems related to violence and ill-discipline. Along with the scourge of HIV/AIDS, and the resulting child and single-mother or grandparent-headed families, social problems are an ideal breeding ground for violence in schools.

The chairmen of the SGBs concurred with the observations of the other participants, namely that the two schools are situated in impoverished and disadvantaged areas, and that members of the community (including learners) are subjected to a great deal of violence. The chairman of Mkhonzi Secondary's SGB indicated:

The school is situated in a place where the people are not rich. People live in the government subsidised houses, commonly known as RDP houses. There is a lot of violence in the area. The community is tired of burglaries and theft

that occur in the area. We have also a problem of *wunga* and those who are selling it. Our children are slaves of this drug including dagga.

While both chairmen alluded to violence taking place in their schools, there was no strong agreement between them about the history of violence in the area, and in their respective schools. In this regard, the chairman of Impunzi High said:

In this school we have little problems of violence. Although there were incidents of violence they were little, they did not warrant any critical attention.

Albeit the lack of strong agreement between the SGB chairmen, it is glaringly obvious that violence does occur in the community, no matter how insignificant it may appear, and that it does affect schools. An educator from a participating school noted in her journal, in support of the view of the SGBs, that members of the South African Police Services (SAPS) came to school to arrest two boys who had allegedly burgled one of the homes in the neighbourhood. According to the SGBs, drugs like *wunga* and dagga are a menace to the lives of children in general and learners in particular, and cause an escalation in violence in both the community and in schools. It could be that the use of illicit drugs leads to an adolescent's alienation from and rejection by pro-social peers, causing him/her to join anti-social peer groups which derive pleasure from escalating incidents of violence (Osgood, 1998).

The support staff of the two schools reported that they had encountered vulgar language as well as drug abuse amongst learners. Besides using vulgar language and doing drugs, some learners carry dangerous weapons. The support staff member from Mkhonzi Secondary explained:

Pupils in this school come from different family backgrounds, but mostly they come from poor families. Learners do drugs and they have influence on learners to do the same. They also carry dangerous weapons.

Both support staff members had encountered incidents of ill-discipline in their respective schools, where obscene language was used by learners. They had also witnessed learners doing drugs and carrying dangerous weapons. Their observations concur with Furlong's (1985) research which found that anti-social

behaviour, like violence, may be reinforced in a child's life if those who do drugs coerce them into doing the same.

5.5.2 Gender and masculinity

The participants from the schools participating in this study stated that gender is one of the factors which contribute to violence being perpetrated in their schools. They cited boys as the main perpetrators, while young boys and girls tend to be the victims of violence. Haffajee (2000) states that gender-based violence impacts extensively and detrimentally on young boys' and girls' physical and psychological health. It is mainly boys who abuse and sell drugs, who bully young boys and girls, and fight among themselves. Many young learners, of both genders, abuse alcohol, particularly those in the 14-to-16 age groups. This is supported by the SGB chairman from Mkhonzi Secondary who said:

During a trip to a neighbouring school, learners, both boys and girls, were caught consuming alcohol. Their ages were about 14 to 16 years and the majority of them were in grade 9.

The SGBs view gender as contributing to violence production in schools. The SGBs confirmed that young boys and girls abuse alcohol, as do some learners in the lower grades.

By contrast, the principals of the participating schools were of the opinion that boys are the main perpetrators of violence, while young boys and girls are usually the victims of gender-based violence. This view by principals supports the notion that socio-economic challenges still play a major role in spreading violence in South Africa (Vally, Dolombisa and Porteus, 1999).

The principal of Impunzi High stated: 'It is the young boys and girls who suffer bullying. The bullies are usually the older boys, especially those who do drugs.' The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary confirmed this, explaining how it affected one young girl in particular, who was bullied by a boy who took her money by force: 'She is a good young girl who is 13 year old. She was literally terrified to come to school after that robbery incident.' The principals viewed older boys as the perpetrators of violence, and young boys and girls of any age as the victims. They noted that some of the boys who are bullies are substance abusers, which is why they rob other

vulnerable learners of their money. In this instance, gender-based violence is perpetrated by learners on learners (Dune et al., 2006).

The educators from the participating schools supported the views of the other participants, in identifying older boys as bullies who harass younger boys and girls. An educator from Mkhonzi Secondary stated: 'Boys in particular bully other boys and girls as well. But girls unfortunately are always victims.' The educators, like the other participants, viewed boys (usually older boys) as perpetrators of violence, who prey on girls. This concurs with what Tolan (2007) noted, namely that male aggression, be it subtle or unsubtle, plays a major role in gender-based violence. Despite what these participants stated about boys being the perpetrators of violence, the learners identified male educators as equally responsible for shaping gender-based violence in schools. A learner from Mkhonzi High related on how a male educator had tried to kiss her during a function at school:

This teacher just grabbed me by my hand and said he wants me to kiss him. I refused to do that, but he insisted and said he will kiss me on the cheek. I wrestled myself away from his grab and went back to watch the beauty contest.

The learners concurred that boys use violence against girls and younger boys, but stressed that educators also use violence against girls. Those educators use their position of power to force themselves on young girls, thus perpetuating the cycle of gender-based violence in schools (Dune et al., 2006).

In conclusion, the research findings of the present study indicate that violence is shaped by the socio-economic status of the school community, and by gender. The socio-economic status of the community contributes to the violence manifesting in schools. Violence is transported into schools from the surrounding communities: as a microcosm of society, schools therefore reflect whatever happens in the broader environment, if a community is violent; this spills over into its schools. The CSV (2009) reports that children who are chronic delinquents probably grew up in negative families and had a negative school experience. Therefore the communities from which these learners come are ravaged by the effects of HIV/AIDS; and children, single mothers and grandparents frequently head up families. Learners from such family backgrounds have virtually no one to look to for guidance, except

their peers. This makes them particularly susceptible to the lure of drugs and the use of violence.

In addition, the findings suggest that gender and masculinity contribute immensely towards shaping and exacerbating violence in schools. It has been established that those who bear the brunt of violence in schools are young boys and girls, in particular those in grades 8 and 9. In support of this view, I observed a case of assault being brought before the principal of Mpunzi High, in which a grade 9 girl had been slapped by a grade 10 boy for having stepped on the boy's shoe.

Violence is a barrier to learning, since young victims often absent themselves from school in order to avoid facing bullies. According to Wilson (2011), violence becomes an obstacle to the social and economic development of such children. Missing classes and dropping out of school may retard learners' academic progress and jeopardise the quality of their future life.

Apart from being subjected to bullying on the part of boys, girls continue to suffer violence at the hands of male educators who abuse their position of power to sexually harass them. Schools should establish structures to deal with the abuse of female learners by both boys and educators. An entry in a reflective journal suggested that ethnicity shapes violence, despite the fact that the interviews did not allude to this. A learner from Mkhonzi Secondary noted in her journal:

A teacher insulted a learner because he is a MoSotho not an uMZulu. This lady teacher would always refer to her as *isilwanyana*, meaning 'a small animal', whenever she makes a mistake in class.

It was disturbing that a person in a position of authority could exhibit such demeaning and xenophobic tendencies. Discrimination based on ethnicity might encourage learners to develop a dislike of foreigners and could foment xenophobic or ethnic-inspired violence in South African schools (Vally et al., 1999).

5.6 Places where violence occurs in schools

5.6.1 Toilets

All the participants were of the view that the toilets are where most violence happens. The participants did, however, differ as regards the type of violence that

takes place in toilets, but agreed that the toilets represent an ideal venue for illicit activities. The principal of Impunzi High said:

I would say in the toilets because that is where you find that somebody is complaining that someone took my money in the toilets. It's mainly in the toilets.

Both principals concurred that most violent incidents occur in the ablution blocks, and highlighted the boys' toilets as the most dangerous place in their schools.

The educators of the participating schools were, however, of the view that toilets are dangerous but that it is younger learners, especially newcomers, who are victimised. An educator from Mkhonzi Secondary stated:

I think it happens in the toilets sometimes at knifepoint. You find that the little ones are victims, especially the newcomers. At one time a young boy could not come to school because there was a boy who used to demand money from him each time he goes to the toilet.

The educators pointed out that the toilets tend to be favoured by perpetrators, because they are hidden from the eyes of the school authorities.

The learners supported the views of the principals and educators, concurring that the toilets are where the production of violence in schools is shaped. A learner from Mkhonzi Secondary indicated:

This happens during lessons when a learner asks to go to the toilet. When he arrives at the toilet, he may find some smokers smoking inside the toilet, and unfortunately he might get mugged by those boys he found in the toilet.

The learners identified the toilets as a place where violent incidents like muggings take place. This view is corroborated by a learner from one of the participating schools, who noted in his journal that he saw older boys ill-treating newcomers as well as younger boys in the boys' toilets. Such instances of violence were not as prevalent in the girls' toilets.

The SGBs of the participating schools were of the opinion that toilets are the venue where a different kind of violence plays out, namely where graffiti is written. The SGBs stated that although graffiti can appear on any school walls, it is in the toilets

where the most humiliating, degrading and insulting comments are to be found. The chairman of the Impunzi High's SGB confirmed:

Learners do vandalise the school in the form of graffiti such as in the toilets. They write insulting and degrading stuff about other learners.

The SGB members confirmed that the toilets are places where violence takes place, noting that graffiti is the most prevalent form of such violence.

Supporting the SGBs' findings are members of the support staff who indicated that it is in toilets that perpetrators gamble or stash their drugs (particularly dagga). They concurred with the SGB members that learners insult one another by writing on toilet walls. A member of the support staff at Impunzi High said:

Learners usually gamble, smoke dagga at the toilets. One day we found dagga rolled into cigarettes hidden in the toilet. It is obvious it belonged to a seller. Learners also insult one another by writing on the walls.

The support staff members concur that what happens in the toilets may foster an escalation in violence: learners gamble and smoke dagga, abuse drugs and write insulting comments on the walls, knowing that their deeds will go unobserved. This deviant behaviour on the part of learners may be attributed to feelings of anger or indignation towards schools (Rock, 1973). During my visits I also observed broken toilets and water pipes, as well as derogatory writings on toilet walls. Such learner-educator insults, in my view, perpetuate schools-based violence. Despite placards on the front wall warning learners of the dangers of smoking, drugs, alcohol-abuse and carrying weapons, there was evidence that learners smoked in the toilets – the presence of cigarette butts attested to this.

