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SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

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DECLARATION

I, Nomakhosi Nomathemba Sibisi, hereby declare that:

(i) The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my own unaided work.

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

(iii) The sources have been properly referenced both in-text and in the reference section.

Signature: …………………   Date: 27 January 2021

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the teachers and learners in South Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

School violence has become pervasive and is on the upsurge in schools throughout South Africa, and more especially in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The reality is that learners carry knives and guns to school, and many attend school under the influence of substances such as drugs and alcohol. Schools are meant to be a welcoming environment where educators can teach openly and learn without fear of victimisation and danger. Learners and educators who are exposed to violence on a regular basis suffer from various adverse psychological and physical effects. This research examined the causes, direct and indirect, of school-based violence and how it impacted both learners and teachers, using those who observed it and those who were victims of this scourge within a school setting. A qualitative research approach was adopted using educators and learners as key informants, and focus group participants, respectively. This study identified school-based violence, with specific reference to community violence and high rates of crime, as drivers of stress and fear among learners and educators. Reportedly, many learners in the schools under study exhibited behavioural problems due to the adverse socio-economic conditions they encountered and imbibed within their respective communities. Based on the findings, the study recommends that close collaboration and partnerships among schools, the community, and the police should be forged to address alcohol and drug peddling in and around schools in a concerted attempt to curb these societal problems. Moreover, parents and guardians need to take accountability for their children's delinquent behaviour. A point of departure should be their active involvement in their children's education through attendance of school meetings where issues of school violence, drugs, and weapons are discussed and resolved collaboratively.

Keywords: Community, Educators, Learners, High School, School violence

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television Camera
CJCP	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Children
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
CPF	Community Policing Forum
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GSHS	Global School-based Health Survey
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and communication technology
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LO	Life Orientation
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSVS	National School Violence Study
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
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
SANCA	South African National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependences
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization

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INTRODUCTION

"I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent."

-Mahatma Gandhi-

1.1 Introduction

The escalating violence in South African schools is a major concern. This issue of school violence has been brought to light by mainstream media reports and viral social media video clips (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013), causing widespread concern about the lack of safety in South African schools (Visser, Winnaar & Govender, 2018). School violence is defined by the South African Department of Basic Education (2015) in its National School Safety Framework of 2015 as violence that occurs not only on school grounds, but also when students travel to and from school or attend a school-related event. According to UNESCO (2017), over 246 million children and adolescents are victims of school violence each year. Data demonstrating the scourge's scope represents an underestimating of the true extent of the problem in South Africa. Longobardi, Prino, Matteo Fabris and Settanni (2019:49) posit that "many cases of school violence are generally concealed, underreported and under recorded". Despite this, the current statistics on school violence in South Africa is alarmingly high, with 57 out of every 1000 students encountering some form of violence (Grobler, 2019). In addition, Mahabeer (2020) indicated that school violence affected 80 percent of South African learners in 2019 on their route to and from school and at school.

Demographic and community factors that impact school safety are found particularly in South African township environments, and these epitomised the study area. Xaba (2006:566) claims that "South African township schools are especially vulnerable to unsafe conditions and threats of violence due to, among other things, their location in and around informal settlements". Blaine (2009:1) holds the view that the crisis in South African schools "…is reflected as [part of] the [many] crises in South African society". Widespread crime and violence in South African society have spilled over into schools, and research has confirmed that internal and external factors contribute to the prevalence of violence in schools. According to Ngqela and Lewis (2012:91), school violence may stem from the larger community and societal factors that the school has little or no control over. The causes of violence in schools are

multidimensional and complex and are occasionally conflicting. School-based violence is prompted by various factors that can be directly linked to factors that are external to the school (Duma, 2013). It has been argued that violence in schools is caused by out-of-school and non-school youth who typically reside in disadvantage communities around the school (Nhambura, 2019). Learners who reside in communities were violence is the norm will transfer these tendencies to school premises. South Africa sees a lot of violent acts in the communities, and children become accustomed to them, so they repeat them in school (Ndebele & Msiza, 2014), which helps explain why school violence is common in many South African schools. Research has shown that both advantaged and disadvantaged schools across the country experience forms of violence that are not only directed at learners in learner-on-learner altercations, but that are often directed at teachers as well. In fact, learner-on-teacher violence heightened post-1994 (Zulu, 2004). Research has demonstrated that incidences of ill-disciplined learners have increased in the country to the magnitude that learners are alleged to have murdered others on school premises (Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe & Van der Walt, 2004). Physical and verbal confrontations, vandalism of school property, substance abuse, theft and gangsterism are some of the reasons that have led to the suspension and dismissal of learners in schools (Mncube & Harber, 2013).

According to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC, 2008), the most serious types of violence occur at school, not just amongst students but also between educators and learners, as well as hooliganism and gangsterism, all of which make the school environment dangerous and unsafe for learning. According to the South African Council of Educators [SACE] (2011), educators are at high risk as targets of school violence. Moreover, it is argued that the construction of educators being perpetrators of violence in schools may be source of the increased rates of educators being targets. More recently, schools in some parts of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) had to close due to the level of violence that brought learning and teaching to a halt (News24, 2019). A school was closed following the death of two learners who were stabbed to death when they tried to separate fellow learners during a fight. It was alleged that the stabbing incident followed a fight over a mobile phone the previous Friday, which had ended with one learner being injured on the face (eNCA, 2018). School violence often occur because of gangsterism, sexual violence, theft, robberies, and intimidation that escalate on school premises. Several learners have taken guns and knives to school as weapons to either intimidation or cause harm to other learners, teachers, and even security personnel.

Various injuries and even deaths have occurred because of shootings and stabbings in schools. The fear of victimisation and death that these incidences have caused has also increased stress and anxiety levels among law-abiding learners and members of staff. The fear of violence has also affected parents who are constantly worried about their children's safety.

Mdletshe (2007) states that, of a total of 28 educators in one school in KZN, 25 refused to return to their classrooms as they feared for their safety. School property has been vandalised and educators' cars were also vandalised to such an extent that educators refused to return to the classroom unless something drastic was done. Smith (2007) reported that 115 assaults and 111 acts of sexual violence involving firearms had occurred in South African schools at the time of that study. These forms of violence should be eradicated because school violence violates any school's educational mission, destroys its climate of respect, and jeopardises the intent of the school to be free of aggression against persons and property (Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2004). When interviewed, teachers argued that the South African government's focus was inclined towards learners' rights without counter-balancing these rights with corresponding responsibilities. They thus argued that they were exposed to violent learners and left vulnerable while their rights as law-abiding citizens were neglected and violated (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010; Mncube & Harber, 2010). Such comments suggest that limited or no action is taken against learners who misuse their rights and abuse the rights of their teachers and peers. Thus, violent, and delinquent learners infringe on the rights of other learners who want to acquire an education. Moreover, the disruptive behaviour of learners is not only a major concern for the safety of teachers and learners, but it also contributes to the deterioration of the culture of learning and teaching (Davids, 2017).

The extensive carrying and use of firearms, the expansion of organised crime, virtually uncontrolled substance abuse, and a weak criminal justice system are deemed responsible for the escalation of violence in South African schools (Le Roux & Mokhele, 2011). Gun violence in schools is related to gangsterism and revenge shootings (sometimes community violence spills over into the school) and is the cause of escalating conflicts and bullying that get out of hand and lead to a culture of violence in schools (Casella, Potterton & Visser, 2006). Some learners argue that they carry weapons to school for self-protection against intimidation and bullying (Le Roux & Mokhele, 2011). Clearly, unrestricted access to a weapon at home or in the community is a driver of violence in schools. Alcohol and substances abuse have been identified to be the strong drivers of school-based violence, predominantly in high schools in

South Africa, and the ready access to alcohol, drugs, and weapons in communities has undoubtedly contributed to violence in schools (Burton & Leoschut, 2012). Le Roux & Mokhele (2011:318) arugue that

> "*There is substantial evidence that reinforces the fact that crime and school-based violence in South Africa have been on the increase for the past two decades and that crime and violence have generally become a way of life for South African communities and high school learners*".

Therefore, schools must develop and maintain safe, welcoming, violence-free learning environments where learners respect education and their teachers, cooperate fully with teachers, and follow the rules and the code of conduct (South African Department of Basic Education, 2014). These are spaces where human rights should be respected, and a culture of teaching and learning developed. However, regardless of efforts to achieve these ideals, they seem to have been ineffective. High exposure to violence has resulted in a vicious cycle of violence as learners respond with violence as a measure of conflict resolution. Mounting violence among learners could thus be a result of continuous exposure to violent members of the family or sheer community violence, harsh discipline at home, and the normalisation of violence as a means of resolving conflict (Ward, 2007).

1.2 Background to the study

School violence is an international, and global problem. Thus, South Africa is not except from this pandemic. According to Section 12(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa, 1996a), everyone has the right to freedom and security. This includes the right to be free from all forms of violence and not to be tortured in any way. Subsection (2) of this section stipulates that everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right to security and control over one's body. The National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 (Department of Education, 1996) also provides details for the protection of learners against physical and mental harm (Netshitahame & Van Vollenhoven, 2002). However, the right to safety is only partially achieved in South Africa as unacceptably high numbers of violent incidences manifest in communities and schools. A stable school is a place where teachers teach, learner learn and school personal operate in a warm and supportive atmosphere free of coercion and fear of violence, mockery, harassment and embarrassment,

thus schools should be places where everybody is physically and mentally secure (South African Department of Education, 2011). However, new reports of school violence have flooded the media recently with news of incidences of violence and even fatalities. In November 2017, the North Coast Courier reported that a fight between schoolboys from different villages in Mandeni, KZN had led to examinations for Grades 8 and 11 learners being suspended at Mbuyiselelo High School (North Coast Courier, 2017). SABC (2016) also reported that the situation was so bad that police had to take some learners to school and that they were under police guard when they wrote examinations.

Journalists who write both online and in newspapers report daily on cases of abusive acts that are associated with physical, sexual, and gang-related acts of abuse in schools (Dlungwane 2017). According to Christie, Butler and Potterton (2007:210):

> *"The purposes of schooling, which can be achieved only in a peaceful school environment, are: to provide an environment where teaching and learning can take place; to prepare people for the world of work, nation-building and citizenship; to teach the values of society; and the development of the individual."*
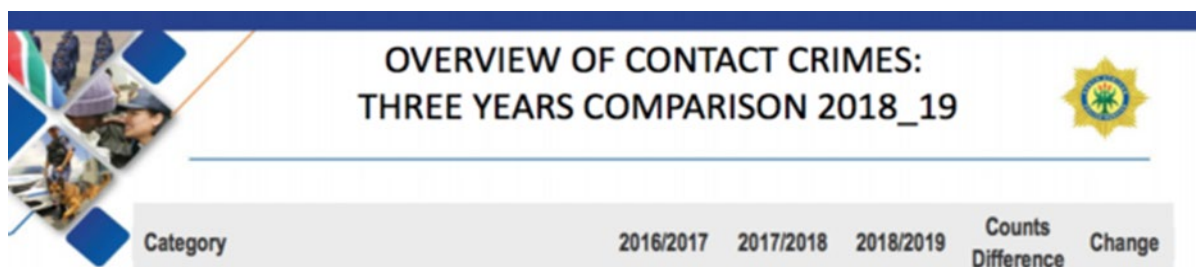
However, there's is a deep-rooted culture of violence in schools that has been cultivated in different ways over many years, thus making schools unsafe and insecure spaces. These incidences have resulted in both learners and teachers feeling unsafe in schools and in the communities in which these school are situated. Various media reports bear testimony to this assertion. For instance, "A high school pupil was robbed and killed by a fellow pupil", and "A teacher was robbed at gun point in front of a class" (Kuppan, 2008:1). In 2011, the secretary of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) reported that 67 000 teachers had resigned citing learners' violence and conflict with school management. The report revealed that, "since the banning of corporal punishment in 1996, learner violence had escalated and that school management teams (SMTs) had received limited support from provincial education departments" (Maseko, 2013:109). These factors had a negative impact on teachers who had been in the education system for years and who had been using corporal punishment to enforce discipline. Sibisi (2016:4) argued that "corporal punishment entailed striking the hands or buttocks, slapping children in their faces, and twisting their ears, to mention a few". These practices were abolished by the South African Schools Act No. 84 (1996b), which states:

"No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner; (2) any person who contravenes subsection 1 is guilty of an offence, and liable to conviction or a sentence which could be imposed for assault."

Therefore, educators who lacked the skills to maintain discipline in the classroom started experiencing difficulties and became easy targets for emotional and verbal abuse by learners. Shaikhnang (2012:75) argues that "…for a school to be regarded as a social institution, it needs to have certain basic regulations controlling and directing the behaviour of its members, the majority of whom are learners".

In June 2019, South Africa had 12.5 million public and independent school learners who attended close to 23 800 schools served by almost 400 000 teachers. Schooling in South Africa has a unique history as they have been plagued by various forms of violence (Nhambura, 2019). Although numerous cultural, societal, racial, political, religious, and economic causes have been traced to the growing spate of violence worldwide (Al-Zyoud, Morgan & Brown, 2013), South African school violence has been associated with high crime statistics that have been declared some of the highest on the globe.

Table 1.1: Overview of contact crimes in South Africa over a three-year survey period

Category	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	Counts Difference	Change
Murder	19 016	20 336	21 022	686	3,4%
Sexual Offences	49 660	50 108	52 420	2 312	4,6%
Attempted murder	18 205	18 233	18 980	747	4,1%
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm (GBH)	170 616	167 352	170 979	3 627	2,2%
Common assault	156 450	156 243	162 012	5 769	3,7%
Common robbery	53 418	50 730	51 765	1 035	2,0%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	140 956	138 364	140 032	1 668	1,2%
Contact Crimes (Crimes Against The Person)	**608 321**	**601 366**	**617 210**	**15 844**	**2,6%**

Overview of contact crimes: three years comparison 2018_19

Source: SAPS 2018/19 Crime statistics, 12 September 2019

Table 1.1 indicates that crimes such as murder, sexual offences, and common assault have increased over the three-year survey period (2016/2017, 2017/2018, and 2018/2019). The above table shows the number of cases that were reported to the South African Police Services (SAPS). One should bear in mind that some crimes are not necessarily reported to the SAPS for various reasons. For instance, humiliation and fear are often the reasons that rape is not widely reported. However, murder cases need to be investigated and these incidences increased by with 3.4% while sexual offences reportedly increased by 4.6%. Overall, contact crimes in the country increased by 2.6% to 15 844 in the survey period. These SAPS crime statistics are important in demonstrating the extent of crime in South Africa and its impact on school violence. According to Burton and Leoschut (2013), the nature of school-based violence in South Africa cannot be totally separated from the country's overall crime rate.

Schools are placed in neighbourhoods and their role is to ensure that meaningful learning takes place and that learners are trained and established socially and mentally to be active community members in the future. In the expectation that they will be healthy, and their schooling will

have a stronger future for their families, parents send their children to school. According to Burton (2008), schools are generally seen as mechanisms to develop and reinforce positive citizens with pro-social attitudes and as sites where individuals are prepared for the role that they are to play in society at large. Unfortunately, many schools have become institutions where children are highly likely to learn criminal behaviour, among other things. Community- and school-based violence has been affecting learners and teachers negatively over a long period of time. Many high schools in South Africa are in townships and urban areas where communities are ravaged by high levels of crime and violence that spill over into schools. Private schools generally serve more affluent communities and hence there are fewer incidences of crime-related violence in these schools than in public schools that are situated in township areas where levels of crime are high. The violence that is perpetuated in township schools evokes fear in learners, which eventually prevents them from realising their potential (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012). Masitsa (2011), who conducted an intensive investigation into school violence, believes that South African townships schools are highly susceptible to violence.

There is evidence that South Africans are highly prone to use violence to resolve conflict and to intimidate others. For instance, South Africa has the second highest rate of gun-related deaths in the world at 9.4 deaths per 100 000 people and the 16th highest number of guns per 100 people at 12.7 (Ngidi, 2018).

Table 1.2: Provincial overview of murder cases in South Africa over a two-year survey period (2017/2018 and 2018/2019)

MURDER: PROVINCIAL OVERVIEW

	MP	WC	GP	EC	NW	LP	KZN	FS	NC
2017/2018	922	3 729	4 233	3 815	950	911	4 382	1 054	340
2018/2019	996	3 974	4 495	3 965	961	914	4 395	1 000	322
Case Diff	74	245	262	150	11	3	13	-54	-18
% Change	8.0% ⬆	6.6% ⬆	6.2% ⬆	3.9% ⬆	1.2% ⬆	0.3% ⬆	0.3% ⬆	-5.1% ⬇	-5.3% ⬇
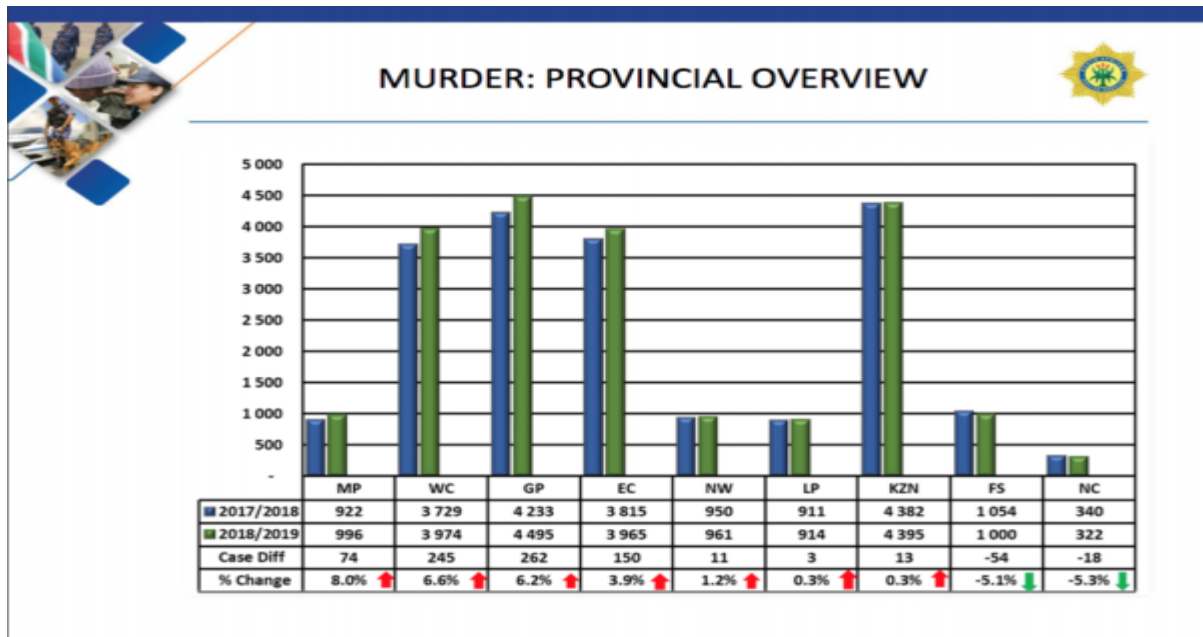
Source: SAPS 2018/19 Crime statistics

Table 1.2 indicates provincial murder statistics of the nine South African provinces. KwaZulu-Natal is second highest in terms of murder rates with an increase of 3% over the survey period. In the first survey (2017/2018) KZN was ahead in terms of murder statistics. However, the difference between 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 for murder is limited. These statistics show the rampant crime and violence in KZN, which tends to eventually spill over into schools.

South African township schools are dysfunctional because they face a range of problems such as poor teaching and learning standards, inadequate leadership and governance, poor facilities, low parental involvement, crime, and negative social attitudes. (Mafora, 2013; Mokonyane, 2011; Mangena, 2012; Pandor, 2006; Williams, 2011). It has been claimed that secondary schools in townships are extremely vulnerable to violence. For example, research undertaken in the Western Cape Township School showed that aggression in this school had gained momentum (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012) over a long period. Communities that exhibit characteristics such as high levels of socioeconomic disorganisation, aggression and ready access to illicit weapons and illegal drugs are at increased risk of learners being vulnerable to violence in schools (Burton & Leoschut, 2012).

According to the ecological model, adverse conditions in communities can have a negative effect on the lives of people who reside in those communities. This model indicates that when violence is rife in communities, it tends to perpetuate violence in schools. According to Mthumkhulu (2015:19), "...it is important to acknowledge that there are certain relevant factors in communities that have an effect on the emergence and sustenance of school violence". The complex nature of school violence makes it challenging to pinpoint one exact cause of school-based violence, particularly in high schools.

1.3 Problem statement

It is estimated that, in South Africa, nearly 14 million learners who attended schools in 2012 experienced violence, corporal punishment, and/or verbal abuse at school (Department of Basic Education, 2012). Burton and Leoschut (2013) found that 22.2% of secondary school learners (an estimated 1 020 597 learners) had experienced a form of physical violence at school in the year before the survey. The South African crime statistics for 2014/2015 revealed an increase in murder and aggravated robbery over the survey period. Murder in the country had increased by 3.4% and sexual offences had increased by 4.6% in this period. Overall, contact crimes in the country had increased by 2.6% to 15 844 in 2018. Parker (2010) maintains that there are various factors that contribute to violent crime in South Africa. Among these are poverty, unemployment, the vulnerability of young people (which is linked to poor child rearing), and inadequate emphasis on appropriate approaches other than corporal punishment to prevent violent crime. A national study on violence in schools established that there had been an increase in reports of violent attacks on educators by learners (Burton, 2008). School personnel argued that these violent attacks on educators occurred because of increased alcohol and drug abuse among learners (Ibid.). Substance abuse is one of the most common, if not the leading, cause of violence among the youth in South Africa. Access to illegal substances is the source of blatant forms of violence directed at authority figures such as educators and principals of schools (Smit, 2010). It is therefore no wonder that Burton (2008) found that 57.7% of educators at primary schools and 58.1% at secondary schools reported feeling unsafe at their schools when teaching. The current research was embedded in the notion that all schools, be it primary, senior, or high schools, should be safe environments that encourage effective teaching and learning. According to Xaba (2012), taking care of the fundamental safety aspects of the school's physical environment is the first step in ensuring school safety and security and this

can be achieved by solving the school's psychosocial safety concerns, such as bullying on the playgrounds as well as reducing or eliminating safety hazards or risks.

Because violence in schools is a global problem, it is important to understand the nature and extent of violence that occurs in schools, as well as its causes. It is also necessary to explore and evaluate the perceptions of people who are predominantly affected by school violence, which are teachers and learners. The current investigation thus devised its research problem based on the issues pertaining to school violence as highlighted in the discourse above. To illuminate the problem and discover possible solutions, this research investigated the authentic perceptions of students in four township high schools about the prevalence and use of dangerous weapons in the school environment.

1.4 Motivation

The eradication of school-based violence in high schools is a matter of urgency, as a conducive school climate that will indorse teaching and learning and improve learners' academic achievement should exist at every school. Quality education can only be offered in a safe environment that is conducive for learning. According to Eke (2016:6), "the future of every nation lies in the strength of its youth and, more particularly, in their productivity and development". Countries need to sustain the prosperity of the knowledge the youth possess to effectively meet the labour requirement of the state. For learners to be equipped with the necessary skilled and requirements needed in the job market, the learning environment have conducive enough for them to unleash their full potential. That can only be achieved in a schooling environment that is free from all forms of violence. Based on this premise, this study contributes to the current body of knowledge on interventions that can be used to enhance safety in high schools to facilitate teaching and learning. Schools do not function in a vacuum as they are part of the broader community and are thus not immune to the ills that permeate society. The strength of the data that were generated by this study lies in the fact that the views and experiences of both teachers and learners were elicited. Most previous studies placed much focus on learners who had been affected by violence in schools, but teachers are also adversely affected in this working environment and their voices should also be heard.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on school violence in high schools for two reasons. (1) The study was able to identify various causes of school-based violence at

four differenthigh schools in various districts in KZN province. These districts included UGu, UMgungundlovu, Pinetwon, and Zululand. The study thus recognises the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem levels of schooling. (2) The study identified different stakeholders and the way they came together to combat school violence. This research involved learners, teachers, and principals at four schooling institutions.

The study's focus on school violence in selected high schools in KwaZulu-Natal will increase scholars' and other role-players' knowledge about school violence, more particularly because it looked through a theoretical lens at violence in schools in various locations in the same province. The outcomes of this research will provide a clear picture of the nature and scope of school violence through trustworthy data. To better understand the findings, the researcher viewed them through my prior knowledge of school violence based on international and other national research projects and efforts to combat school violence. The researcher explored the national legislative framework that guides schools' functioning, perused the Constitution and SASA, and scrutinised existing policies for the prevention and protection of school communities and ways to combat school violence. The findings and recommendations of the study will enlighten policy makers who constantly explore new systems of discipline that can be used to reduce the incidences of violence in schools. The findings and recommendations will also assist in the development of new or amended policies and frameworks that will ensure the safety of learners, teachers, and other school staff on school premises.