5.6.2 Classrooms

All the participants in this study were of the view that a significant number of violent incidents take place in class. This is where fights, theft, graffiti and vandalism occur. Normally these types of violence happen in the absence of educators, but sometimes while they are present. Some learners vandalise desks or steal other learners' belongings under the noses of the educators. An educator from Impunzi High remarked:

In this school violence happens mostly in classrooms almost in all grades. This violence happens both during and in the absence of educators. There are so many cases of fights among learners, theft, breaking of windows that take place in classrooms.

The educators in the sampled schools were of the opinion that violence manifests in classrooms, and that it can happen at any time, regardless of whether or not an educator is present. This supports the argument by Burton (2007), that most learners at school experience some form of violence in the classroom.

The learners concurred with the educators' statements that violence and violence-inducing incidents occur in classrooms. A learner from Impunzi High said:

Violence happens in the classrooms. Learners smoke and gamble using playing cards in a classroom. Learners also break windows and notice boards deliberately.

The participating learners pointed out that various behaviours might give rise to violence in the classroom. Because some learners gamble and smoke in class, their actions disturb the other learners. This view is confirmed by an educator from one of the participating schools, who noted in her diary that she had caught learners gambling using playing cards in the classroom. The learners also alluded to the fact that some perpetrators vandalised classrooms, mainly when educators were not present. This contradicts the theory espoused by Marshall (2003), that when learners are closely monitored it will result in them becoming bored and developing violent tendencies.

The principals of the participating schools stated that unoccupied classrooms invite behaviour that could lead to violence. This supports the argument by CSPV (1998) that violent behaviour is the result of a collision of behavioural patterns between individuals within certain social contexts. Therefore principals alluded to the fact that learners fight in class. Supporting this view was an entry in the learner correctional register at one of the participating schools, which noted that two boys were punished for having fought in class. Other prohibited actions which occur when there is a lack of supervision include stealing and gambling. The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary explained:

It is very disappointing that you find learners unattended in a classroom. This creates an opportunity for learners to fight and hurt one another. Most of the cases of violence that were reported to me as a principal took place in a classroom.

The principals were of view that unattended classes promote incidents of violence. They ascribe this to the fact that learners are left unsupervised during free periods and study periods (which are usually not supervised). Mncube and Harber (2013) argue that unattendance of classes happen in disorganised schools where there is non-observance, on the part of educators, of their basic terms of employment. The principals attributed absenteeism amongst educators to personal illness, family responsibilities or commitments and a lack of responsibility. During my tour of the schools, I observed that most of the classes were rowdy. I noted that this was especially the case where there were no educators present, although in some instances the classes were disorderly despite the educators being present.

5.7 Lack of teacher professionalism

5.7.1 Absence from class and lessons

The absence of educators from classrooms was unanimously identified by the participants as one of the factors encouraging violence in schools. They stated that whenever a fight occurs among learners, the likelihood is that no educator would be present, since learners would not fight in the presence of an authority-figure. The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary said:

I would say violence incidents in this school mainly happen in the classrooms, especially during the study periods. I would normally say in most cases when you hear of kids fighting the probability is more than 90% that there was no teacher in that class....

The principals viewed unsupervised classes as an invitation to violence. They estimated that 90 per cent of fights in class happened in the absence of educators. One of the principals opposed the view that educators frequently absent themselves from class, insisting that they are always present. The principal of Impunzi High

stated: 'Violence happens mostly in the toilets because there are always teachers in the classrooms.'

These contrasting views provided the researcher with ample opportunity to understand the reality of different views about educators' absence from classrooms. The learners who participated in this study reiterated what the principals had said about the absence of educators contributing to incidents of violence in schools. The learners added that chaos breaks out and fights erupt when educators are in the staff room or outside the classroom. A learner from Impunzi High said:

Fighting, bullying, gambling and even smoking happen in the classrooms when the teachers are not in the classrooms, but when they are in their staff room.

The learners were of the opinion that unsupervised classrooms are a fertile breeding ground for different types of violence. One of the reasons why educators were absent from class is that some of them had problems teaching in their particular learning area. A learner from Impunzi High noted:

Another issue is that teachers don't go to classes because they have a problem in teaching mathematics, so they bunk classes in grade 9. They just give us tests without teaching us.

Certain educators absent themselves from class because they are unable to fulfil their mandate of teaching children. According to the learners participants, some educators lack knowledge of their chosen area of specialisation, hence they bunk class. In so doing, the educators turn their backs on their main purpose, which is to prepare learners to become future employers or employees who are disciplined and will obey their organisation's stipulated values (Green, 1991).

The educators who participated in this study were also of the view that learners behave in a manner that is unbecoming, in front of an educator. They indicated that the absence of educators from class created an ideal space a culture of violence to take root. An educator from Mkhonzi Secondary said:

There is no way a learner can bully another learner if the teacher is in class, so one of the factors that attributes to violence is the absence of educator in class.

The educators agreed with the other participants that an educator's absence from class creates an opportunity for the reproduction of violence in schools. They view this in light of the fact that an educator's presence is a deterrent to violence or violence-inducing behaviour. Motala, Dieltiens, Carrim, Kgobe, Moyo and Rembe (2007) argue that absenteeism not only create a platform for violence but also contributes to the loss of valuable teaching time.

The educators ascribed their absence from class to free periods and their having to attend educational workshops. This view is collaborated by Motala et al. (2007) when they state that strikes, stay-aways, examinations, sporting events and municipal activities are cited as some of the reasons why educators absent themselves from work. Such actions negatively affect the progress and welfare of learners at school.

I observed that whenever there was no educator in class, the learners would gamble and play cards, some would even quarrel and fight. The fact that learners are sometimes left unattended refutes the argument by Foucault (1977) that the set-up in schools resembles that of prisons where inmates are constantly watched.

The chairmen of the SGBs of the participating schools emphasised that not all violence occurs in class in the absence of educators, some instances of violence occur elsewhere on the premises. Nevertheless, they acknowledged that some educators arrive at school late and leave early, which means learners are left alone and at the mercy of those wishing to misbehave. The SGB chairman of Mkhonzi Secondary explained:

Not many cases of violence occur in the classroom, but some take place outside the classroom. However the educators arrive late to school and they also leave early before the school closes for the day. This leaves the learners alone without educators. Such a situation can lead learners to do nasty and dangerous things which can lead to violence.

The SGB members conceded that although some violence takes place outside the classroom, it can also occur inside the classroom in the absence of educators. They acknowledged that some educators do not adhere to school hours, which leaves learners vulnerable to any kind of violence inside the classroom. All learners who are left unattended are tempted to indulge in misconduct (Giddens, 1994).

The support staff members of the schools participating in this study had contrasting views about the absence of educators from class as one of the factors promoting violence in schools. While one support staff member stated he was unaware of violence happening in classrooms, the other acknowledged that violence and violence-inducing incidents do happen in unsupervised classes. The support staff member from Mkhonzi Secondary said, in acknowledging that violence occurs in classrooms: 'I hear that learners gamble and fight in the classrooms especially in the absence of teachers.'

Some support staff members acknowledged that educators' absence can cause an escalation of violence in schools, but others indicated that they had no knowledge of this. This difference in opinion points to the fact that support staff are not always informed about what happens in their schools. Some such support staff are segregated and are not recognised as part of the school community. Not involving them in the affairs of the school in effect creates a space for the production of violence in schools (Downes and Rock, 1988).

5.7.2 Lateness in attending class

All participants in this study deemed lateness on the part of educators to be a major factor in shaping violence in schools. They stated that educators' tardiness provides disruptive and ill-disciplined learners with an opportunity to indulge in mischievous acts. An educator from Impunzi High claimed:

Late-coming is a problem in our school. Both teachers and learners come late. Late-coming by teachers provides learners with an opportunity to misbehave and even indulge in violence activities.

The participating educators believed that their colleagues who arrive at school late in effect give learners time to misbehave. Educators, through their lateness, not only abdicate their duty to teach learners, but also expose learners to violence such as assault, robbery and many other violent activities (Leoschut and Burton, 2009).

Learners left unattended tend to indulge in activities which may result in violence. I observed that in both the sample schools educators would take their time to arrive at class, wasting about five to ten minutes before attending to the learners in their class. This was corroborated by a learner from one of the participating schools, who noted in her journal that one female educator was always late for class, which means

learners were frequently left on their own. The learners concurred that educators' tardiness placed their fellow learners in a vulnerable position and opened them up to different kinds of abuse. Learners were frequently robbed of their possessions (especially money and calculators) when educators took their time arriving for class. A learner from Impunzi High said:

Most of the time teachers come late to school like most of learners. In their absence, boys from other classes come and rob learners of their money and calculators. We also get time to gamble by playing dice and playing cards.

The learners attributed the educators' absence from class to lateness. Because such lateness has a bearing on the occurrence of violence in school, it means the school, rather than protecting learners from violence, teaches them violence (Van Wyk, 2008). Such a lack of professionalism must be curbed in order to shelter learners from potential violence.

The principals of the participating schools were of the opinion that educators lack professionalism, given the way in which they behave. According to the principals, educators come to school late and some are even late for class, which gives wayward learners ample time to misbehave and venture into criminal activities. The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary said:

We do have a challenge in terms of late-coming ... late-coming is rife at school. It is very disappointing that educators also come late to school. Educators must know that if they are not in class they are creating a fertile ground for kids to fight and hurt one another.

The school principal conceded that some educators arrive late and thereby shirk their duties. Both principals found such unprofessional behaviour undesirable. Failure to be present to educate learners may promote truancy and disruptive behaviour in school which may, in turn, prompt some learners to indulge in criminal activities (Burton, Leoschut and Bonara, 2009).

The support staff members of the participating schools pointed out that not only learners are tardy in coming to school, educators are also among the late-comers. The support staff members deemed such behaviour unprofessional and lacking in

terms of their role as authority-figures. In acknowledgement of the above, a support staff member from Mkhonzi Secondary noted:

The educators in this school do come late and they also leave early. This leaves the learners without educators and this leads to nasty accidents happening in class.

The support staff members noted that such lax educators lack professionalism in as far as their conduct is concerned; they abdicate their duty and mandate to teach while failing to ensure the safety of their learners. Learners who are left to their own devices may develop deviant tendencies which fail to conform to the set norms of the school (Giddens, 1994).

In conclusion, while Harber (2001) and Fataar (2007) state that South African schools are plagued by various types of violence, violence takes place in different place and at different times. Some of the places where violence occurs include the toilets and classrooms. A lack of educator professionalism, which saw them being absent from class, was instrumental in making the classroom a potential site of violence. Toilets are dangerous places in schools, since it where most instances of violence happen. This is due to the fact that toilets are normally located out of the line of sight of the authorities. Besides toilets, classrooms may be breeding grounds for violence, for various reasons. Unsupervised classrooms create a potential space for violence to occur in schools. Many free periods and unsupervised study periods see learners being left to their own devices. Schools should put plans in place for instances when educators are absent due to illness or family responsibility, or when a lack of professionalism on their part gives rise to absenteeism.

A lack of educator professionalism includes absence from and lateness in coming to school. According to Hunt (2007) this is attributed to the dysfunctionality of schools, characterised by low morale amongst educators, a lack of accountability, and learner absenteeism.

It is an educator's duty to be present at school during working hours, in order to carry out his/her professional mandate, which is to teach a child without fail. An educator's failure to present him/herself for class potentially exposes learners to various kinds of violence. Apart from being absent, many educators report late for duty. Their

tardiness promotes truancy and encourages learners' disruptive behaviour, which may lead them to resort to criminality and violent behaviour.

5.8 Measures for preventing violence in schools

5.8.1 Code of conduct for learners

The participants confirmed that their schools do have a school code of conduct, which the learners know about. The difference between the two schools was that one distributed copies of the code of conduct to parents and learners upon registration, while the other school told learners about the code by the word of mouth, that is, the learners did not receive printed copies. The principal of Impunzi High explained:

Yes they know about the code of conduct, but I must admit they don't really know the contents of it. Actually we can't afford to give them, we talk about the code of conduct in the assembly and we have copies with the LO [Life Orientation] educators who have to conduct lessons looking at the code of conduct.

The principal of one of the schools stated that the learners are merely informed about the contents of the school's code of conduct; they are not issued with copies. This means learners do not have a physical and constant reminder of the rules and regulations which are in place to discourage them from committing violence. A code of conduct is a tangible measure aimed at preventing learners from committing disruptive acts which can lead to criminal activities and violence (Burton, Leoschut and Bonara, 2009).

On the other hand, the educators from the other school stated that learners do have the code of conduct in their possession, which they were given during registration, but the challenge is that it seems the learners are not familiar with its contents. An educator from Mkhonzi Secondary said:

They are given this code of conduct when they are admitted to school but they don't read it, we can see that from the way they behave for example late-coming. I think we have a challenge to try and educate our learners about the contents of the code of conduct especially the RCL [Representative Council of

Learners], for they are the backbone of the school. The onus is upon the school to try and ensure that everyone is aware of it.

Some educators were of the opinion that learners are given the school code of conduct documents on registration, but other educators denied that, stating that learners are merely informed of it. All educators agreed that the learners do not know what the school code of conduct entails. They conceded that it is their duty, as educators, to educate learners about the code. Besides being a deterrent to committing violence, such a code may help prevent unwanted learner behaviour, including absenteeism, poor learning performance, learner drop-out and truancy (SAHRC, 2008). This will happen because the school code of conduct for learners will spell out, in detail, what is expected of learners. The learners in the two sample schools, when reviewed, stipulated (in agreement with the educators) that those found in breach of the code of conduct would be subjected to disciplinary procedures: they might be warned, suspended or even expelled, depending on the seriousness of the misdemeanour. Offences alluded to in the code include bullying, fighting, carrying and using dangerous weapons, gambling, sexual harassment, drug abuse, and any action that perpetuates violence.

The SGB members of the participating schools concurred with the other participants, conceding that some schools furnish their learners with a code of conduct on the day of registration, but they acknowledge that not all learners may be familiar with the provisions outlined therein. This was evident when the SGB chairman of Impunzi High indicated that 'there is a school code of conduct, but I am not sure whether it does reach learners'.

The SGBs, as custodians of good governance at schools, have a legal responsibility to provide and ensure a safe and violence-free school environment (Squelch, 2001). The implementation of the school code of conduct is mainly the responsibility of school managers and educators, but SGBs participate in formulating the code as a means of curbing and preventing violence (Brunton and Associates, 2003).

5.8.2 Strategies learners use to cope with school violence

The participants who responded to the question about the strategies learners use to cope with school violence, highlighted that learners report their victimisation to

educators. It was also evident that if that route fails, or if they receive an unsatisfactory response from an educator, they report the matter at home. The learner knows that his/her will take action after having reported the matter. Furlong (1985) argues that Anti-social behaviour (like violence) may be reinforced in a child's life when parents only respond or take action when the child commits an aggressive or violent act. It was also revealed that some learners solve the problem of victimisation by removing themselves from the problematic situation. Failing all else, they fight the perpetrator. The educators contended, in support of the other participants' responses, that learners report their victimisation to them and also to their parents/carers at home. An educator from Impunzi High said: 'They come and report to us and sometimes they go report at home if it happened that they didn't get much help in the school.'

The participating educators confirmed that learners, in an attempt to cope with violence, report their victimisation to their educators. They also report this to their relatives, if they are of the opinion that their case did not receive the necessary attention from their educators.

However, the principals were of the opinion that learners tend to report instances of violence or harassment to their siblings, if they are victimised at school. This is supported by the principal of Impunzi High:

Learners go out during break time and get their siblings (older brothers) to come and deal with the perpetrators. We are trying our level best to stop this because we do not want outsiders to interfere with matters happening at school. We discourage that.

The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary added to this comment:

We as the school, we have established the safety and security committee which also involve learners. So learners are part of the measures in place to fight violence in schools.

The principals of both schools expressed the view that, as a means of coping with violence in schools, learners report incidents to educators, yet in extreme cases they revert to their siblings. The latter action, on the part of learners, is deemed dangerous, since the victim's relatives can seek retribution from the perpetrators by

coming onto the school premises. Such a threat not only potentially harms the learners involved, but also innocent educators and other learners, while educational activities may also be disrupted (UNESCO, 2010). Another measure which is open to learners is to become involved in the school's safety and security committee. This enables learners to acquire skills in fighting schools-based violence.

The participating learners stated that they could resolve any problem they encounter: if they failed to talk themselves out of the problem, they were taught to defend themselves, so they resorted to fighting. As an example, a learner from Mkhonzi Secondary said: 'I can mention with confidence that I can talk myself out of the situation without having to fight because I don't like fighting and I avoid fighting.'

Several learners (mainly boys) made startling revelations about the measures they take to cope with violence, nothing that they either try to talk themselves out of a nasty situation in order to avoid fighting, or fight if they cannot defuse the situation verbally. This is not a positive measure, since violence begets violence.

5.8.3 Strategies educators use to cope with school violence

The participants in this study mentioned that educators tend to send offenders to the principal for punishment. If the case is severe they summon the child's parents to a disciplinary hearing which is constituted according to DoE policy. It was also found that educators were invited to serve on the school's safety committee, yet many participants lamented the fact that these committees are largely dysfunctional.

The educators agreed with the other participants in that perpetrators of violence are sent to the principal's office if educators fail to administer discipline themselves. If that does not help they follow all departmental procedures and eventually expel the perpetrator. This is reiterated by an educator from Mkhonzi Secondary, who said:

A perpetrator of violence is sent to the principal if the class teacher fails to resolve the problem. The principal will summon the perpetrator's parent and talk the issue out. If that does not help the perpetrator is suspended or expelled after only all measures prescribed by departmental policy have been followed. Sometimes as educators we use our discretion, by recommending a 'no return' to the learner at the end of the year. In 2009 we had troublesome boys who smoked and sold dagga. We decided as educators to give them a 'no return'. There was a reduction in the use and sales of dagga.

The educators acknowledged that principals have the final say in matters relating to discipline in schools. It is the principals who suspend perpetrators in accordance with prescribed departmental policy. The educators revealed that they sometimes recommend that specific learners, who are troublesome, not be readmitted to their school the following year. While expelling troublesome learners might be the solution, however it must not infringe learners' right to education. In support of the latter view, Mandela argued peaceful ways should not be blocked in solving problems (Asmal, Chidester and Jones, 2003).

The principals, on the other hand, stated that they invite educators to be part of safety and security committees in their schools. They raised a concern, though, that these safety committees are not effective and tend to be dysfunctional. This was supported by the principal of Mkhonzi Secondary:

Teachers were invited to be part of the committee that will constitute the safety and security committee, but I will be honest with you that committee is not functioning; we are just like a school that doesn't have a safety and security committee.

School principals are supposed to establish safety and security committees to help protect all those within the school boundaries. They invite educators to be part of such committees, yet the committees are not functional. The principals suggested that people of good standing in society should be invited to address the learners about the dangers of violence. The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary said:

We should invite all people who talk about how to live a good life, especially the social workers, police and motivational speakers, to come and address learners. Also, the ex-convicts should be invited and relate their experiences to learners about life in prison.

Such talks will motivate learners to aspire to live decent lives and to work towards a prosperous future. Another benefit is that these individuals will highlight the destructive nature of violence, thereby contributing to reducing incidents of violence in schools.

The SGB members who participated in this study opined that educators talk to learners whenever learners have committed some form of violence or a violent act. The chairman of Mkhonzi Secondary's SGB said:

The teacher would talk to the learners, whenever they are involved in violence or violent incidents. If the learners don't pay attention to what the teachers say the matter is handed over to the principal and also to parents, if need arises.

The SGB members were of the view that teachers report acts of violence to principals if they fail to resolve such matters themselves. They also believe perpetrators' parents should be involved, if necessary. According to Mestry, Van der Merwe and Squelch (2006), there has been an alarming increase in violent incidents in South African schools since 1994. For this reason, schools should involve learners' parents in finding solutions to this matter.

The educators did not mention break supervision as a possible measure that could be undertaken to curb violence. Through observation it was revealed that the educators did not supervise the learners during break. A learner from Mkhonzi Secondary noted in her journal:

It was during the break that two male learners were fighting as if that they wanted to kill each other. I did not know the reason of their quarrel. One boy stabbed his adversary; the other boy retaliated by hitting the other one with a brick. The two boys were sent to the clinic.