1.5 Research aims and objectives

Violence in schools and in the community has intensified to such a magnitude that it has rendered some schools almost inaccessible for learners in South Africa (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2008). The aim of the study was to elicit, interpret, and understand learners' and teachers' perceptions of school violence in selectd schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. This investigation thus aimed to identify and gain a deep understanding of the causes of violence in the selected high schools. A total of 54 participants comprising teachers and learners from the selected high schools participated in the study. The schools were in urban and rural areas in KZN, which represented two dissimilar communities as a fair depiction of the South African socio-economic reality.

Education is a basic right and thus both educators and learners are protected by Bill of Rights that is entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). Section 29(1) of the Bill of Rights expresses that everybody has the right to education and security of one's person, which underscores the right to be free from all types of violence originating from the general population (i.e., schools) or private sources (i.e., the community). All people have the right not to be harassed and not to be punished in a debasing or inhumane manner. Furthermore, Section 12(1) of the Bill of Rights expresses that everybody has the right to physical and mental integrity, whereas Section 28(1) protects children's rights by expressing that each child has the right to be shielded from abuse, neglect, and/or corruption (Republic of South Africa, 1996a).

1.5.1 Objectives

With reference to the selected high schools in KZN, the objectives of the study were to:
1. To identify the nature of school violence in selected schools.
2. To identify the various causes of school violence in the selected schools.
3. To evaluate teachers' and learners' responses to school violence.
4. To establish the effects of school violence on learners and educators.
5. To examine the effectiveness of current measures to curb violence in these schools.

1.5.2 Research questions

Also pertaining to these four selected schools, the research questions that gave direction to the study were:
1. What is the nature of school violence in the selected schools?
2. What are the various causes of school violence experienced in these schools?
3. How do teachers and learners respond to school violence?
4. How are learners and educators affected by school violence?
5. What strategies are employed to mitigate school violence?

1.6 Significance of the study

Schools' violence, appears to be an increasingly alarming phenomenon in South Africa (Burton, 2008; Grobler, 2009; Burton, 2013). Violence in schools persists despite the efforts

of the Department of Basic Education to promote peace in schools through a number of initiatives and interventions. Similar to other countries globally, South Africa is characterised by violence. News of violence is broadcasted on the news on a daily basis while video games and television programmes increasingly normalise violence in various forms with impunity. It therefore comes as no surprise that many South African schools are characterised as violent due to the high prevalence of violence in society. The severity of school violence, the frequency of violent incidences in schools, the exact location of violent acts, and how different groups in schools experience violence provide key details to understanding and measuring the problem of violence in schools.

The South African media is quick to highlight images of violence in schools. Headings such as "Faction fights in KZN turn school playgrounds into battlefields", "Policing alone won't reduce violence at schools", "Savvy school turns its gang crisis around", "Glenvista pupil suspended for allegedly attacking teacher" and "There are better ways to deal with school violence" characterised the news on schools in 2019 (Nhambura, 2019). These reports confirmed that school violence was prevalent in South Africa and difficult to contain. Ngidi (2018) revealed that schools in KwaZulu-Natal experienced the highest rates of violence, verbal abuse, and corporal punishment compared to schools in seven other provinces in the country. Hofmeester, Deputy President of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), reported that while learners in the Western Cape claimed that it was easy to bring weapons into their schools, KZN learners said they had easy access to drugs and alcohol at their (Ntuli, 2015).

Payet and Franchi (2008) argued that Durban schools in KZN have become dangerous playgrounds for gangs and that violence is used to solve disputes and disrupt lessons. Singh and Steyn (2014:81) contend that "the frequent occurrence of aggressive and violent behaviour displayed by learners in schools has had a devastating effect on the school system and has become a cause for great concern among the stakeholders involved in the South African school system". KZN Circular no. 32 of 2012 (Department of Basic Education, 2012) acknowledges that every parent is concerned with the life of his/her child, therefore the issue of violence in schools cannot be the responsibility of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) alone. According to the Department of Basic Education (2017), parents should also play an active role in ensuring that the safety of their children inside and outside school premises is guaranteed − and therefore all role players in education must ensure that violence in schools is under control.

School are not institutions where children merely learn how to read and write, but they are spaces where children are equipped with life skills to make individual and wise choices for the future. These choices will be warped if schooling environments are characterised by violence, criminal behaviour, and children who are disobedient and wilful. Violence steals teaching and learning time as more time is spent on trying to resolve issues than on things that matter. Violence infringes on learners' and educators' constitutional right to a safe and free environment (Neser, 2002:33). Osher, Bear, Sprague, and Doyle (2011:48), in support of the latter assertion, are of the view that the violent conduct of learners "...interferes with learning, diverts administrative time, and contributes to teacher burnout". Besides its implications for poor school performance, violence also impacts negatively on both teachers' and learners' lives as it may have devastating effects on the victim for the rest of his or her life. Mazerolle, Legosz and Finighan (2011:17) argue that violence significantly impacts "...social costs [as] numerous studies have reported both short- and long-term emotional, behavioural, and psychological problems [due to] student-on-student victimization, such as depression, reduced perception of self-worth, poorer school outcomes, chronic absenteeism, suicide, [and poor] psychological adjustment".

Violence does not only manifest in schools, but also impacts communities where it occurs in the streets and in homes. Burton (2008) states that violence manifests in a number of forms such as bullying (that often results in teen suicides), sex scandals, various forms of discrimination based on race and gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, as well as unprofessional educator conduct. The violence that is perpetuated in township schools evokes terror among targeted learners and teachers, which essentially prohibits learners from reaching their full potential and teachers from doing their work effectively (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012). Masitsa (2011) concurs that South African township schools are vulnerable to violence, which exposes learners and the school to bullying and fear. Township high schools are highly vulnerable to violence due to a variety of exacerbating causes (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012).

The term 'school-based violence' gained popularity around the early 2000s. In earlier research studies on school violence, researchers focused on learners and how it affected them. Bullying was the most identified form of school-based violence globally in the 1980s, and evidence has suggested that this form of violence has increased substantially over the years. Mthimkhulu (2015) states that, between 2004 and 2015, there had been increasing references in 150 publications on bullying alone. The research that was conducted then focused on areas such as

bullying and the use of corporal punishment on learners. However, it has since transpired that corporal punishment and bullying are not the only forms of school violence and that teachers are also victims.

Several societal factors contribute to school violence, and therefore I deemed it important to investigate school violence from both teachers' and learners' perspectives. I believed that the data would elucidate how the community contributes to violence in schools. Prior to this investigation, no comprehensive research had been conducted that involved students, teachers.

1.7 Conceptualisation of relevant terms

The following terms are used throughout this study thesis and are thus defined in this section for the sake of clarity. Phrases and concepts specific to the focus of this study are explained. The terms 'high school', 'learners', 'teachers', 'school violence' and 'community violence' are clarified in terms of their associated with the school context. In addition, the clarification of these terms and phrases gives sense to the topic that this study studied, namely the frequency and occurrence of school violence in four selected high schools in KZN.

(i) High school

The National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 (Department of Education, 1996) categorises schools in South Africa as a pre-primary, primary, or secondary schools. According to the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), a school is "an institution which enrols learners in one or more grades between Grade 0 [R] and Grade 12". Accordingly, a high school is conceptualised as a learning institution – either a public or independent school – that enrols learners between in and between Grade 8 and Grade 12.

(ii) Teachers/Educators

The Employment of Educators Act No. 79 of 1998 conceptualises an educator as "any person who teaches, educates, or trains other persons or who provides educational services, […] at any public school, departmental office or adult based education centre" (Department of Basic Education, 2011). In terms of this study, an educator/teacher is any person who is employed to

provide educational services to learners in a high school environment either on a temporary or permanent basis. The terms 'educator' and 'teacher' will be used interchangeably and will be limited to persons employed by the DBE who provide teaching services in high schools.

(iii) Learner/s

The word 'learner' is defined as "...an individual enrolled within a schooling system, learning a planned curriculum, and that individually attends a formal school system (Rundell, 2002). In the context of this study, the term 'learner'/'learners refers to an individual attending high school (Grade 8 to Grade 12) in South Africa.

(iv) School-based violence/school violence

The term 'school violence' refers to any form of violence resulting from unacceptable behaviours and acts that are committed on school premises by a learner or group of learners, or by teacher/s, with negative outcomes. School violence will also refer to the inappropriate wielding of power by some individuals over others in the school environment. Thus, school violence occurs when teachers, learners, or outsiders inappropriately exercise power over others that is physically and emotionally harmful and that disrupts the safe learning environment. According to Miller and Kraus (2010:15), school violence includes, but is not limited to, "...such behaviours as child and teacher victimisation, child and/or teacher perpetration, physical and psychological exploitation, cyber victimisation, cyber intimidation, fighting, bullying, classroom disruption, physical and psychological injury to a teacher and a student, cult-related behaviour and resultant activities, sexual and other boundary violations, and the use of weapons in the school environment". School violence denies individuals their basic human rights and the ability to reach their full potential either by diminishing their humanity or by limiting them from becoming what they might have been. Exposure to violence in children can increase aggressive activity (Weaver, Borkowski & Whitman, 2008) and violence can manifest physically, emotionally, sexually, verbally, and psychologically (Nayak & Suchland, 2006).

1.8 Research methodology and design

Research methodology entails the procedures and methods − such as the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods – and the instruments that are employed to gather data (Mouton, 2001). For this study, I employed qualitative research methods which were aimed at eliciting insights from the participants based on their experiences and perceptions of violence. Moreover, the data also needed to reveal the extent and the impact of school violence in the schools under study. The use of a qualitative investigation allowed elaborate, in-depth interpretations of the phenomenon under study without depending on numerical measurements (Zikmund & Babin, 2013). Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with groups of participants were conducted to obtain the required data. The researcher followed the case study design guidelines as the study was undertaken in four high schools (or cases) in KZN with the aim of developing detailed, intensive knowledge about a single phenomenon, namely school violence and its impact.

1.8.1 The study population and sampling method

To collect primary data, an appropriate sample must be selected to provide valid findings. A target population is defined as the total number of units that have the desired characteristics and are eligible to participate in the study at hand (Kumar et al., 2011). Qualitative research methods were used to address the research questions utilising a selected group of people from the study area. The selected target population comprised learners and teachers from four high schools in KZN. The sample schools were purposively selected for their characteristics of school violence and participants who would be able to share first-hand information on the school violence phenomenon. Thirty-two educators' twenty-four students were purposively recruited as study participants. Permission to conduct the interviews and focus group discussions was obtained from the Department of Basic Education and the principal of each school.

1.8.2 Method of data collection

This study utilised face-to-face interviews with teachers and focus group discussins with learners. Questions were posed based on a pre-set interview schedules but were generally open-ended for probing of in-depth knowledge. The methods I employed facilitates in-depth

understanding of the participants' views and perceptions. Data were collected to unearth and examine factors that, in the view of the participants, contributed to the prevalence of violence at the selected high schools. The interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in allocated venues during recess and when the teachers had free lesson periods. The interviews and focus group discussions were voice recorded using a tape recorder.

1.8.3 Method of data analysis

The interviews and discussions were transcribed and translated into English where IsiZulu had been used. Each respondent was allocated a pseudonym. The data were coded and later categorised into themes. The data were analysed using De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport's (2005) model entitled, "Qualitative data analysis and interpretation". They advise that data analysis frequently necessitates revision in data collection procedures and strategies, and the researcher followed this advice. Merriam (2009:175) indicated that, "Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of the data involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the research has seen and read - it is a process of making meaning." A diligent, comprehensive, and thorough reading of the data enabled the researcher to become immersed in the data. Immersion is defined as the "repeated reading of the data and reading the data in an active way-searching for meanings, patterns, and so on" (Braun & Clarke, 2016:16). Immersion meant that the researcher got familiarised with the data to the depth and extensiveness of the content, which was important in drawing conclusions and themes.

1.8.4 Ethical considerations

The research was fully approved by a committee that had reviewed the proposal according to the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Applied Human Science, Criminology and Forensic Studies guidelines. Ethical clearance for data collection was obtained (Protocol reference number: HSS/0903/017D). The research proposal was also reviewed by the Department of Basic Education and was approved (Protocol reference number: 2/4/8/1761). Targeted participants were duly informed of the purpose of the study and the use of the data. A consent form was read and signed by the participants and the researcher. It was presented in two languages (English and IsiZulu) for easy understanding. Data collection occurred with the full and voluntary consent of the participants. The participants were informed about the study's

objectives and how they would be selected, as well as some of the potential risks or discomfort associated with participating. Informed consent meant that the participants did not feel obligated to participate, lowering the possibility of the study findings being tainted. After the participants had agreed to participate in the study, the ethical issue of doing no harm had to be recognized. Participants were requested to choose pseudonyms for the research findings write-up to maintain their identities. The data revealed during the interviews was kept confidential.

1.9 Chapter outline

The chapters were structured according to established guidelines for theses of this nature:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by describing the background and establishing the context in which the study was conducted. Central to the discourse, I build understanding of the school violence phenomenon. The background is comprehensive and illuminated by means of an extensive literature review and media reports on the topic of the study. This chapter provides definitions of key concepts; establishes the aim, objectives and research questions that guided the study; and elucidates the research design and methodologies that were employed. The methods of data collection and sampling are also explained.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature review that, amongst other issues, elucidated the nature of school violence. Diagrams of violence reported in South African schools are presented and discussed. A brief history of South African schools and school violence is presented in regard to national and international forms of research on school violence. This systematic survey of prior studies is related to the purpose and goals of the present study in order to explain the nature and causes of school violence and the dilemmas that schools face in responding to this form violence. This chapter also provides insights into the effects of school violence on learners and teachers as described in the literature.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that I employed is presented in this chapter. The theories that I employed explain why the research problem that was investigated existed and also why it has persisted to this day. Three distinct but complementary theories, namely the social learning

theory, the ecological systems theory, and the sub-culture of violence theory are discussed in relation to how they inform criminological analyses of school violence within the South African context.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

The description of the research methodology that was employed provides in-depth information on the way this study was conducted. The discourse illuminates the qualitative research methodology that was employed and looks at the study processes, the data collection tools, and the different procedures that were followed to guide this study.

Chapter 5: Study Findings

This chapter is a first of two chapters that present the findings and discuss the key themes that emerged from the data. It presents narratives and provides the insights into school violence of the participating learners and teachers. Findings based on the narratives shared by participants are analysed and the data are interpreted based on the theoretical context. The topic is often related to the past study of school violence and new results are announced. The results corroborate previous researchers' findings and arguments and provide deeper insight into educators' and learners' respective experiences of the phenomenon under study. In essence, this chapter focuses on the causes and nature of school violence and the challenges that schools experience in their efforts to respond effectively to school-based violence.

Chapter 6: The Effects of Violence on School Communities and Measures to Curb School-Based Violence

This is the second chapter that reports on and discusses the findings. It is a continuation of the previous chapter, but it more specifically explores *the effects* (or *impact*) of school-based violence on learners and teachers. I also explore strategies that may be employed by schools to curb school-based violence.

Chapter 7: Recommendations and Conclusions

This is the concluding chapter of this thesis. It presents the gist of all the chapters and provides a summary of the key study findings. The chapter is concluded by offering relevant recommendations.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the main research problem of this study by conceptualising the background and context of the study. The overall aim of the study was given, which is to identify and gain a deep understanding of the causes of violence in the selected high schools in KZN Province. This is followed by an outline of the research objectives and research questions, as well as a discussion of the motivation and rationale for undertaking this study. Definitions of the key concepts that were used in this study were provided. The chapter is concluded by an outline of the structure of the entire thesis. The next chapter presents a discussion of the literature that was reviewed and presents the main findings that formed the basis on which this study was constructed.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

"Violence is a disease − a disease that corrupts all who use it regardless of the cause."

-Chris Hedges-

2.1 Introduction

This literature review substantiates the argument that was raised in Chapter One that school violence has escalated radically in South Africa over the past ten years. This is shown by the high number of illegal acts and violence happening in school grounds. Such cases have often regularly been reported in the media. The nature and extent of school violence is discussed with reference to both national and international perspectives. According to Kraska and Neuman (2012), the purpose of reviewing literature is to show the similarities and differences that exist among a collection of information on the same topic to demonstrate the value of prior research and how the current study is associated with it. The literature review is preoccupied with gathering and coordinating what is known, learning from others, and incorporating new ideas. Hart (2010) argues that a literature review distinguishes what has been done from what needs to be done. It discovers important variables that are relevant to the subject, synthesises and elicits new insights, establishes the context of the subject, and elucidates the theory that ought to be applied. In the context of the topic of the current study, it appeared that most previous researchers focused primarily on how school violence affected learners and only a limited number of studies explored how school violence affected both learners and educators. The current study therefore explored the school violence phenomenon by focusing on the risk factors that evidently contributed to it, while it further explored the psychological and physical effects this phenomenon had on educators and learners in selected schools in KZN.

2.2 The history of violence in South African schools

Visible school violence in South Africa dates to the 1976 Soweto uprising when learners were involved in violent protests sired by political, social, and educational injustices at the time. In this event, Black youths embarked on a full-scale campaign against the school system that they saw "…as a primary agent of their enslavement" (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012:89). Learners protested discriminative educational policies, specifically the teaching of African learners in

Afrikaans. Political violence in South Africa from 1948 onwards, according to Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 91), resulted in high levels of hostility and, as a result, widespread violence, particularly among the black community. Apartheid racial systems taught black students to resist, resulting in youth violence in South Africa (Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 91). Ngqela and Lewis (2012) state that the escalation of violence in South African schools, particularly in townships, erupted when thousands of learners protested Afrikaans being the medium of instruction in schools where learners' mother tongues were African languages. Pahad and Graham (2012: 12) support Ngqela and Lewis (2012:91) in indicating that apartheid's violent history and more recent societal developments impact the levels of classroom violence in South African townships. Mdhuli and Zwane (1994:14) state that learners in Black schools were "…subjected to brutal atrocities such as gang wars, shootings, murders, and rape". Therefore, the violent aspect of South African society is inextricably linked to the country's history, which is tarnished by memories of brutal oppression, exploitation, and subjugation. These violent actions inspired learners and educators to use aggression and vicious coping mechanisms such as bullying, physical combat, gangsterism, gun carrying and corporal punishment as well (Du Plessis, 2010). Consequently, the high level of violence in schools is a result of a complex interplay of previous history and present tensions at the individual, school, and community level.

South Africans now live in a democratic country with a painful past of conflict that often escalated into violent wars and political struggles (Shabalala, 2016). According to Kollapan (2006), South Africans have come a long way since the first democratic elections in 1994, and while political goodwill among the public has created a platform for the transition into a more prosperous future, these self-destructive tactics have not disappeared in the aftermath of the Soweto uprisings of 1976. In fact, most of these protest strategies are still being used by many educators and learners today (Sibisi, 2016). Reports of extreme incidences of violence in school have demonstrated that South African schools are unsafe for both learners and educators. For instance, Zwane (1997) discusses the implications of the marginalisation of youths and argues that school-going youths who took part in violent protests around 1976 are now parents who influence the youth of today. According to De Wet (2007:255), "violent patterns and problem-solving skills are very often transferred from the family to the school system, thereby reflecting the interaction and transference of violence from one system to another". This generation of parents has witnessed violence and perceives it as bringing about the desired change in their

very own life experiences. Parents pass on their beliefs to the next generation especially their own children, and their beliefs to the next generation.

Singh (2006:10) argues that parents "generally shape and influence the direction that their children embark on; therefore, if the current generation of parents sees violence as a means of achieving rewards, it has far-reaching implications not only for the current generation of youths, but for future generations as well." Every generation must fight its own battles but is seems that the youth of today have to face more diverse battles and challenges than the youths of 1976. For instance, the violence that contemporary youths face today is aggravated by unemployment, substance abuse, and broken family ties. South African schools have turn out to be extremely volatile and unpredictable places owing to entrenched violent attitudes that have become a part of their everyday existence.

School violence has become more pervasive than before, and the phenomenon is increasing exponentially in schools throughout the country in general, and particularly in KZN (Maphumulo, 2018). A survey that was conducted in the Ethekwini region on school violence against educators revealed that school violence was highly prevalent in that region (Singh, 2006). According to the latter author's findings, several factors contributed to the increase in school violence, and chief among them were the abolition of corporal punishment, a family background characterised by violence, overcrowded classrooms, and an increased awareness among learners of their rights without emphasis on responsibilities (Singh, 2006). The studies conducted by Singh (2006) and Sibisi (2016) on school violence against educators underscore the fact that the lack of proactive support from parents and the Department of Basic Education in preventing violence exacerbates the situation in schools. Many experienced teachers reported having been victimised or having witnessed school violence in their careers, and they envisaged that newly appointed educators entering the system would become easy targets of this alarming epidemic.

The history of violence and persistent acts of violence in the country have resulted in the normalisation of violence by society. According to Reygan (2016) and Bhana (2015), violence in South African schools often reflect the high levels of violence to which children are exposed in their communities and this violence become internalized and normal to these childen. Leoschut (2008) avers that increased exposure to violence and the reinforcement of aggressive acts become normal ways of relating to society which, in turn, contributes to the escalating

rates and pervasive nature of violence in South African schools and communities. Both learners and school personnel have normalised school violence in the sense that they are aware of and have accepted the fact that they will be victimised if they are still in the education system. Thus, learners and teachers in South Africa can deal with their high exposure to school violence by normalising this vice. Although it has been more than 26 years since South Africa's first democratic republic was established, the country continues to experience high levels of violence and crime, which are not uncommon considering the country's history (Ngidi, 2018).

2.3 School violence as a global phenomenon

School-based violence has been a global phenomenon "…that affects one of the core institutions of modern society to some degree in virtually all nation-states" (Akiba, LeTendre, Baker & Goesling, 2002:830). It is also not a new phenomenon. For instance, in the 17th Century French schools grappled with sword and fist fights as well as unrest and attacks on educators (Duma, 2013).

According to Singh (2011), comparing crime related statistics among and within countries is futile as laws differ from country to country. Moreover, there are significant methodological variations in the way information is gathered by nations. Some of the factors that make cross-country comparisons difficult include differences in the levels of reporting criminal incidents within countries; the differences among social, financial, and political situations; and contrasting views in terms of the nature and implications for some crimes (Khani, 2015). However, this discourse does not seek to create a cross-country comparison of school-based violence, but rather to illustrate that the phenomenon has become a global menace. National surveys and information that focus on the nature and extent of school-based violence are therefore reviewed. For the sake of brevity, three international areas will be highlighted, namely the Unied States of America (USA), Central and West Africa, and the Southern African region.

2.3.1 United States of America

According to Lambert (2013:23), violence is not a new phenomenon in American schools. His study cites a report dating back to the 1800s which reported that students killed someone else

in a school. The victim was a teacher whom the students thought had administered discipline unfairly. Robers, Kemp and Truman (2013) cited a report by the United States Department of Justice on school-based crime and student safety. The literature reveals that, in the United States, thirteen adolescents are murdered every day. Eight children and teens die in gun-related incidents. Almost every year there is mass shooting in an elementary or secondary school (Centers for Disease Control, 2010, 2007). Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup polls on education over the past decade cited a lack of discipline and school-based violence as the worst problems confronting public schools in the USA (Gallup, 2009). The study incorporated data obtained from an assortment of government-supported sources, including national studies targeting students, educators, principals, and post-secondary associations, as well as data gathered from state departments (Robers et al., 2013).

A survey conducted in the USA revealed that the number of crimes committed at or near the 85 000 public schools in the USA was estimated at more than 3 million cases annually, with 185 580 people having been injured (National Crime Survey, 2004). The survey further revealed that, on any given day, it was not uncommon for students to carry guns to school. The National Crime Victimisation Survey (Robers et al., 2013) points out that incidences of victimisation involving learners between the ages of 12 and 18 are more likely to occur at school than elsewhere. For instance, this survey established that the victimisation rate was 52 in every 1 000 learners at school and 38 in every 1 000 learners away from school (Robers et al., 2013). Roberts et al. (2013) also revealed that 4% of learners at public schools reported being victimised while at school, which contrasted with the 2% of learners who attended private schools and had the same complaint. According to a report published by the New York Department of Education (2011), between 4.5% and 7.5% of students in the USA carried some sort of weapon with them to school.

As a result, in the USA, learner violent behavioUr is a hot topic, and various government agencies, such as the Department of Education and the Department of Justice, have been tasked with gathering and analysing data from a variety of sources to gain a better understanding of school-based violence (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010:1). Working together with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the two organisations revealed that 23% of kids reported gangs at their school in 2007. In the school year 2003-2004, 10% of teachers in city schools reported being threatened with injury by pupils, compared to 6% of teachers in suburban schools and 5% of teachers in rural schools. The following risk behaviors were

reported in a 2007 nationwide survey of students in grades 9-12: 30 days prior to the study, 5.9% of kids brought weapons to school, such as a knife or gun. On the school grounds, a total of 7.8% of pupils were threatened or harmed with a weapon and 12 months prior to the research, a shocking 12.4% of kids were involved in a physical altercation on school grounds (Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention, 2010:1). The literature also shows that urban students in the United States are more likely than suburban or rural students to report experiencing significant issues with hostile comments, violent battles, assaults or harmful acts, and gang activity.