Supervising learners is essential in any attempts at stabilising violent incidents in schools during break time. According to Drosopoulos et al (2005) bullying (both verbal and physical) is a global phenomenon which is prevalent in many schools. Therefore such supervision will restore the confidence of those learners who are usually the victims of bullies. This will also prevent older bullies from coming to school, terrorising learners and selling drugs. It is incumbent upon the school's management to draw up a playground supervision roster, in order to prevent violent incidents from occurring during break. The presence of educators in class was deemed the best means of curbing violence in class, because learners would hesitate to do anything untoward in the presence of an authority-figure. It is therefore of the utmost importance that educators discharge their mandate of teaching learners by honouring their teaching periods. Educators therefore must inculcate a

personal culture of presenting themselves for work. They must be professional in their doings. This is supported by a learner from Impunzi High who said: 'The teachers must always be in a class because violent activities occur during their absence.'

Although support staff are not involved in teaching and learning, they offered suggestions about how educators can curb violence in schools. The support staff member from Mkhonzi Secondary suggested: 'Give learners extra work and involve them in extramural activities to make them busy and not concentrate in drugs.' The idea is that supplementary work will deter learners from engaging in violent acts, or that extramural activities will keep learners busy and draw their attention away from illegal substances, which are the cause of many woes including crime, thuggery, sexual harassment and a host of different types of violence (Thio, 2010).

5.8.4 Strategies SGBs use to cope with school violence

The participants in this study believed the SGBs do discuss issues related to violence during their meetings, where parents are urged to monitor the behaviour of their children. It also transpired that although parents are elected to safety and security committees they are not capacitated to formulate any strategies aimed at curbing violence.

The SGB members who participated in this study indicated that in their meetings and in the parents' meetings, violence was a topic for discussion – in fact, the effect violence has on learners and educators has been discussed at length. According to the SGB chairman of Mkhonzi Secondary:

At parents' meetings we discuss all the issues of violence in the school and how they affect the learners and the teachers. The suggestions are made as to how violence can be curbed at school.

Many educators, however, view SGBs as not doing much, since when violent incidents occur, they are often not present at school. According to the educators, while the SGBs may discuss issues pertaining to violence, it is mostly talk. An educator from Mkhonzi Secondary noted:

SGBs are not that much involved because these things happens while they are not here at school, but they become aware of such incidents and they

discuss them during their meetings. There is nothing much done because these meetings do not produce tangible solutions.

The principals who participated in this study stated that SGBs, as a way of coping with violence, form committees on safety and security. However, such committees become impractical since those parents serving on the committee do not have the capacity to steer such a forum. The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary, in respect of how SGBs cope with violence, said:

It is difficult for a parent who is not that capacitated, to go into a staff and request a meeting to constitute the safety and security committee. What makes it difficult is that the parent does not have time because he or she is working.

The principals confirmed that SGBs are not empowered to form and coordinate safety and security committees, and in addition, many parents find it difficult to carry out this task, since they have day jobs. The principals expressed the view that such committees may only be effective if they are educator-orientated. This argument may be due to the fact that learners spend most of their time in the presence of educators. As they grow, many learners' violent tendencies grow (Osgood 1998); therefore educators are the ones who would best be able to identify the emergence of violent tendencies in a child. According to the principals, on the other hand, to ensure buy-in on the part of parents, it is best to avoid establishing educator-driven committees. Getting learners engaged in sport was put forward as a possible solution to the problem of violence in schools. The chairman of the SGB of Mkhonzi Secondary proposed: 'We should engage learners more in sport and not give them opportunity to stay idly.' It is self-evident that learners who are idle are prone to engaging in untoward behaviour which can result in violence. Learners who participate in sport, on the other hand, have fewer opportunities for indulging in activities that can result in violence.

5.8.5 The role of the DoE in curbing violence in schools

The *Education Laws Amendment Act*, 31 of 2007 (ELAA31, 2007) was promulgated to counteract violence in schools. This law allows and gives power to schools to conduct searches for dangerous weapons, drugs and illegal substances. Schools

may make use of official structures to assist them in implementing this law, for example calling in the help of the SAPS.

All the participants in this study were of the view that their schools enforce *ELAA 31* of 2007, even though they themselves were not familiar with its content. The educators admitted that they conduct random searches for drugs and dangerous weapons, but reported that the law was not effective as a deterrent to violence in schools.

Those educators who participated in this study indicated that although the law allowing for learners to be searched was applied, it yielded few results. One of the reasons is that boys hide their weapons and illegal goods with girls. An educator from Impunzi High confirmed this:

We do apply that law, *ELAA 31* of 2007, because the school have invited SAPS to come and conduct search for dangerous weapons and drugs. They have come in here twice this year randomly searching learners. They found few knives and dagga. According to me this search was ineffective since it yielded little than expected.

The educators reported that the search and seizure act is applied, since schools invite the SAPS to come and search learners for weapons and drugs. The educators were not confident, however, of the success of such searches. Inviting the police to enter the premises to search learners, even though the intention may be good, makes the school set-up resemble that of a prison, where inmates are constantly surveyed (Foucault, 1977).

The learners who participated in this study were also of the opinion that the search and seizure law, despite being applied at their schools, was a waste of time. They argued that some educators informed certain learners beforehand that the police would be coming to conduct a search of the premises. This enabled the would-be culprits to come to school without their weapons or drugs on pre-arranged days. A learner from Mkhonzi Secondary attested to this when he said:

We were informed that the police will come anytime to search the learners for drugs and dangerous weapons. Consequently learners did not bring things that might put them into trouble. During the search days the boys would hide

their weapons and drugs with girls because police sometimes do not search girls.

The learners felt that the law which permits the search and seizure of dangerous weapons and illegal substances is not applied effectively. They pointed out that by informing learners prior to the search the educators defeated the object of the exercise. On the other hand, as a means of curbing violence, the learners suggested that schools be provided with security guards who are capacitated to implement the search and seizure policy. A learner from Impunzi High proposed the following:

To prevent violence from happening at school, the school must employ security personnel who will monitor and search everyone who enters the school.

This policy, which is stipulated in *ELAA 31* of 2007, allows schools to conduct searches and to confiscate drugs and dangerous weapons found on the school's premises. The principals who participated in this study, however, had conflicting views about the application of *ELAA 31* of 2007. One principal stated clearly that as a school they do not apply this law: the reason given was that there is no time to do searches, because the priority and the emphasis have to be on educating learners. The other principal said that their school occasionally applied the policy of search and seizure, especially when they had been tipped off about learners carrying drugs and dangerous weapons. The principal of Mkhonzi Secondary admitted:

I want to be honest with you: we don't apply the policy of search and seizure. We just literally don't search the kids; you see there's no time to do that. Our main focus is at teaching the kids. I think it is in 2009 that a search was done at school and it was not effective.

As is evident from the above, principals do not apply the policy of search and seizure systematically. Clearly, they view this policy as ineffective. Furlong and Morrison (2000) view violence as an action involving criminality and aggression, and which retards the scholastic development and learning opportunities of a learner. It is therefore the duty of all stakeholders (principals included) to try their best to curb violence and thwart the chances of it manifesting in schools. The SGB members of the participating schools agreed that the policy is implemented in their schools, and that the SAPS had been invited (by the principals) to conduct raids on their

premises. This seemingly contradicted the reports of the principals who said the policy was not implemented. The SGB members also differed from the principals in that they viewed the policy as a success, since some learners had been caught in possession of illegal substances or weapons. The SGB members viewed the raids as a deterrent to school violence. An SGB member of Impunzi High said:

We do implement this law (*ELAA 31 of 2007*). The principal invites the police to come and conduct searches at school. These searches are successful since learners have been caught carrying things illegal like dagga and knives.

The SGB members, as the custodians of good governance in schools, deemed the searches to be successful because perpetrators were often caught red-handed. They also viewed the searches as a deterrent to the violence which is apparently becoming a disturbing phenomenon in schools across the globe (Akiba, LeTendre, Baker and Goesling, 2002).

In conclusion, the literature and the findings suggest that measures of preventing violence in schools include, among others, the code of conduct for learners, the *Education Laws Amendment Act, 31 of 2007* (ELAA31, 2007) and strategies aimed at curbing violence – strategies which stakeholders such as learners, educators and SGBs can implement. The code of conduct for learners is an important document because it not only outlines the rules and regulations which learners need to adhere to, it also stipulates the expected behaviour of learners. This tool can be used to prevent learners from engaging in any disruptive behaviour which can lead to criminal activities and violence in schools. The competence of a school's managers and educators will determine the success or failure of implementing such codes of conduct. Besides the code, the DoE has enacted legislation aimed at counteracting violence in schools. The *Education Laws Amendment Act, 31 of 2007* (ELAA31, 2007) was proclaimed to help schools in their endeavour to fight schools-based violence, permitting them to conduct searches for dangerous weapons and illegal drugs, and seize them. According to this Act, schools are permitted to solicit the help of the SAPS. Learners can also report incidents of violence to educators, as a means of coping with bullying or victimisation. In addition, learners may join safety and security committees which can benefit their fellow learners and educators alike. Educators can also escalate reports to the principal, in matters regarding school

discipline. In turn, principals can take disciplinary action by following the prescribed departmental policy. Educators as well as SGB members can join the school's safety and security committee. One obstacle preventing the more effective functioning of such committees is that those parents who serve on the SGBs often have work commitments; therefore it is not easy for them to attend emergency committee meetings.

5.9 Chapter summary

In chapter five, data were analysed and findings were discussed. The participants in this study expressed the belief that what happens in schools is influenced by what is happening in society, which means violence in schools is often inspired by the violence manifesting within the community. Therefore, the fabric of the community where the school is located has a bearing on the production of violence in its schools. All participants in this study believed that as much as the schools value the education of their learners, ill-discipline is rife, and the safety of neither learners nor educators is guaranteed. All participants alluded to the fact that violence and violent behaviour are prevalent in their schools. Physical attacks, bullying, verbal abuse, theft, sexual harassment, vandalism and corporal punishment are the major forms of violence manifesting in schools. These types of violence occur both inside and outside the classroom. It is therefore imperative that schools put structures in place to fight violence. Gangsterism and drug and alcohol abuse were mentioned as contributing to violence in schools. The participants viewed drugs, particularly *wunga* and *dagga*, as exacerbating the problem. While Boys were identified as the main culprits for victimising young boys and girls however it was established that gender-based violence was also perpetrated by educators (Dunne, Humphreys and Leach, 2006). By contrast, it was established that girls also were frequently the perpetrators in cases involving cyber-bullying. According to the participants, violence often took place in toilets – bullying especially. The toilets tended to be defaced by graffiti which slandered learners and educators alike. The absence of educators from classrooms perpetuated violence: when learners are left unattended they tend to embark on potentially violent activities. Socio-economic status and gender (male) were cited as factors which also shaped violence in schools.