2.3.2 Central and West Africa

School violence is rampant in Central and West Africa as reported in various studies. A study by Antonowicz (2010) found that 62% of young Ghanaian girls aged between 11 and 12 attending junior high school had been victims of bullying at school. A study conducted by the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Education (2007) indicated that physical and psychological violence accounted for 85% and 50% of all violence against children in schools. In the DRC, school violence is also on the rise. Children are disproportionately likely to be attacked while walking to school, these children further further feared getting abducted or raped which prevented them from attending school (Maphumulo, 2018). In Benin, 92% of learners reportedly had experienced bullying perpetrated by both teachers and learners (Antonowicz, 2010). In the Central African Republic, 50.7% of primary school learners classified physical violence as the most frequently occurring form of violence within the school boundaries (Antonowicz, 2010). Referring to the Global School-Based Health Survey, Antoniwicz (2010) indicates that, in Ghana, about 55.7% of male learners and 56.6% of female learners affirmed having been involved in a fight in the previous year (Antonowicz, 2010).

2.3.3 Swaziland

Although Swaziland has made great strides towards ending school violence, there are still challenges in fostering safe and conducive school environments (UNICEF, 2012). There is evidence that Swaziland is still grappling with the issues of gender-based and sexual violence; peer victimisation and school-based bullying; physical violence; and verbal aggression. According to Tumwine (2014) school violence is rampant in Swaziland as evidenced by media reports documenting the violence directed at learners. UNESCO (2007) indicated that a lack of statistics on school-based violence was a major problem in Eswatini when the issue of violence

in schools needed to be resolved. A global report compiled by Save the Children, Sweden (2005) indicated that, in Swaziland, 28% of children had been subjected to corporal punishment inflicted on their hands, while 59% had been physically assaulted with an object such as a cane in school. A report conducted on a national scale involving 1 292 young women in Swaziland found that 17.4% of the girls aged 13-17 had dropped out of school because of pregnancy. Of these girls, 10.6% had been forced to have sex or had been raped and 19.5% of these incidences had occurred as the girls were on their way to school (Pereznieto, Harper, Clench & Coarasa, and 2010:10). Tumwine (2014:3) cites the following evidence about violence in schools in Swaziland:

- The sports educator at a high school in Northern Swaziland broke a child's arm by severely and physically assaulting him (Ndlovu, *Times of Swaziland*, 05 March 2011).

- In an incident that happened at another high school in Southern Swaziland in 2011, an educator was attacked by a learner while he was administering corporal punishment to a group of male students (Maziya, *Times of Swaziland*, 25 March 2011).

- At Mhlatane High School in Northern Swaziland, corporal punishment was used. Educators caned the students in addition to kicking, slapping, and punching them (Dlamini, *Times of Swaziland*, 26 September 2011).

- At Ncabaneni High School, a 22-year-old male marijuana addict, stormed into a classroom wielding a spear and stabbed 13 learners. A 13-year-old girl died on the spot and the other children stoned the learner to death (*Times of Swaziland*, 16 July 2009.)

2.3.4 Botswana

Humphreys (2008) report that the use of corporal punishment is legal in that country under certain conditions. Article 29 of the Education Act of 1967 provides for the Minister to make regulations to prescribe "the conditions for the administration of corporal punishment". Article 2 of the Education (Corporal Punishment) Regulations 1968 states:

"No corporal punishment shall be administered to any pupil (a) at any school; or (b) by any school teacher for anything done by the pupil at school or in respect of his schooling, unless the following conditions are complied with:

(i) the punishment shall be administered either by the headmaster or by some other teacher in the presence of the headmaster;

(ii) no instrument of punishment other than a light cane shall be used and no punishment shall exceed 10 strokes with the cane;

(iii) no male teacher may inflict corporal punishment upon any girl whom he has grounds for believing is over the age of 10 years;

(iv) no punishment shall be administered except for offences of a serious or repeated nature."

Mabasa (2013) revealed that 92% of students had been beaten by teachers for misbehaviour and that 67% of the parents had approved of this sanction. Such punishment is sanctioned by both the judiciary and customary law through a magistrate's court, and it can be applied at school. Botswana also experiences violence in schools "that manifests in multiple ways, including physical fights amongst learners, sexual assault, theft, vandalism, and the use of corporal punishment by teachers" (Mabasa, 2013:99). The learning environment in public schools in this country has for some time been characterised by violent attacks on teachers by students. For example, a teacher escaped death by a whisker in 2011 at Mmei Junior Secondary School after he had been brutally stabbed with a sharp instrument by three learners. In October 2011, an 18-year-old student at Swaneng Hill Senior Secondary School stabbed a teacher with a knife in the hand after an altercation in a storeroom.

2.4 The nature and extent of school-based violence in South Africa

The Department of Basic Education [DBE] (2015) defines school violence as hostility and victimisation that occurs both within and outside the classroom, near schools, on the route to and from school, and online. School-based violence is not a new phenomenon in South Africa as it has been occurring in schools since the formalisation of education by colonialists. However, the nature and extent of school-based violence changed over time due to several factors such as socio-economic issues, changes in government and leadership, and the social revolution around the globe.

South Africa is arguably one of the most violent countries in the world with the rate of homicide soaring to 31.3 per 100 000 between 2012 and 2013. KZN has persistently recorded high rates of violent crimes, especially murder, and it is not surprising that schools in KZN still experience violence and crime at unacceptable rates. Below are a few examples of recent physical and

psychological school violence incidents that took place in KZN. They illustrate that violence continues to be a frequent method of resolving conflict and achieving specific goals.

• Mbuyiseni Ntshangase, 16, is killed in a high school brawl on July 21, 2015, and another adolescent is critically injured (Wicks, 2015).

• On August 14, 2015, a 15-year-old boy uses his father's gun to shoot another youngster at a Pietermaritzburg school (Jansen, 2015).

• On August 21, 2015, a grade 12 student at Qantayi High School in Empangeni shoots and murders another student before turning the pistol on himself (Jansen, 2015).

Lungisani Ngema, 17, is stabbed to death at Hlamvana High School in Isikhawini on November 5, 2015. (Ngwane, 2015).

• On November 6, 2015, at Vulindlela Primary School in Newcastle, a 12-year-old learner stabs two classmates to death (Ngcobo, 2015).

• On February 6, 2016, five Lamontville High School students allegedly gang raped a 15-year-old girl during a free period in a classroom (SABC, 2016).

• On March 3, 2016, a teacher from Umlazi's Qondokuhle Primary School strips a 6-year-old boy naked for soiling his pants and instructs other students to throw water over him (SABC, 2016).

• On March 12, 2016, Mnqobi Gcumisa, an 18-year-old student at Ekupholeni Secondary School in KwaSwayimane, is stabbed to death on school grounds by a fellow student in a fight over the drug "whoonga" (Ntsele, 2016).

 School-based violence is also rife across South Africa, with the National School Violence Study (2008) indicating that 15% of young people experienced violence at school. In 2012, the National School Violence Study found that 20.2% of secondary school learners had been threatened with violence, physical assault, sexual assault (including rape), and robbery. While classroom safety seemed a foregone conclusion for parents, classrooms became a preferred environment for acts of violence, as stated by national studies that were conducted in 2008 and 2012 (National School Violence Study, 2008; 2012). Many incidences of the school-based violence in schools are perpetrated by learners who are the classmates of the victims. Educators reported that they had lost control of learners as they were often unaware of substitutes for

corporal punishment or were simply not equipped to implement unconventional disciplinary measures (Maphosa 2010).

According to Ntuli (2015), After Jamaica, South Africa is the second nation with the largest cases of abuse in schools. These negative statistics were declared by the Chairperson of the South African Council for Educators (SACE), Veronica Hofmeester, during a South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) seminar on violence in schools in 2015, Durban. The seminar was attended by principals from across KZN. Hofmeester, who was also the Deputy President of SADTU at the time, indicated that 22% of learners in South Africa had been threatened with violence, physically assaulted, robbed, or sexually assaulted at school. The study that was conducted by the National School Violence Study revealed that learners had been the perpetrators of 90% of the violence that had occurred at schools, "…whether against other learners or teachers" (Ntuli 2015:1). Burton and Leoschut (2012) found that violence among learners constituted 78.5% verbal and 74.4% physical abuse. The statistics they cited indicated that about 24% of the province's learners aged between 7 and 18 had experienced violence and verbal abuse at school. The survey also found that, out of nine South African provinces, the Free State had the highest percentage of school-based violence (30.4%), followed by the Western Cape (28.7%), Limpopo (25.2%), and Gauteng and the Eastern Cape provinces with the lowest rate (Burton & Leoschut, 2012). Even recently, Angie Motshekga, South Africa's Minister of Basic Education, indicated that the current wave of stabbings and attacks at educational institutions around South Africa is cause for serious concern (Khumalo, 2019).

Experiencing violence and exposure to this vice at a young age in any environment increases the risk of later victimisation and stimulates the perpetration of violence and other anti-social behaviours. Schools, if considered holistically, are environments where children not only acquire scholastic knowledge, but also learn to know, to be, to do, and to live together. Kreifels and Warton (2018) school violence has a detrimental effect on all these systems, as it is frequently the case that children learn distrust and suspicion, develop distorted views of personality and self-esteem, and gain negative social capital. If violence and safety-related threats are not effectively managed, children's future is at risk. Thus, school safety is a fundamental precondition for learning and not merely an issue that can be marginalised. For instance, according (Ncontsa, 2013),

1. The classroom is the site where most forms of violence take place.
2. Corporal punishment, though banned, continues to be experienced by one half of secondary-school learners.
3. Bullying is experienced by more than 1 in 10 learners.
4. Most violence, of any form, is perpetrated by learners and peers from the same school rather than by young people or others from outside the school environment.
5. Sexual violence remains common and is experienced at the hands of both fellow learners and educators.
6. Learners receive very mixed messages when it comes to acceptance of and approaches to violence, particularly messages provided by educators and principals.

In the proximity of schools, the sight of learners carrying knives and guns and arriving and leaving school under the influence of substances such as narcotics and alcohol has become part of everyday reality. Learners carry weapons in and around schools with impunity and no one can predict when these weapons will be used, which renders both learners and educators vulnerable. Schools should be safe spaces where educators and learners can perform their teaching and learning activities openly and without fear of any sort of victimisation. In schools, violence comes from different sources, happens in various ways and involves different parties. At different occasions, it can also include multiple parties from inside or outside the school. Such incidences underline the extent of violence and crime that occur within communities and that generally impact negatively on educational activities within the school (Mncube & Harbor, 2013). Prinsloo (2005:5) defines a safe school as "a school that is free of danger and where there is an absence of any possible harm; a place where non-educators, educators and learners may work, teach and learn without fear of ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, or violence".

2.5 Forms of school-based violence

Several types of violence occur in schools, and therefore it is imperative to describe the nature of these acts of school-based violence and to explain how and why they occur. Different types of school-based victimisation include, but are not restricted to, stealing, or extorting possessions or money, verbal abuse, intimidation, and physical attacks (Dogutas, 2013). Studies have focused on different types of school-based victimisation. The National School Framework (2016) defines school violence more specifically as any typical acts of violence

that take place inside an educational institution, when travelling to and from school, or during a school-related event. These school-based acts of violence can be both physical and non-physical and may or may not result in bodily or emotional harm affecting the victim. Usually, this abuse takes the form of violence against learner-on-learner, learner-on-educator, educator-on-educator, and educator-on-learner. These acts of violence cause the daily functioning of the school day to be seriously disrupted. This study examined school-based violence that included physical violence between learners and educators and the types of violence that involve "physical assault between learners; sexual assault perpetrated by boy learners on girl learners; assault (physical and sexual) by individuals outside the school on learners and teachers; assault by teachers on learners; and assault by learners on teachers" (Roper, 2002:68).

2.5.1 Bullying

2.5.1.1 Learners as victims of bullying

Although bullying is a common phenomenon in schools, research on the topic only dates to some thirty years ago when it focused on schools in Scandinavia (Olweus, 2003). Ever since then, bullying has attracted the attention of several researchers as the number of incidences of violence has been on an upward trend in schools. There is a clear link between bullying and school violence, as seen by school shootings, chronic bullying, physical violence, and suicide (Raven & Jurkiewicz, 2014). Bullying is the most common form of school-based violence in South Africa as most schools have recorded some incidences of this phenomenon. It is important to note that learners can be bullies and victims of the vice at the same time. Bullying refers to undesirable and premeditated actions, which are aimed at causing physical and psychological harm to children who cannot defend themselves (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger & Lumpkin, 2014). It is a type of violence that occurs repeatedly and entails a power imbalance between the victim and the perpetrator (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017).