Measures aimed at preventing violence in schools were also discussed in this chapter. It was stated that the schools' code of conduct for learners represented an instrument that could be used to discourage violent behaviour, as it laid bare the school's expectations of learners, to the learners. Such codes consist of detailed tabulations of what learners should and should not do. All participants were in agreement regarding the possible ways of curbing violence. Reporting any such incidents to educators and inviting people of good social standing to address learners, were two proposed ways in which to curb violence. Supervising learners during break time and while playing sport was another suggestion. Also proposed was the idea that security guards should be empowered to conduct searches of all learners entering the school premises. Extra schoolwork was envisaged as another deterrent to keep learners out of mischief that may result in violence. The *ELAA*, 31 of 2007, promulgated as a measure by the DoE to curb school violence, was discussed. This act allows schools to conduct searches for dangerous weapons and to seize them. From the findings it transpired that some schools, albeit being aware of this act, did not implement it. All participants agreed that it is essential to implement this law by searching for and seizing any illegal substances and weapons.

CHAPTER SIX: KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE FINDINGS

This research was an exploratory qualitative study which examined the dynamics of violence in schools in the area of KwaDabeka in Clermont, KwaZulu-Natal. Two schools were chosen as samples for this study. This chapter discusses some key themes that emerged from the findings of the present research. Not all the themes that surfaced in this study will be interrogated, only those that purport to answer the research questions pertaining to this study.

6.1 Power struggles and violence

This research found that power struggles exist between educators and learners, and also among learners. It emanated that educators, by virtue of being authority-figures, exercised power over learners. The male educators in particular tended to exhibit their power over other male learners. This is corroborated by Chege (2006, 3), who states: "In South Africa, for example, young people in the group and individual interviews described their relationships with male teachers as generally hostile and detached as they reportedly seemed to 'enjoy' beating the boys and often humiliated them." These power struggles were also noted when male educators sexually harassed schoolgirls. In some instances, schoolgirls were impregnated by male educators. A support staff member from Mkhonzi Secondary stated that an educator had allegedly impregnated one of the schoolgirls, but the rumours were found not to be true. Strangely enough, these rumours were corroborated by entries in the SGB minute book, which seems to indicate that the schoolgirl may have been pressured to withdraw the allegation. She may also have been promised certain favours in return, by the educator in question. This is an indictment which the SAHRC (2008, p. 7) referred to as follows: "Young female learners are particularly vulnerable, and very often are not in a position to negotiate consensual sex or the use of contraception." This is supported by Osgood (1998), who asserts that more males are involved in violent behaviour than females.

Power struggles also played out in the relationship between learners and non-teaching staff. The learner participants viewed non-teaching staff as having no jurisdiction over them, while the support staff demanded respect, as they deem

themselves to be part of the institution. Such power struggles led to direct conflict between learners and support staff. Affirming this situation is the support staff member from Mkhonzi Secondary, speaking from experience. Drosopoulos, Heald and McCue (2008), in their research, speculate about what might be the source of such disrespect being shown by the learners. They postulate that learners might be used to bullying their parents and getting away with it, hence their general contempt for authority-figures.

Power struggles among learners manifest as gangsterism. Some learners do not believe in school justice, and therefore have less respect for the school as an institution which is able to solve the problems they encounter. The learner participants reported the ill-treatment and violence they were subjected to at school to their relatives at home, or to friends. In retaliation, the perpetrators were often attacked and this invariably led to gang wars. The principal of Impunzi High alluded to an incident where people from the community came onto the premises and stabbed learners at school, in retaliation for what had happened to their sibling.

6.2 Masculinity and violence

The findings of this research suggest that older boys used their masculinity to exercise authority over younger boys. As a result, younger boys tended to be ill-treated and bullied in various ways, for instance they would be made to pay a certain amount of money at the demand of older boys. This is one way in which bullies show their power over vulnerable younger boys. This is corroborated by Mestry, Van der Merwe and Squelch (2006, 46), who note that those who suffer bullying are "vulnerable, displaying physical and psychological qualities making him/her prone to victimisation, particularly a lack of support, leaving the victim feeling isolated, exposed and scared". A learner from Impunzi High attested to this by saying that young learners and newcomers are robbed of their money or made to hand over their money. Failure to do so leads to them being beaten. However, not only boys suffered from such a display of power, girls also were victims. The manifestation of masculinity often occurs in the form of gender wars. Boys deem girls to be the weaker gender, which is why the girls are victimised by bullies at school. Traditional stereotypes rate boys above girls, and girls are therefore victimised and molested by boys, without the perpetrators suffering any consequences. This is supported by

Haffajee (2006, p.3), who notes that "schools are fertile breeding grounds for potentially damaging gendered practices ... Girls are trained to accept the battery and assault, while boys, by contrast, receive tacit permission to continue with the violent behaviour because their violence is not condemned or interrupted." An educator from Mkhonzi Secondary confirmed that it is mainly girls who are victimised by boys.

6.3 Disregard for the law

This research found that a disregard for the law and for regulations was prevalent in schools, due to a lack of proper internal organisation and management, but also due to pure ignorance or complete insolence on the part of educators. Corporal punishment was abolished in 1996 after the first democratic government took over the administration of the Republic of South Africa in 1994. Corporal punishment is now outlawed. Section 8(1) of the *South African Schools Act* of 1996 states clearly that schools are prohibited from administering corporal punishment. Despite this, there were clear reports of certain educators meting out corporal punishment as a form of discipline. Worse, they did this with the full knowledge that it was against the law. This was confirmed by an educator from Mkhonzi Secondary, who confessed to flouting the law. Many educators defended themselves by stating that corporal punishment was the most effective way of instilling discipline in an African child. These sentiments were echoed by the research findings of the South African Council of Educators (SACE) (2011), which noted that despite the banning of corporal punishment in South African schools, it remained the method of choice for disciplining learners. SACE (2011) further elaborate that this disregard for the law is due to a lack of alternative methods of discipline.

It emerged in this research that some school managers furnished their learners with a school code of conduct for learners. Given the general disregard for the provisions of the codes, it may be that these documents were not distributed due to sheer negligence. School codes of conduct are legal documents which direct learners regarding what to do at school, how to do it and when to do it. Such codes therefore provide learners and educators alike with a sense that regulations are in place to create a safe environment for teaching and learning (Mestry et al., 2006). Any disregard of the school codes of conduct for learners constitutes a breach of the

South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996. The principal of Impunzi High stated that his school did not have such a code to distribute to learners.

The findings of the present research suggest that schools have little knowledge of the *Education Law Amendment Act*, 31 of 2007 (ELAA 31, 2007). This law grants schools the power to conduct searches and seize illegal weapons and/or substances. Many schools have a total disregard for educational laws aimed at instilling order. This was confirmed by the principal of Mkhonzi Secondary, who stated that his school did not apply this law, despite knowing about it. This constitutes blatant contempt for the law.

6.4 Socio-economic status

The present research found that socio-economic status is a contributing factor in schools-based violence. Schools are often located in communities characterised by abject poverty. According to the CSPV (1998), areas with high population density, low-income earners and high housing density (i.e. low-cost housing) are especially prone to violence. Such conditions diminish a community's ability to exert social control (CSPV, 1998). It is for this reason that societies around schools in semi-urban areas are plagued by many social ills, which impact on what happens at those schools. Most inhabitants of these communities are, in one way or another, affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Invariably, learners' lives are influenced by what happens at home. Many children head up households following the death of their parents or adult carers, due to HIV/AIDS. The concomitant lack of leadership or guidance at home has a bearing on whether learners participate in activities that may result in violence. The researcher discovered that gambling, drug abuse, alcohol abuse and gangsterism are rife at the sample schools, and concluded that these societal ills are a reflection of what is happening within the surrounding communities. This confirms Furlong's (1985) argument in respect of learning theory, which is that deviant behaviour is not inherent but is learnt through imitation or reinforcement. Therefore, perpetrators of violence copy acts of violence learnt mainly within their own communities. A learner from Impunzi High noted that when learners are faced with conflict they solicit the help of their friends outside school, and in this way they transport violence from their society into their school.

6.5 Degeneration of moral values

The present research found that morality had eroded among learners and educators. These deteriorating morals manifest in the form of graffiti on school walls – toilet walls especially. Such vandalism speaks of great disrespect for school property. Learners lack ownership of their schools, as is evident from their vandalising school property. This is supported by Furlong and Morrison (2000), who argue that acts of vandalism are representative of schools being invaded by the norms and values of the surrounding community. Educators also display a lack of moral values: they are supposed to lead by example, but their derogatory comments fail to make them suitable role models for learners. A support staff member from Impunzi High corroborated this by noting that educators feel free to use swearwords and vulgar language when addressing learners.

6.6 Lack of professionalism

In this research it emerged that professionalism was lacking among educators. In support of this finding, Harber and Mncube (2011, 237) quote the Deputy Minister of Education, who in 1997 said: “Many of our teachers are not committed to quality teaching, their behaviour leaves much to be desired, they are more interested in their own welfare, are not professional and dedicated, are never at school on time...” Educators’ absenteeism and lateness thwart learners’ learning opportunities. Their lack of professionalism also serves to promote violence in schools: this study found that in the absence of an educator, trouble-makers amongst the learners abused their classmates. Educator absenteeism is directly to blame for young boys and girls being harassed by perpetrators who seize the moment. Gender-based violence, like sexual harassment, takes root in the absence of educators. This was corroborated by the principal of Mkhonzi Secondary, who noted that most fights among learners happen during an educator’s absence. Schools therefore, instead of preventing violence, provide a breeding ground for violence. This is supported by Harber (2002, 8), who argues that disciplined schools may help to prevent violence, but on the flip side schools “can provide an experience which reinforces violent attitudes and adds to the child’s experience of violence”.

6.7 Chapter Summary

In chapter six, key themes emerging from the findings were discussed. This research found: first that power struggles exist between educators and learners, and also among learners. The educators by virtue of being in authority exercise power over learners. The male educators in particular were inclined to exhibit their power over male learners. On the other hand power struggles among learners manifest themselves as gangsterism. Some learners do not believe in school justice, therefore they will solve the problems they encounter by themselves. Power struggles also play out in the relationship between learners and non-teaching staff. The learner participants viewed non-teaching staff as having no jurisdiction over them, while the support staff demanded respect, as they deem themselves to be part of the institution.