Maree (2005:16) refers to bullying as occurring "when someone keeps doing or saying things to have power over another person". In whichever form it manifests, bullying compromises teaching and learning as it encompasses both physical and non-physical acts that are repetitive. Physical bullying happens when a student uses explicit bodily acts to acquire authority and control over others (Schmidt, Pierce & Stoddart, 2016). Kicking, punching, hitting, and other physical attacks are examples of such behaviours (Chabalala, 2011). In addition, teasing, name-

calling, whispering, isolation and threats of injury are part of non-physical abuse (Shariff, 2004). Ringrose and Renold (2010) define emotional bullying as a psychological act of aggression by the bully toward the victim, which includes name-calling, ridiculing, sarcasm, threatening, belittling, social exclusion, or humiliation. On the other hand, psychological bullying is defined as causing considerable stress and interfering with a person's ability to form healthy and secure relationships by inflicting emotional abuse on them (Chabalala, 2011). This type of bullying occurs between close friends and has a serious effect on one's self-esteem. It can also include indirect behaviours like stealing or destroying other students' property (Ndebele & Msiza, 2014).

Neser (2003) identifies three common categories of bullies: Proactive bullies, who are more defensive in nature and do not require encouragement to injure or humiliate somebody else; reactive bullies, who have already been victims of revenge by abusing other vulnerable or smaller children; and proactive bullying victims, who initiate battles but are willing to scream or exaggerate reactions if questioned. According to Harber (2004), although there are different forms of bullying, bullying is committed by both men and women, and the victims of bullying are both males and females.

Bullying is categorised as: learner-on-learner bullying, teacher-on-learner bullying, and learner-on-teacher bullying. Bullying of a physical nature is more common among boys than among girls, while girls are more inclined to subtle and indirect ways of harassment such as slandering, spreading rumours, and manipulating friendship relationships. The quest for power and control results in bullying where young and powerless learners are the victims. This power imbalance emanates from differences in physical strength, socio-economic status, age, popularity, and body size (Banks, 2014).

Bullying refers to undesirable and premeditated actions, which are aimed at causing physical and psychological harm to children who cannot defend themselves (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger & Lumpkin, 2014). It is a type of violence that occurs repeatedly and entails a power imbalance between the victim and the perpetrator (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). It involves the repeated oppression, either physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful one or group (Dunn, 2007). This power often comes from, amongst others, differences in age, physical strength, socio-economic status, or the popularity of the bully.

There is a real or perceived power imbalance and/or status between victims and perpetrators, which the perpetrator misuses in his/her intention to harm (Davids, 2017). It becomes very difficult for victims to defend themselves when bullying occurs.

Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) argue that young learners, especially those in Grades 8 and 9, are vulnerable to school-based violence. Bullies are mostly much older learners who have been in the school for longer and have been bullying learners in the lower grades for some time. In several studies, demographic risk factors such as age, grade, and gender have been confirmed to be clearly connected with bullying (Atik & Güneri, 2013). Perpetrators target these youngsters as they cannot defend themselves against bullying. Because bullying has been normalised in schools, learners look forward to being seniors so that they can also bully younger learners upon entering high school or senior classes. According to Maharaj (2007:56), "...these predators [Gr 12s] have to wait for five long years to rise to the top of the food chain and gain for themselves the exclusive use of the matriculation quad, a square of territory jealously guarded and forbidden to the youngsters". Similarly, Pečjak and Pirc (2017) reported that the prevalence of bullying decreases as learners progress through the grades, with fewer students reporting bullying in higher grades.

Learners with learning difficulties, such as those whose intelligence is below average or those who require special attention, become particularly susceptible to bullying (Maharaj, 2007). Besides underachievers, high achievers who are intellectually talented and advanced also find it difficult to relate to their peers. According to Singh and Steyn (2014), learners with poor academic skills become frustrated and less academically motivated and, as a result, they eventually resort to violent behaviour and thus make school life difficult for those that perform well by victimising them.

Being a victim of bullying has long-term consequences for the victim. Victims of bullying are not only cut off from their social networks and denied peer group connection, but they also feel inept, lack self-confidence, and have major health issues (Darney, Howcroft & Stroud, 2013). Likewise, Klomek, Sourander and Gould (2010) indicated that bullying has a negative impact on a student's self-esteem and can lead to depression and anxiety. Victims of bullying often feel too afraid to go to school − they feel depressed and lonely and dislike school. Many of them withdraw from school and their peers. In extreme cases, victims of bullying commit suicide, take drugs, or resort to drinking alcohol. The implications of victimisation frequently

vary from mild physical and psychological issues to its most tragic outcomes, including murder and suicide, depending on the frequency and severity of bullying, as well as the victim's personal and social characteristics (Lutzker, 2006). Bullying is rife among learners at both primary and secondary schools and often results in serious long-term effects on the victim and has been linked to absenteeism from school and low academic performance (Patchin & Hinduja, 2016). Tragically, it has been the cause of many children's suicides. Bonanno and Hymel (2010) reported that suicide is one of the most dangerous consequences of bullying. Similarly, Klomek, Sourander, and Gould (2010) study reported that individuals who are bullied had a higher prevalence of suicide ideation than those who are not bullied. In addition, bullies are also more likely to be arrested for committing a criminal offence during adolescence and to become abusive towards their spouses later in life (Brunton & Associates, 2003).

Traditionally, boys were seen as the sole perpetrators of bullying in schools, but girls have also become perpetrators of this vice. Physical harassment is most likely to be used by boys as an intimidation tactic, whereas girls are more likely to practice violence through emotional abuse. However, girls are now involved in physical bullying as well. Bullying is also perceived to be linked to experiences of violence at home, as children learn that violence is a primary mechanism for negotiating relationships and children who suffer at the hands of family members are more likely to be bullies and/or to be bullied than those who live in peaceful homes (Mncube & Steinmann, 2014). Children may use bullying as a coping mechanism for whatever issues that they may be required to deal with at home. They bully other children and teachers at school and that gives them a feeling of power instead of the helplessness they may be experiencing at home. This is particularly significant considering the strong relationship that exists between experiences of violence and the risk of engaging in, or perpetrating, violence.

2.5.1.2 Teachers as victims of bullying

Cases of teachers being subjected to bullying by learners have become serious cause for concern in both primary and secondary schools. The victimisation of teachers includes violent behaviour which has a negative impact on effective teaching and learning. Several teachers reported that they had fallen victim to physical violence meted out by learners. Learners abuse their teachers by deliberately ignoring their instructions, swearing at them, and damaging their property. De Wet and Jacobs (2006, cited in Davids, 2017) found that bullying targeted teachers was prevalent in the Free State and the Eastern Cape. The study revealed that 79.7% of the

teachers who took part in the survey reported having been exposed to some form of bullying during their teaching careers. In the Western Cape Province, a young female teacher's hair was set ablaze by a Grade 9 learner (*Speak out against the abuse of teachers*, 2013:7). This shows that attacks on teachers are increasingly becoming more violent as learner discipline deteriorates.

Even though teachers are supposed to take on the leader role or be in charge in the school, they are often humiliated and embarrassed in front of their learners. They fear victimisation and feel helpless as they cannot take any decisive action against troublemakers (De Wet & Oosthuizen, 2010). In such circumstances, it is unlikely that effective teaching and learning can take place. Teachers who feel unsafe due to intimidation often spend long periods away from school on sick leave owing to stress-related problems. This negatively impacts the quality of teaching delivered by these teachers and it affects their commitment to and passion for their profession. Eventually, their absenteeism and fearful attitude negatively affect their learners' academic performance. It may thus be argued that learners' disruptive behaviour is a cause for concern as it poses a serious challenge to school management and learners' academic outcomes.

According to Meyer-Adams and Conner (2008), the effects of bullying on victims include the loss of self-esteem, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, depression, and a feeling of isolation. The physical effects include headaches, bed-wetting, loss of appetite, poor posture, and stomach problems (Ngekane, 2010). Emotional problems experienced by the victims of bullying are depression, suicidal tendencies and actual suicide, tension, and fear (Ngakane, 2010). The resultant social problems include isolation and loneliness. Educational consequences include absenteeism, withdrawal from social activities at school, and loss of concentration (De Wet, 2005).

2.5.1.3 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a common phenomenon in South African schools, and it often manifests through the posting of harmful material via social media or on the Internet. This also encompasses the sending of texts that paint negative images of other learners (Ngidi, 2017). A social media site can be defined as "any website which allows for social interaction to take place" (Costello, McNiel & Binder, 2016:313). According to De Wet (2016:31), "cyberbullying includes unwelcome sexting, cyber stalking, posting embarrassing content

about someone, stealing personal information, unreasonable intimidation during gaming, creating fake profiles on social network sites, and sending threatening, mean or defamatory text messages or images". Cyberharassment is like "harassment", but the difference is that it involves repeated unwanted texts messages, making prolonged silent calls or posting unwanted or appreciated contact of the victim on social media. Perpetrators of cyberbullying make mischievous, anonymous comments or threats on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Burton, 2008).

The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP, 2009) conducted a pilot study among as many as 1 726 youths recruited in Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, and Port Elizabeth. The survey found that 73.9% of young people had access to the Internet either at home or at school; 64% reported using MXit; 47.9% had access to the Internet on their mobile phones; 31.4% had a profile on a social networking site such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter or Hi5; and 30.4% participated in online chat rooms and used instant messaging applications such as MSN and Yahoo chat (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009). Previous research conducted on middle school students showed an increase in females being at risk of victimisation through cyber bullying and this was associated with the risk of experiencing depression (Messias, Kindrick & Castro, 2014). A recent survey conducted by the *Seventeen Magazine* involving girls aged between 12 and 18 years showed that 74% of adolescent girls spent much of their time online on chat rooms or sending instant messages and e-mails (Chisholm, 2006). However, despite the large number of studies on bullying, only a few reported cyberbullying within the school context. With the use of technology increasing all over the globe, learners have started using electronic forms of bullying. Cyberbullying has become a great concern for schools (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009).

As the world moves into the Fourth Industrial Revolution, more people are using electronic devices. Social media platforms where people express their feelings on the global web have become very popular among young people. The Internet and other cellular and cyber technologies have opened vast opportunities for learning, exploration, and social and public engagements amongst children and the youth of South Africa (Mutongwizo & Burton, 2009). However, these benefits are also fraught with danger, and much has been documented on the extent and potential hazards of such technologies. A university study among 1 594 learners in Grades 6 to 12 at six schools (three primary schools and three secondary schools), that was conducted in the Nelson Mandela Bay area, found that 90% of young people used social

networking (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009). Although cyber bullying is new, the negative intentions reflected in numerous posts remain bullying deliberately as they express harmful intentions towards a defenseless victim. Social media posts are exposed to a large group of people in a short space of time and can move quickly between or among different media platforms. Hence, cyber bullying has been considered as the cruelest kind of bullying since it allows the bullies to remain unknown and it lowers their empathy and sensitivity (Ang & Goh, 2010).

Cyberbullying opens a platform where people unknown to one another comment or express opinions on whatever has been posted online about an individual. This facility is made easy and inviting by digital technology and the Internet because cyber space allows for anonymity and it has the ability to distribute content to a large audience at a high speed in addition to its ability to create and alter images (Tustin, Zulu & Basson, 2014).

Benbenishty and Astor (2008) state that as mobile messages stay anonymous, it is easy way to humiliate, harass and intimidate others. Therefore, cyberbullying may have more negative and longer-lasting consequences on children and young adults than face-to-face bullying, as anything written online can be persistent and can therefore torment the victim later in life. The worst part of negative messages and images posted online is that, even after they have been deleted by the individual that posted them, several people might still have the content of the message. Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) assert that over a third (37%) of young people who were surveyed in a study by the Crime for Justice and Crime Prevention organisation admitted to having experienced some form of cyber aggression either at home or at school. Cyber-bullying impacts negatively on a learner's self-confidence as the victim feels embarrassed, hopeless, and incomplete, which can lead to academic failure and social withdrawal. The fact that affected learners experience psychological trauma implies that the school and their parents are also affected. It was reported that many victims of cyberbullying were so traumatised and disempowered by the bullying that they expressed the desire to die rather than suffer further humiliation and abuse (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006). Behavioural problems that manifest in a decline in school grades and school attendance are a certainty, and negative impacts on family relationships are additional consequences (Dredge, Gleeson & Garcia, 2014). Further, teenagers who reported being victims of cyber-bullying were also at higher risk of becoming suicidal than those who reported school-based bullying.