Second, the findings suggest that masculinity was at play between the older boys and the younger boys. The older boys exercise their authority over the younger boys. Such a relationship will always be a source of conflict and violence at school. However, not only boys suffered from such a display of power, girls also were victims. The manifestation of masculinity often occurs in the form of gender wars. Boys deem girls to be the weaker gender, which is why the girls are victimised by bullies at school. Third, disregard for the law and stipulated regulations were rife at schools. Whilst corporal punishment is now outlawed, some educators apply it as a form of discipline. Most educators did this in the full knowledge that it was abolished in all schools in the Republic of South Africa. While educators were offenders in this regard, however learners also disregarded the school code of conduct for learners that were given to them. However it also emerged that schools did not furnish learners with school codes of conduct. This was flouting of law which control the behaviour of learners at schools. The findings also suggest that schools have little knowledge of the *Education Law Amendment Act, 31 of 2007 (ELAA 31, 2007)*. This law grants schools the power to conduct searches and seize illegal weapons and/or substances. Many schools have a total disregard for educational laws aimed at instilling order. Fourth, this research found that socio-economic status is a contributing factor in schools-based violence. Societies around schools in semi-urban areas are plagued by many social ills, which impact on what happens at those

schools. Therefore the concomitant lack of leadership or guidance at home has a bearing on whether learners participate in activities that may result in violence.

Fifth, this study found that morality had eroded among learners and educators. These deteriorating morals manifest in the form of graffiti on school walls – toilet walls especially. This vandalism of schools shows a great respect of school property. It is not only learners who manifest this degeneration of moral values, also educators display a lack of moral values: they are supposed to lead by example, but their derogatory comments fail to make them suitable role models for learners.

Sixth, lack of professionalism was rife among educators. According to this study educators absent themselves from classes and are frequently late from classes. Educators' absenteeism and lateness thwart learners' learning opportunities. Their lack of professionalism also serves to promote violence in schools.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary

In identifying the dynamics of violence in schools, this project explored the underlying reasons for and the types of violence, as well as initiatives for violence prevention, with the intention of generating indicators that may inform a common framework for comparison within all nine provinces of South Africa. The findings of this study were based on the following research questions. The first question is:

What are the perceptions and experiences of learners, educators and school governors of school violence?

Participants in this study were reluctant to acknowledge that violence does occur in their schools, but were rather keen to depict their schools in a positive light. It eventually came to light that violence does indeed occur in their schools, in forms they may not initially have characterised as such. It appeared that learners are rude, ill-disciplined and uncooperative. Some learners abuse drugs. According to the stakeholders, drugs are the root of all evil, and the cause of violence in schools. The participants also revealed that fighting is rife among learners. Educators are supposed to act as role models, yet it was established that instead of curbing violence they perpetrated it in certain acts towards learners. Many educators scold and treat learners in a manner that is unbecoming to their profession. Scolding as an act does not perpetuate violence, but often a learner's reaction to a scolding may be violent. Criminals and thugs were identified as coming from outside schools to pose a threat to the stability of those schools. The types of violence that were mentioned include physical attacks, bullying, verbal abuse, theft, sexual harassment, vandalism and corporal punishment. Physical attacks involve pushing, shoving, kicking, stabbings and many other acts of aggression. Fights and assaults are prevalent in schools, and are exacerbated by the availability of weapons. However, it was established that most fights are started by learners who abuse drugs. Bullying bedevils schools, with young boys and girls in particular being the targets. The perpetrators usually want to extort money which they then spend on drugs. Schools are duty bound to protect young boys and girls from bullies before irreparable damage is done to them – physically and emotionally. Besides the aforementioned

types of bullying, some learners practise cyber-bullying, or use cell phones and the internet to insult or humiliate other learners and even educators. Cyber-bullies are found across the gender spectrum, but it tends to be mainly girls who perpetrate this type of aggression.

Verbal abuse is rife in schools. Learners use swearwords and insulting language towards other learners and even educators. This form of moral decay may lead to the deterioration of relations between educators and learners. It is not only learners who use vulgar language – educators are not immune from using insulting language. By giving in to their anger or frustration, such educators abdicate their role of being role models, perpetrating violence through swearing. Their actions could cause learners to become so resentful that they develop a negative attitude towards their educators and fellow learners, as well as the learning process.

Theft is a common occurrence in the sampled schools. In the main, learners' property (especially bags and calculators) are stolen. The thieves tend to be substance abusers who sell the stolen goods so that they can fund their habit. Jealousy and revenge are other possible motives for theft. Schools, together with SGBs, should formulate strategies for preventing theft, because theft traumatises learners and disrupts their learning.

Sexual harassment happens both at school, and sometimes en route to school. Usually, it is male learners who are the perpetrators. But, sadly, it is not only male learners who are implicated in sexual harassment – some male educators are also guilty of this misdemeanour. Certain educators are alleged to have impregnated schoolgirls. Having sexual intercourse with a minor is against the law, but it also attacks the dignity of those girls and may have an adverse effect on their health and scholastic progress.

Vandalism in the form of graffiti is rife in schools. Learners use graffiti to insult one another and sometimes to target educators, by writing comments on the walls of toilets and classrooms. Obscene drawings and writings appear on most classroom walls and desks. Vandalism includes schoolrooms being stripped of their doors, copper handles being stolen from classroom windows, cabling and wiring being stolen, and taps being removed. Such thievery leaves schools in a state of decay and disrepair.

Corporal punishment remains the preferred way of administering discipline in many schools. Those who inflict such punishment view it as the fastest and the most effective way of disciplining learners. Corporal punishment is deemed the only African way of maintaining discipline. Educators perpetrate such violence against learners in the full knowledge that what they are doing is illegal.

Violence in schools is a result of gangsterism, illegal drug abuse and alcohol abuse. Gangsterism originates in schools when learners report their victimisation to their siblings, relatives and friends, and solicit help from them. Gangs then show up on the premises ready to avenge their friends. Apart from such outsiders coming to school bent on revenge, gangsterism is also the result of learners aligning themselves with specific groups and then getting involved in fights to protect their friends.

Drug abuse is one of major causes of violence in schools, where it severely disrupts teaching and learning. The most prominent drugs are *wunga* and *dagga*, which are readily available to learners via drug pushers working on behalf of drug lords. The problem is that communities contribute to the escalation of drug abuse. Learners who sell and distribute drugs on behalf of drug merchants transport the problem from the communities into the schools.

Alcohol abuse is another source of violence in schools. The problem is exacerbated by the availability of liquor outlets near schools. The most disturbing trend is that learners between the ages of 14 and 16 abuse alcohol. This is an indictment against those communities from whom the learners copy certain societal values.

Most learners view the school toilets as dangerous places to be. The toilets are ideal for the nefarious purposes of perpetrators, who value their secluded location. The toilets are usually hidden from the eyes of the school authorities. Many learners are bullied physically and emotionally in the toilets. The environment is redolent with graffiti which vilifies other learners as well as educators. Some learners also gamble or abuse drugs in the school toilets.

A lack of teacher professionalism, which manifests as teacher absenteeism and tardiness in coming to school, encourages violence in schools. Most violent incidents occur in classrooms in the absence of educators. By arriving late educators not only abdicate their duty of teaching learners, but they also expose learners to violence such as assault, robbery and many other violent acts. Some educators argue that

they are only absent during free periods, or when they attend departmental workshops. Nevertheless, their absence from class provides the perfect breeding ground for violence and violent incidents and that much cannot be disputed.

The second research question is:

How do wider structures such as gender, age, socio-economic status and ethnic/tribal divisions shape violence production within schools?

The socio-economic status of the communities surrounding schools shapes the types of violence being perpetrated on school premises. Schools are a microcosm of society; therefore they reflect whatever happens in that society. The violence that manifests in schools is a reflection of the violence occurring in societies. Communities surrounding schools are often home to low-income earners, and the rate of unemployment is high. This has a bearing on the lifestyle of the inhabitants. The communities from which these learners come often experience the effects of the scourge of HIV/AIDS, which explains why the children, single mothers and grandparents are heading up so many households. Learners from such backgrounds lack proper guidance and mentorship; hence they indulge in practices which may result in violence.

Gender is another factor which shapes violence. Young boys and girls suffer ill-treatment and abuse at the hands of older boys. The victims are usually in grades 8 and 9. Many boys tend to view girls as sex objects, therefore they sexually harass girls whenever an opportunity arises. However, male educators frequently use their position of power to force themselves on young girls and abuse them sexually.

The third research question is:

What measures and initiatives are taken by schools to promote a violence-free environment?

Code of conduct for learners

The code of conduct for learners is an important document which outlines the rules and regulations to be observed by learners. It also stipulates the behaviour expected of learners. Thus, the code is a tool that can be used to prevent learners from displaying disruptive behaviours which can lead to criminal activities and violence in schools. The researcher established that although schools have codes of conduct,

learners are not issued with copies. Learners are told, by word of mouth, what the code entails, and they therefore do not have a constant reminder to discourage them from resorting to violence. It is incumbent upon school managers and educators to implement codes of conduct in their schools.

Learners' strategies for curbing violence

The learners participating in this study reported incidents of aggression to their educators, as a means of coping with violence in schools. In extreme cases the learners reported their victimisation to their siblings – a dangerous course of action which could lead to gangsterism. To cope with violence, learners serve on safety and security committees which may or may not enable them to acquire the necessary skills to combat schools-based violence. Some learners revealed that they talk themselves out of a dangerous situation, but failing that, they are prepared to defend themselves by fighting. Such negative actions are discouraged – rather than curbing violence, fighting fuels violence. The educators propose, as a means of curbing violence, that learners should be engaged in sporting activities – that will leave them with little or no spare time to indulge in potentially violent activities. Schools should therefore investigate the possibility of providing even the most basic of sporting facilities.

Educators' strategies for curbing violence

Educators report disciplinary matters to their principals, who take disciplinary action by following prescribed departmental policy. Educators often recommend to principals that learners who perpetrate violence not be accepted for enrolment the following year. Some educators recommended that learners be supervised during break time and even during informal sporting events. Such supervision is essential for preventing violent incidents in schools. For their part, educators must discharge their mandate of educating children with aplomb, and must therefore not absent themselves from class. It can be argued that learners are often afraid of engaging in activities that can lead to violence in the presence of an educator. Therefore, the educators' presence in classrooms will act as a deterrent to those planning to misbehave. As a safety measure, safety and security committees should be constituted, and meetings should be held regularly. These committees must involve educators, learners and parents, so that a wide range of stakeholders are

represented. There is a view that in case of serious disciplinary issues, where disciplinary action needs to be taken, the parents should be involved.