Technological innovation around the globe has also reportedly increased the cases of cyber-bullying where text messages, emails, offensive images, and online chats are used to harass and bully learners. A study by the European Union Kids Online Initiative (2010) indicated that 6% of the respondents had experienced cyber-bullying. A similar affirmation was recorded by the WHO (2009), stating that 135 of the surveyed learners had experienced cyber-bullying.

Information and communication technology (ICT) has become an essential part of people's daily lives all over the world. Information and communication technology devices are used for educational purposes, information gathering, and work-related activities. There is a wide range of these products which has become easily accessible to numerous users including children. Kritzinger (2016) reiterated that ICT and internal availability is deemed to play a significant role of learners both socially and educationally. Against this background, cyberbullying has emerged as a new form of bullying that poses both a public threat and psychological health problems (Chang et al., 2014).

Belnap (2011:501) argues that "cyber-bullying has been described as more pernicious than traditional bullying, for it allows for the "gradual amplification" of cruel and sadistic behaviour and may cause an extreme emotional response". As a result, victims of cyberbullying may resort to taking their own lives. Cyberbullying has a ripple effect of victims as allows wide range of individuals to partake in malicious activity, creating a persistent feeling of insecurity among its victims. It interferes with in school functioning as it can start from an individual learner to a group of learners and later spreading throughout school interrupting teaching and learning.

2.5.1.4 Sexting

New generation mobile technology has introduced facilities for easily accessible photo and video material, and with these advancements, the definition of sexting must be revisited (Harris-Cik-Steyn, 2018). The internet has made it easier for teenagers to access sexually explicit media sites (Strassberg, McKinnon, Sustaı́ta & Rullo, 2012). According to Geldenhuys (2015:32), the term sexting was coined in 2005 as a fusion of the terms, "sex" and "texting". With Dike et al. (2013:74) and Sabbah-Mani (2015:532) defining sexting as the practice of sending or uploading explicit sexual text messages and images, such as nude or

seminude photographs, over cellphones or the Internet. Similarly, Rodríguez Castro et al. (2017) define the term 'sexting' as the sending, receiving and/or forwarding of nude or sexually suggestive photographs and/or videos and/or sexually explicit messages across social media platforms or internet-based applications. Adolescent learners exchange sexual images of themselves or with their partners or other people via chat rooms or other sexual-orientated networks. Sexting activities involving children, particularly teens, are common, and many parents are unaware that their children are sharing semi-naked or naked photos of themselves to peers via their cell phones (Dike et al., 2013). Teenagers should be made aware of the dangers that come with sending nude photos via the internet or social media platform to their partners and posting them online platforms (Cupples & Thompson, 2010). Teenagers consider sending nudes to their significant others as low risk which is not always the case. It has been emphasised that the exchange of nudes between minors may be classified as child pornography, which is illegal.

The following are the three main scenarios in which sexting manifests itself:
- The exchange of images solely between two romantic partners.
- The exchange of images between romantic partners that are then shared with others outside the relationship.
- The exchange of images where at least one person would like to start a romantic relationship.

Sexting has gained significant media coverage, particularly where teenagers are involved in it. (Fatah, 2008; Hoffman, 2011; Lutz, 2010; Reavy, 2008; Rubinkam, 2008). Sexting or 'outing' is a modern type of cyber abuse involving the dissemination and reception through the Internet of pornographic images (Burton & Leoschut, 2013, cited in Tumwine, 2014). Burton and Leoschut (2013) further state that sexting turns into bullying when the consequences of failing to comply with requests for photos are used as a pretext to emotionally torture the victims, or when the photos are sent against the receiver's wish. Young people hardly contemplate the consequences of sending someone 'nudes' or sexually suggestive pictures. For example, what happens when one is no longer on good terms with the receiver of these images or if the phone or computer gets stolen? Female learners that send nudes images of themselves to their boyfriends have greater risk of having those images being distributed to other people once they have broken up (Celizic, 2009). According to Strassberg et al. (2012), in one incidence a female

leaner that was trying to get attention of a male learner that she liked sent nudes to get his attention and was humiliated when a third part acquired those pictures that sent them to the interschool. These pictures were not only limited to school but was distributed to non-school personnel and leaners from other school which resulted in the learner committing suicide. In October 2014, cyber-forensic experts in Johannesburg dealt with a case in which more than 200 Grade 11 students in Johannesburg were emailing or receiving photographs of themselves and classmates posing naked (Hoskens, 2014 cited Geldenhuys, 2015). In addition, Coetzee (2013) reported that the South African Films and Publication Board conducted a study in Cape Town, Durban, and Johannesburg schools, involving 934 students aged 13 to 17, which discovered that 60% of the students were aware of friends passing on pornographic website addresses to one another, and 81 percent were aware of friends having pornographic images on their computers.

Such pictures can be used by another person to blackmail the owner into doing certain things against their wish. There have been numerous reports of girls that have blackmailed over explicit picture sent to their boyfriend to blackmail the sender (Englander, 2010). Often these pictures are used by other party to 'get even' with the victim as result of the breakup. (Bronkhorst, 2014, cited in Tumwine, 2014).

The following information conjures up another instance of sexting:

> "A KwaZulu-Natal teacher has been suspended after he was caught allegedly exchanging graphic sexual material with learners via the WhatsApp messenger service. The provincial Education Department on Monday said the male teacher from Tongaat Secondary School was placed on suspension following allegations of sexual misconduct. Learners at the school held a placard demonstration on Monday after details of the alleged sexting went viral" (Teacher suspended over WhatsApp sexting scandal, 2019).

The costs involved in adolescent sexting include the dissemination of copmpromising photographs or videos to a wider audience, cyberbullying, deleterious mental health ramifications (including, but not limited to, depression and even suicide), and other risk-taking behaviours such as early-debut sexual activity (Klettke et al., 2014; Van Ouytsel et al., 2017).

There are several other inherent risks such as online victimisation, so-called 'Facebook depression', sexual solicitation and predation, and adolescent sexting, which have legal implications emanating from the creation, distribution, and possession of child pornography (Costello et al., 2016).

Section 1 of the Films and Publications Amendment Act No. 3 of 2009 and Sections 15-22 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act No. 32 of 2007 criminalise child pornography (Harris et al., 2018). Therefore, the fact that sexts are defined as an explicit means of creating, distributing, or possessing a sext depicting a minor would automatically constitute child pornography, which is a punishable offence in terms of the South African law. Most teenager's sext at some point in their lives as the practice has become a norm. The reality is that age of learner partaking in sexting is declining and increasing the possibility of teenagers engaging in actual pornography which should be a great concern to South Africans (Dake, Price, Maziarz & Ward, 2012). Schools need to effectively deal with the issue of sexting involving teachers and learners who engage in this practice. However, stringent regulations that protect the privacy of people make this a very difficult issue to deal with at school level.

2.5.2 Guns and weapons in schools

While the use of guns and deadly weapons is not new in the South African society, it remains a problem that confronts most communities. The term weapon refers to any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; any chemical substance, device, or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or death (Botha et al., 2013). Easy access to illegal firearms and other deadly weapons, and the scope of violent behaviour associated with such weapons, pose serious consequences for the user and the victim (Bersin, 2011). According to Mncube and Netshitangani (2014), learning environments (particularly schools) have become territories for crime and violence, and this has necessitated some learners and educators to take weapons to school for their personal security. Although the SAPS and the Department of Basic Education have collaborated on safer school initiatives such as the Firearm Free Zones for Schools in terms of the Firearms Control Act of 2000, unacceptable levels of weapon-related violence still occur in schools.

Mathe (2008) defines 'a gun' as a harmful tool that discharges a missile at high velocity, while 'a weapon' is any harmful instrument used in fighting. According to the Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools (2001:1), a dangerous object is:

- any firearms or gas weapon.
- any explosive material or device.
- any article, object or instrument which may be employed to cause bodily harm to another person.

The National Policy declared all public schools as drug free and object-free zones (Regulations for Safety Measures at Public School, 2001:1). Hence, schools are required to adhere to this legal provision. However, despite the policies that have been developed, their implementation has not been effective as many schools in South Africa are not gun and drug free zones. Botha et al. (2013: 2) claim that learners bring guns to school for various reasons, including protection, security, dominance, and prestige, or to sell. Physical and weapons-based violence share common risk factors, and a variety of individual and school-level characteristics have been consistently found to predict both (Botha et al., 2013). Mncube and Steinman (2014) confirm the use of a variety of weaponry by gangsters in schools and they refer to guns, knives, bottles, and even sharpened pencils that are used to threaten and control other learners.

There has been an increase in the number of injuries and deaths in schools yearly because of the use of guns and other dangerous weapons. Citizens who own guns argue that, due to high levels of crime in South Africa, they have the right to protect themselves and their belongings. Carrying a weapon is often a response to insults and other violent and provocative offences, and this then leads to the normalisation of and justification for the carrying of weapons by everyone, including learners who are not affiliated to gangs (Horowitz & Schwartz, 2011).

The many learners when reportedly carry weapons to school is an indication of alarmingly high levels of crime and violence in society. One may argue that not all learners carry weapons to school with the intention of harming other children, as some carry weapons to ward off bullying and intimidation that they fear might become fatal if they do not have the means to defend themselves. When students are threatened with a weapon or miss a substantial number of school days due to fear, they are more likely to bring a gun to school. Furthermore, Mncube

and Harber (2013: 5) claim that students' perception of their school's ability to protect them influences their chance of responding to violence with violence. When they do not believe their school can protect them, some students may turn to carrying weapons and using violence as a form of self-defence. Horowitz and Schwartz (2011) maintain that the prevalence of illegal weapons in schools has a psychological effect on learners who are not in gangs as they are conditioned to believe that violence is the only way to resolve conflict and threat. The prevalence of weapons thus increases the likelihood of learners resorting to violence to resolve conflict. This fact poses a challenge for school management teams (SMTs) as they need to identify and manage potentially violent situations.

Levin and Noulan (2000) argue that teachers must be able to defuse situations of conflict and teach learners to embrace more pro-social means of conflict resolution. However, the feasibility of this strategy seems elusive when learners come from communities where violence is used as the only means of conflict resolution. Teachers have been injured and some even lost their lives while trying to stop fights on school premises. It is important to note that the rate of murder is not only limited to the number of citizens who own guns, but that the high rate of violence in schools is also reflective of safety problems sired using knives and other blunt weapons by groups or gangsters during conflict situations (Mathe, 2008). The reality is that learners have easy access to guns and weapons due to unchecked acts of crime and violence in society. Media reports have increasingly exposed evidence of youths carrying illegal weapons with impunity. These weapons are used to intimidate and harm other learners and teachers. According to a South African Council for Educators (2011) survey, three in ten learners at secondary school knew of a fellow learner who had brought weapons to school, three in ten reported that it was easy to acquire a knife, and one in ten reported that it was easy to obtain a firearm. The easy accessibility of guns and weapons turns schools into some of the most dangerous places to be in South Africa.

A news broadcast on 2 August 2018 in Durban stated the following (Two learners stabbed to death, 2018). The following was reported,

> "Classes were suspended at a high school in KwaMakhutha outside Durban, after two learners were stabbed to death inside school premises. The attack was allegedly carried out by a fellow pupil. The fight is believed to be part of ongoing turf wars in the

township. Mangaliso Mbatha, an 18-year-old Grade 10 pupil, died while trying to save a friend who was under attack. His friend, 17-year-old Grade 11 pupil, Sihle Mngadi, was also stabbed to death (eNCA, 2018).

The Education Laws Amendment Act 31 of 2007 was promulgated to legalise the search and seizure of illegal drugs and dangerous weapons from students (Department of Education, 2007). The law also provides that the governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for learners in consultation with the learners, parents, and educators of the school (Hlatshwayo, 2018). Schools that are experiencing violence must monitor threats by implementing prevention measures and overseeing their implementation. Involving members of the SGB will help tap into a diversity of advice on the necessity and appropriateness of any searches for drugs and weapons involving learners. Moreover, scholars such as Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2013) advise that the nature and causes of violence in society and schools need to be examined and discussed in schools, teacher education institutions, and in society forums.

2.5.3 Gangsterism

A gang is defined as "a group with a sense of togetherness that strives to intimidate and conduct violent actions or other crimes, and that defends itself physically against violent acts of other groups" (Veriava, Thom & Hodgson, 2017: 298). Gangs are a problem in schools, but they have their origins in neighborhood gangs. Because some of the learners are members of street gangs, the ripple effect of their activities spreads into schools, causing violence on school grounds. Gangsterism has become a global issue. The history of gangsterism in South Africa is associated with the mushrooming of townships in the 1950s, particularly Sophiatown in Johannesburg (Lukhele, 2016; Fenwick, 2007). The increase in the male population in incarceration centres arguably also contributed to the formation of different gangs. When ex-convicts are released from prison, they continue with the recruitment of gang members in the community. The common perception is that gangsterism is a phenomenon common among the Coloureds. However, as far back as the 19th Century, Black groups also started several gangs (Hlatshwayo, 2018). Over the years, gangsterism has been spreading among all the races in the country, and this phenomenon is now associated with every ethnic group in the country. Gangs are no longer restricted to street corners, prisons, or poor societies, but they are now overtly operating within communities and school settings (Mncube & Steinman, 2014).