SGBs' strategies for curbing violence

SGBs frequently meet to discuss and seek solutions to the problem of violence in schools. From the research it appears that no noticeable solutions have come from the SGBs. Because of their position, SGBs should form safety and security committees, but the perception exists that they are not empowered to do so, or to coordinate such committees successfully. The fact that parents work during the day, and that some of them are illiterate, makes it difficult for them to serve on these committees. One opinion is that such committees, in order to be effective, should be educator driven. The danger of that is that schools could lose parental buy-in. Another action which may help to curb schools-based violence is to invite people of good social standing (i.e., pillars of the community) such as social workers, policemen and women, and motivational speakers, to address learners about the dangers of violence. Besides these people, reformed ex-convicts should be invited to speak to learners about life in prison as a deterrent. The educators suggested that learners must be engaged in extracurricular activities, besides sports, to keep them busy and draw their attention away from drugs, which are deemed the underlying cause of many societal woes, including crime, thuggery, sexual harassment and a host of different types of violence.

The DoE's strategies for curbing violence

The DoE enacted legislation to help schools fight violence. The *Education Laws Amendment Act, 31 of 2007 (ELAA31, 2007)* was proclaimed to help schools in their quest to fight violence on their premises. Schools are permitted to solicit the help of the SAPS in searching learners for weapons and illegal drugs, and seizing any such materials. There is a view that for such action to be successful, learners should not be informed prior to a police raid. Some principals do not apply a policy of search and seizure, since they deem the process to be time consuming, given that the mandate of the school and its educators is to educate learners. The DoE allows schools to formulate codes of conduct for learners as a way of curbing violence. Section 8 of SASA outlines how schools should design such a code and what it

should entail (SASA, 1996). The DoE, through section 10 of SASA, abolished corporal punishment in this country (SASA, 1996) with the express aim of curbing violence in schools. Contravening this section of the Act, section 10 of Act 34 of 1996, constitutes a breach of law and is punishable by law.

7.2 Conclusions

In this study, which was exploratory and qualitative, two schools situated in what can be referred to as semi-urban townships, were studied. A variety of research methods were applied to produce the data which authenticated the findings of the research. The researcher found that different types of violence occur in schools, but that all violence has an impact on the lives and scholastic progress of learners.

The research found that there were two main contributors to violence in the sample schools, namely their communities and the school's stakeholders. First, communities surrounding the schools are plagued by poverty as well as numerous social ills. The socio-economic status of their inhabitants is low. These factors have a bearing on learners' lives, influencing and affecting the way learners live within their communities and the way they function within their schools. Many communities in impoverished areas are rife with HIV/AIDS, gangsterism, theft, drugs, alcohol abuse and sexual harassment.

The social ills infesting communities are transported into schools by learners who observe and copy what happens in their immediate environment. This fosters in learners proneness to violent tendencies. It emanated in this study that some schools have sloppy or no security, but this does not mean that schools are generally powerless to curb most types of violence. Schools may establish and maintain structures to counteract the spill-over of violence from the community and onto their premises. Schools may put up security barriers that will discourage theft and burglary. Installing security gates manned by security personnel will inhibit undesirable outsiders (especially gangsters) from gaining access to the premises.

This study found that in the vicinity of schools there are liquor stores and drug dens plying their trade. Many learners access drugs and alcohol easily whenever and wherever they want. Such learners become problematic and disruptive at school. Sound relations between schools and communities could be a panacea to many

abuse-related problems. Schools should forge interrelationships with communities so that those communities 'take ownership' of 'their' schools. Such community pride will help counter the efforts of those who supply drugs and alcohol to learners.

The societal influences that bedevil communities are mirrored in the violence learners experience at school. Bullying, physical attacks, sexual harassment, graffiti, drug abuse and verbal abuse are just as rife on the premises. Some learners inflict physical and emotional violence on others. The younger ones, especially girls, are usually the victims of such violence. It transpired from this study that violence begets violence, since victims report their victimisation to their relatives, who then retaliate and usher in gang wars in schools. The toilets were pointed out as the most dangerous places in school, since they provide a safe and hidden place for perpetrators to victimise other learners: the toilets are usually somewhat removed from the eyes of the school authorities. The fact that educators are not seen to be patrolling such hotspots, but are in fact not visible on the terrain, promotes violence on school premises. Schools should therefore draw up a roster which will ensure the presence of educators in obscure parts of the terrain during break times in particular. Furthermore, schools should ensure that the whereabouts of all learners on the premises are accounted for, as this will serve as a deterrent to violence occurring during teaching time. Such action will expose unwanted trespassers who, with the complicity of unsavoury characters amongst the learners, commit acts of violence in schools.

Second, this research found that school stakeholders were often the perpetrators of violence. The research found that in some schools educators lack professionalism – they arrive late and leave early. Some learners made known their observations that educators absent themselves from school. Such actions leave learners without educators, but also without surveillance. Learners are therefore exposed to any form of violence. Educators thus unintentionally collaborate with troublemakers in unleashing violence on innocent learners. During educators' absence from class girls are sexually harassed and young ones are bullied. The research showed that gambling frequently occurs in classrooms where educators are absent. This could lead to conflict and subsequent fights, with serious consequences which include outside communities getting involved. Some learners noted that educators ignore their reports of victimisation; as a result they try to deal with the problem on their own

– such action ultimately has grave outcomes. Educators should therefore find it in themselves to act with professionalism in discharging their professional mandate of teaching learners.

The research also showed that many educators commit acts of violence with a clear conscience, despite knowing what they are doing is illegal and against prevailing social mores. For example, some educators sexually harass learners, using their position of power to victimise them. Such actions not only harm the victims physically, but may also scar them for life. As a result of their position of authority, learners trust and have faith in their educators. Therefore unsuspecting learners easily fall prey to the predatory intentions of unscrupulous educators. An educator mentioned that she saw her colleague with a schoolgirl in a very compromising situation, with him inappropriately touching the girl. However, the most direct and disturbing consequences of such dalliances are pregnancy and STDs (sexually transmitted diseases). Victims of such violence may suffer physical and emotional scarring, while the perpetrators may forfeit their jobs as educators.

Schools should be perceived as institutions where law and order rule. However, the opposite is the case: laws are breached consciously and unwittingly by educators. This study found that educators inflict corporal punishment on learners despite the fact that it was abolished by acts promulgated by the legislature. It emerged in this study that educators prefer corporal punishment as a means of disciplining learners. Some educators blatantly stated that they were subjected to corporal punishment during their schooling, and that it 'made them what they are'. What is not evident to these educators is that they are instilling in learners the perception that violence can be used to fight violence. The contrary is true: violence cannot be used as a corrective measure or form of discipline.

The researcher found that not all schools disseminate school codes of conduct to learners, therefore learners do not always know, in concrete terms, what is expected of them in regard to how they should conduct themselves. Empowering learners through hand-outs outlining the codes could serve as a deterrent to violence. A principal confessed that his school does distribute the code, and that they brief learners about the rules and regulations at the start of the school year, during assembly. But this does not seem to have the desired effect.

The search and seizure act was promulgated by an act of parliament (*ELAA 31, 2007*) to empower schools to search for and seize illegal substances and weapons. However, this researcher found that most schools are aware of this act, and that those who do know about it, hardly ever conduct searches. If they intend to search the learners they inform them beforehand, which defeats the purpose. This disregard for the law equals a missed opportunity for any school to set in place measures which could effectively fight violence.

Learner-on-learner violence was rife in schools. Bullies displayed their power over newcomers, girls and young boys. Some learners were forced to hand over their money at the command of bullies. Numerous victims reported such incidents at home, which led to power play unfolding between outside gangsters and school bullies. Power struggles also tended to surface between learners and educators, who abused their position of power over learners. It was noted that in these struggles educators sometimes slapped or punched learners, which angered the latter. This situation could result in violent confrontation, if educators do not stop their offensive behaviour.

This study established that vandalism and graffiti were rampant in the sampled schools. These two manifestations are representative of deteriorating morality among learners. Graffiti provides an outlet for insulting other learners as well as educators. There is no respect for school property – something which might be fuelled by a lack of ownership. The situation can be remedied if all stakeholders get a sense that they are equally responsible for their school's standing, infrastructure and achievements.

Some educators use insulting and vulgar language in front of learners, which reveals something about their own questionable morals. Such educators fuel violence through their utterances, instead of leading by example.

Since this study established that violence is rife in the sampled schools, corrective measures should be put in place to arrest the escalation of violence. A number of recommendations are tabled as measures which could be employed to help curb schools-based violence.

7.3 Recommendations

1. While educators are supposed to be role models to learners however findings suggest that some educators perpetrate violence against learners. This study recommends that if schools are to run effectively and violence free educators should endeavour to be true role models to learners.
2. Findings suggest that there is a lot of learner ill discipline in the school. In the light of this the findings recommend that more should be done to bring discipline back to schools. The state should embark on initiatives that will reduce ill discipline in schools.
3. Findings suggest that a lot of learners dabble in the drugs culture hence fightings among groups. This study recommends that if violence is to be eradicated the state should initiate the awareness to the learners about the dangers of substance abuse.
4. The findings suggest that female learners are victimised by male learners. In the light of this the findings recommend that the state should embark on an initiative to conscientise learners about the dangers of gender based violence.
5. While educators are expected to lead by example however the findings suggest that educators leave their classes unattended. This lack of professionalism tempts learners to embark on potentially violent activities. This study suggests that the state should put stricter measures in place to curb educator absenteeism from school and classes. Educators must also be workshopped about the importance of professionalism in the workplace.
6. The findings suggest that the hidden places like toilets are breeding grounds for violence. The study recommends that initiatives should be put in place to closely monitor the pupil movement in such places.
7. The findings suggest that Socio-economic status is one of the factors which shape violence in schools. This study recommends that schools must establish sound relationships with surrounding communities. The aim is to ignite the interest of communities in the wellbeing of the schools and learners in their midst. Communities might then feel a sense of ownership towards schools. Such an attitude might awaken the need to protect schools from any incidents which could potentially incite violence.

8. While the schools' codes of conduct for learners are in place in schools however they seem ineffective in curbing violence. The findings recommend that a thorough implementation of school code of conduct should be effected by workshopping all stakeholders especially learners, and parents on matters regarding learner conduct, since they are the least knowledgeable the school code of conduct for learners.

9. In the light that violence is rife and learners carry dangerous weapons and illegal substances, this study proposes the idea that security guards should be trained and empowered to conduct searches on all learners and outside people entering the school premises.

7.4 Final conclusion

The study was qualitative and therefore the perceptions of participants were interrogated to elicit what their thoughts were about scourge of violence in schools. Many views emanated from this study with respect to causes of violence, types of violence, victims of violence, places where violence occurs and remedies to be employed to curb violence. Moreover to the latter views participants believe what happens in schools is influenced by what is happening in society therefore it means violence in schools is often inspired by the violence manifesting within the community. The participants also believe that the fabric of the community where the school is located has a bearing in the production of violence in its schools. While all participants in this study believe that as much as the schools value the education of their learners, nonetheless violence and ill-discipline are rife and safety of neither learners nor educators is guaranteed.

7.5 Possible topics for further research

School violence is an inexhaustible topic; many aspects of violence were not alluded to and touched by this research. Therefore further research is recommended to delve deeper into the dynamics of this phenomenon. Further research could be done in the light of the stipulated recommendations. The question of violence perpetrated against educators and its impact on teaching and learning should be explored. The effectiveness of initiatives that fight violence should also be explored if they are in

place. If they are not in place what is the cause of their absence. While the school is said to be a microcosm of society therefore a link between violence especially gender based violence happening in the community should be explored. The impact of such transported violence to learner schooling and remedies should be explored.

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APPENDICES

A. Ethical clearance certificate

B. Permission letter from the KZN Department of Education

C. Interview Schedule for principal, Life orientation teachers, school governors and support staff

D. Interview Schedule for Learners-Victims

E. Interview Schedule for Learners-Perpetrators

F. Observation Schedule

Appendix A : Ethical clearance certificate



Research Office, Govan Mbeki Centre
Westville Campus
Private Bag x54001
DURBAN, 4000
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609
Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

28 June 2011

Dr. VS Mncube (1628)
School of Education Studies

Dear Dr. Mncube

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0182/011
PROJECT TITLE: Dynamics of Violence in Schools

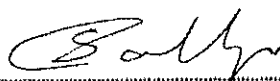
FULL APPROVAL NOTIFICATION – COMMITTEE REVIEWED PROTOCOL

This letter serves to notify you that your application in connection with the above was reviewed by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee on 22 June 2011, has now been granted full approval following your responses to queries previously raised:

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol

Yours faithfully



PROF. STEVEN COLLINGS (CHAIR)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE



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

Appendix B: Permission letter from the KZN Department of Education

29 Jul 2011 17:49

No. 9306 P. 1



kzn education
Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

VUSUMUZI SITHEMBISO MNCUBE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
EDGEWOOD CAMPUS
PRIVATE BAG X 03
PIETERMARITZBURG

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Date: 01 June 2011

Reference: 2/4/8/4


PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

PROPOSED RESEARCH TITLE: Dynamics of Violence in Schools

Your application to conduct research in the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, educators, schools and institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. Interviews and research where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period: From 01 June 2011 to 31 June 2012.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Superintendent General. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s) contact Mr Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Address: Department of Education Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200

The Department of Education in KwaZulu Natal fully supports your commitment towards research and wishes you well in your endeavours. It is hoped that you will find the above in-order.


Nkomothi SP Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education

3/6/2011
Date

*dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.*





kzn education
Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

VUSUMUZI SITHEMBISO MNCUBE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STUDIES
ASHWOOD
3605

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Date: 01 June 2011


PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

PROPOSED RESEARCH TITLE: Dynamics of Violence in Schools

Your application to conduct research in the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The research and interviews will be limited to the following Schools and Institutions:

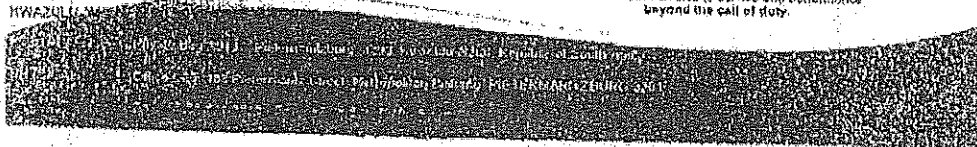
- 1. ██████████ Secondary
- 2. ██████████ Secondary
- 3. ██████████ Secondary
- 4. ██████████ Secondary
- 5. ██████████ Secondary
- 6. ██████████ Secondary
- 7. ██████████ High School
- 8. ██████████ High School
- 9. ██████████ Primary
- 10. ██████████ High
- 11. ██████████ High
- 12. ██████████ High

Regards,


Nkomoathi SP Sishi, PhD
Head of Department : Education

3/6/2011
Date

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.



Appendix C:

Interview Schedule for principal, Life orientation teachers, school governors and support staff

Name of School _____

Name of participants: _____

Gender: _____

Designation _____

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this research. This is our private study so we do not come here in the capacity as Department Education officials but as researchers. I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. You could also benefit from this study in the sense that your knowledge of the topic will increase.

These individual interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed. I give you my assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous (Van Heerden, 2000:276). I cannot tell other people about the personal detail of our discussion and I cannot mention your name. I can however use your information and those of others in a way that is not recognized as information of one particular person.

Interviews with principal, LO teacher and Governors are aimed at obtaining general information on the school's background inclusive of violence, ethos and organisational 'culture' and day-to-day life at school.

Kindly answer the questions as honestly as possible, as your responses will assist this study in obtaining information on school violence and can assist to improve school management and support.

Questions

1. Tell me about the background of the school. (Principals)
 - Population (group dynamics in terms of race)

- Size (number of learners and staff)
 - Can you tell me about any history of discipline/violence in your school.
2. How would you describe the ethos/ values/ principles of the school? (All except support staff)
- Values
 - School climate
 - Discipline/Violence.
3. What can you tell me about the culture of this school with regard to the following (All):
- Late coming
 - Meetings
 - Conflicts/Discipline problems
4. How does the school function on a daily basis? (All except support staff)
- Leadership and Management
 - School governing bodies
 - Curricular programmes
 - Extra-mural activities

Question: Code of conduct for learners

5. What kind of violence occurs in the school? (All)
- 5.1 Where does violence in your school normally occur?
- 5.2 How does it affect the learners?
- 5.3 How does it affect the teachers?
- 6.1 What strategies do learners use to cope with school violence? (All)
- 6.2 What strategies do the teachers use to cope with school violence?
- 6.3 What strategies does support staff use to cope with school violence?

6.3 What strategies do SGBs use to cope with school violence?

6.4 In what ways does your school implement the policy of search and seizure of illegal drugs and dangerous weapons? (ELAA 31, 2007)

7. What else can be done as a school to reduce violence?

Additional Comments

Do you have additional comments, concerns or suggestions that you would like to make, which are not included in the interview?

Appendix D:

Interview Schedule for Learners-Victims

Name of School _____

Name of Learner _____

Gender _____

Age _____

Grade _____

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this research. This is my private study and I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. You know that you are selected because of the violent experience you had and the way in which you coped in these situations.

This is an interview to gather information to find out how you cope when you are exposed to school violence. I want to ask you to some questions for me. The aim of these questions is to find out how school violence affects you and how you deal with school violence. I will also ask you questions on how to help learners to cope better and how to make schools safer.

These interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed. I give you my assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous. I cannot tell other people about the personal detail of our discussion and I cannot mention your name. I can however use your information and those of others in a way that is not recognized as information of one particular person.

Kindly answer the question as honestly as possible as, your answers will assist this study to get more information on the effects associated with school violence and can assist to improve school management and support.

Questions for interviews: Learners A – Victims

1. Tell me about things that you like about your school? Why do you like that?

2. Tell me about anything you dislike about your school? Why do you dislike that?
3. Do you think violence is a problem at this school? Why do you think so?
4. What are the common violent incidents at the school?
5. In what places do these incidents occur the most? Who is involved?
6. How safe do you think learner feel at this school? Please explain
7. Tell me about a time you experienced violence? – prompt when necessary
8. How did you handle the situation?
9. What helped you to cope with the situation?
10. Were you satisfied about how the school/teacher resolved the matter? Please explain.
11. If yes, how was the matter resolved?
12. Have you ever perpetrated violence? Please explain.
13. If yes, how was the matter resolved?
14. What kind of programs/measures can be used to support victims of violence?

Appendix E:

Interview Schedule for Learners-Perpetrators

Name of School _____

Name of Learner _____

Gender _____

Age _____

Grade _____

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this research. This is my private study and I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. You know that you are selected because of the violent experience you had and the way in which you coped in these situations.

This is an interview to gather information to find out how you cope when you are exposed to school violence. I want to ask you to some questions for me. The aim of these questions is to find out how school violence affects you as an individual and how you deal with school violence. I will also ask you questions on how to help learners to cope better and how to make schools safer.

These interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed. I give you my assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous. I cannot tell other people about the personal detail of our discussion and I cannot mention your name. I can however use your information and those of others in a way that is not recognized as information of one particular person.

Kindly answer the question as honestly as possible as, your answers will assist this study to get more information on the effects associated with school violence and can assist to improve school management and support.

Questions for interviews: Learners B – Perpetrators

1. Tell me about anything that you like about your school? Why do you like that?

2. Tell me about anything you dislike about your school? Why do you dislike that? Do you think violence is a problem at this school? Why do you think so? In what places does violent behaviour take place at this school and who is involved?
3. How safe do you think learner feel at this school? Please explain?
4. Were you ever a victim of violence in school? Tell me about the time you experienced violence.
5. What happened and how was it resolved?
6. Tell us about the incidence you were accused of as a perpetrator of violence
7. How was the situation resolved? Were you satisfied about the manner in which it was resolved?
8. In what ways could you have handled this situation differently?
9. What programs/measures can be used to reduce/prevent violence?

Appendix F: Observation Schedule

School Environment	Date	Date	Date
Entrance and Exit on the school premises (e.g. Security gate with alarm system; visiting parent, school busy; teachers supportive and friendly; help parents with direction and information)			
Gates locked (Locked during and after school hours)			
Electronic security devices (alarm, panic button) (Alarm system with security guard living on premises)			
Fencing (Wall in front but accessible low fencing around)			
Surveillance camera			
RCLs/Prefect duty/educators on duty			
Police Patrols			
Guard patrols armed/ cell phone or radio (Security guard)			
Strong room (Situated in principal's office; principal in possession of key)			
Rules and warning on notice boards			
Weapon searches/ and seizing			