Schools are ideally safe spaces devoid of any fear of crime or violence. They are spaces where children can learn in a safe and protected environment but, unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case in numerous schools worldwide (Prince, 2005; Standing, 2003). The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Annual Report (2001:10) on South Africa emphasises the fact that "…many schools are places of crime, violence, fear, intimidation and trauma, which consistently disrupt their normal functioning …"

Egley, Howell and Major's (2006:93) definition describes gangs as follows:
> "Gangs are organisations comprising three or more individuals who form an alliance for a common purpose; the group identifies with and claims territory in the community and engages individually or collectively in violence and other criminal activities."

Crawage (2005:45) also defines gangsterism by referring to group clustering:
> "…the evolution of an urban identity determined along racial and economic lines. It includes the formation of groups with the aim of committing violence and crime, and to defend themselves physically against violence of other groups."

Gang-related violence takes any form of violence including assault, gender-based violence, and bullying. Gangsterism is related to involvement in, or related to, a formal or informal collection of young people and the violence they commit is often a result of needy and socially disadvantaged situations (Donald et al., 2006) to which, due to the influence of a free market democracy, schools might unwittingly be contributing. Magidi, Schenk and Erasmus (2016), and Van Wyk and Theron (2005) confirm the view that gangs take control of an area and the youth when the community and its institutions have failed in their task to educate the youth. The inability by formal institutions to control, care for and protect community members provides a wide gap for gangs to take control. Violence related to gang activities is often retributive (taking revenge on another gang or individual member) or instructive (sending a message to another gang), but the violence may also be used to generate or facilitate participation in the gang itself. In the school context, a gang can be regarded as a group of learners who persistently and together exhibit anti-social and aggressive behaviour.

Gangs result from weak and broken family structures and thus members of a particular gang identify with 'the family' of their peers. As a result of post-apartheid globalisation and

economic neoliberalism, Van der Merwe (2014) indicated that young boys with weak economic prospects are more likely to gravitate towards gangster lifestyles. Most boys that join gangs come from disintegrated families where they do not feel loved, hence a gang becomes their family that protects them and gives them a sense of belonging (Nhambura, 2019). Belonging to a gang while at school gives youths a sense of power and constant protection that would have been absent if they were not part of a particular gang. Gang membership gives students the assurance of acceptance and belonging which ultimately fulfils their psychological needs (Ngidi, 2018). The more young people become loyal to a particular gang, the easier it becomes for them to be detached from their own families. Gangs always test the loyalty of their members, and in the process, families inevitably lose their members. When gang members discover a new family structure that will offer the help or attention that might have been lacking in their typical family, it is easy for a gang to replace the family system (Larson, Smith & Furlong, 2002). Belonging to a popular gang, enhances learners' popularity and social status according to them respect among their peers (Ngidi, 2018). Teenagers that associate themselves with a gang regard this gang as their family. Quite often, teenagers who join gangs come from poor communities therefore gang membership "acts as a protective factor for at-risk youth who might otherwise succumb to what might be perceived as more devastating outcomes such as continuing poverty and academic failure" (Sharkey et al., 2011:47).

In South Africa, gangsterism thrives mostly in urban areas in townships and in and around large cities such as Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban. Schools located in areas with high levels of criminality or gangsterism face the occurrence of violence outside their boundaries as violence in the neighbourhood extends to schools. Poor socio-economic situations, such as unemployment, low income, and inadequate living conditions, are all factors that contribute to the formation of gangs in these communities (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya 2014). Various media have regularly reported on shooting incidents in schools on the Cape Flats in South Africa due to the high rates of violence associated with gangsterism, drug use, and alcohol consumption. Exposure to high levels of violence and being brought up in violent communities negatively affect the psyche of children and this compromises their ability to be functional members of society (Sibisi, 2016). According to Mncube and Steinmann (2014), research that was undertaken by the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cape Town (2001) in 20 primary and secondary schools in the Cape Metropole and surrounding areas found that crime and gang-related violence were common occurrences in schools in the Western Cape. This study concludes that violence has robbed educators and learners in these areas of a sense of

safety in their schools, leaving them grappling with feelings of anxiety and fear (Mncube & Steinmann, 2014).

Contemporary teachers are confronted by several challenges. For instance, they are expected to teach a population that is increasingly diverse not only in terms of unique cultural backgrounds, but also in terms of academic, behavioural, and social skills (Mncube & Steinmann, 2014). Most of these learners come from disadvantaged communities that are characterised by poverty, unemployment, and a reduced budget to pay public school fees. Many learners in one class also makes it difficult for teachers to maintain order and discipline. According to Mncube and Steinmann (2014), the Human Rights Commission's report on public hearings on school violence and the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) both maintain that learners in South African schools widely demonstrate a blatant disregard for their teachers. Reports have indicated that learners regularly swear at their teachers and engage in "shouting, back chatting, laughing in the teacher's face, and the abuse of alcohol and dagga at sports meetings" (De Wet, 2003:95).

Teachers are expected to guide their learners to achieve high academic standards. They can appeal to learners with extraordinary situations in inclusive environments, but also to learners who display gang-related aggressive activities resulting from the increasing incivility of society (Lane & Meeker, 2010). Reckson and Becker (2005) explore the narratives of eight South African high school teachers employed in a neighbourhood marked by gang violence in the Western Cape. The study indicated that an improvement in the quality of teaching made no positive difference to learners because violence prevailed due to gangstersim in the schools under study, making it very hard or almost impossible for teachers to exert any influence on these learners.

The submissions made by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) to the South African Human Rights Commission echoed the same concerns about verbal abuse in schools and its impact on teachers. The abuse perpetrated by both learners and parents has resulted in teachers experiencing emotional and psychological trauma and affected teachers who admitted that they felt insecure and unable to effectively manage their classrooms. Research has also shown that some types of gang-related violence that affect schools clearly originate outside the school environs (Ncontsa, 2013). For instance, gang-related violent

behaviour such as bullying and sexual harassment that is perpetrated by male learners on female learners may well be learned in families and communities beyond the school.

According to a study conducted by Magidi, Schenk and Erasmus (2016), gang activities affect the daily functioning of schools. These activities instil fear among learners, teachers, and parents. The teaching and learning process is affected as classes are frequently disrupted due to gang shootings near schools. Fights among gang affiliated learners or learners and teachers also break out and this raises deep concerns about safety issues at schools.

Gangsterism has been recognized as a widespread phenomenon in schools. The presence of gang-related violence in schools fosters violence since it is linked to rivalry between gang organizations (de Wet, 2016). There are a variety of reasons why students become entangled in the network of gang violence at school and join such prominent gangs. Poor devotion and commitment to school, anti-social behaviour at school, poor grades, association with delinquent classmates, limited belief in established rules, and positive attitudes toward drugs are all linked to the likelihood of joining a gang (Nhambura, 2019).

According to Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2014), gangs at schools should be considered a community problem in South Africa because schools are a part of the community and hence mirror the community's concerns. Gang riots that erupt among opposing gangs keep community members in constant fear of being injured or killed. Lindsay (2012), Marcovitz (2010), Kelly (2008), and Kemp (2007) acknowledge that sense of vulnerability among community members. Jacobs (2014) suggests that, because of gangster activities in their schools, learners and teachers might be subjected to physical torture, psychological trauma, and spiritual sanctity that, to a large extent, all lead to financial loss. Barbarin and Richter (2001) argue that youngsters who have joined gangs may ultimately suffer psychological trauma and social alienation as they will encounter resentment and suspicion from their families and the community for their involvement in gang-related activities.

2.5.4 Corporal punishment

In the recent past, corporal punishment was cenral to the authoritarian approach to school management based on the view that children needed to be controlled by adults and that measures such as sarcasm, insults, and other forms of abusive behaviour were ways of teaching children moral lessons (Duma, 2013). Corporal punishment entails striking children's hands or

buttocks, slapping them in the face, and twisting their ears with the intention of instilling discipline. These practices were abolished following the enactment of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) which states: (1) "No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner; (2) any person who contravenes subsection 1 is guilty of an offence, and liable to conviction or a sentence which could be imposed for assault". However, a national study by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP, 2012) found that, of the 5 939 learners who had been surveyed in 2012, 49.8% had still been caned or spanked by a teacher or principal as punishment for exhibing undesirable behaviour.

In addition, Govender and Sookrajh (2014) surveyed seven primary school educators in KZN and found that corporal punishment was a common form of discipline. These participants believed that corporal punishment was used to control behaviour, foster normalising judgment through obedience to school rules, and reinforce the authority of an educator as a knowledge giver based on their previous experiences. The national school violence research report from 2012 gives evidence of the continuous use of corporal punishment to enforce discipline in South African schools. According to the findings of this study, 49.8% of students claimed to have been beaten or flogged by educators or principals as punishment for misbehaving (Burton & Leoschut 2012). The national school violence study report also indicates that the provincial rates of corporal punishment ranged from 22.4% to 73.7%, with the highest levels of corporal punishment observed in KZN (73.7%) (Burton & Leoschut 2012).

Researchers such as Masakhane and Chikoko (2016) claim that the administration of corporal punishment is equivalent to teaching children that violence is a way of solving conflict. These authors claim that the use of corporal punishment is like showing children that abuse is a means to settle conflict. According to these authors, it also suggests that children understand that aggressive action on the part of a strong individual at the detriment of a vulnerable person is appropriate. Hence, learners use physical force to resolve conflicts with their peers both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers justify the use of corporal punishment to instil discipline in the school. Ngubane, Mkhize and Singh (2019:84), argued teachers apply corporal punishment "…indiscriminately and, in some instances, violently for anything vaguely resembling indiscipline". This belief seems to be encouraged by a verse in the Bible that reads, "Spare the rod and spoil the child" (The Holy Bible, 2000. Proverbs Chapter 13 verse 24). Many teachers in the 20th century grew up in an era when corporal punishment was used on

them when they were still in school, and they thus believe that it is the right way of disciplining learners. According to the PLAN Report (2008), there is no sufficient evidence to suggest that corporal punishment increases learner conduct and academic performance; however, there is substantial evidence to imply physical injury and even death. Mncube and Netshitangani (2014) argue that the most prevalent method of abuse of teachers is corporal punishment, an interpersonal form of violence committed by schools in their quest to 'govern' learners.

During the apartheid era, the relationship between educators and learners was characterised by power and fear (Kapueja, 2014) as teachers used the cane to maintain and enforce discipline in public schools. Mokhele (2006:48), mentioned "before 1994, power and authority were the basis for control and discipline". Ngubane at al. (2019:86) argue that "the classroom setting was strict, and the learners tended to be apprehensive as they were not granted a platform to voice their opinions and concerns regarding disciplinary matters".

Contrary to the behaviour and beliefs expounded above, the school environment should be safe and free from all the types of violence. However, if corporal punishment is still being enforced, that ceases to be the case. Corporal punishment is mostly used in disadvantaged schools in poor rural communities and townships and remains widespread in rural areas in South Africa (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005). Learners residing in these areas often do not report incidences of corporal punishment. With the advent of social media, it has become evident that corporal punishment is still applied in many parts of the country as social media networks are awash with videos taken by learners depicting corporal punishment being administered in schools.

Kapueja (2014:24) argues that corporal punishment is "the continuous emphasis that has been placed on the need for children to fear their teachers/parents, on the maintenance of strict discipline, and to enforce absolute obedience to the authority of the parent/teacher and the laws of God". Corporal punishment was founded on the understanding that children should be controlled by adults and that they should not question them. This form of punishment ensured that children feared adults. However, even though the practice was outlawed by a South African court of law on 18 September 2019, some parents have continued to use corporal punishment. The South African Constitutional Court ruled in favour of the removal of any physical punishment, even that which may be deemed 'reasonable and moderate' by parents. Thus, any form of spanking of children by their parents is illegal. Justice Mogoeng ruled that spanking is

inconsistent with Section 12(1) of the Constitution, which states that "everyone must be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources".

Many teachers and parents have argued that corporal punishent is necessary and should be reintroduced, but Mncube and Netshitangani (2014:8) argue that "there is a danger that following this path will lead to the semi-militarisation of schools in South Africa − a situation in schools where traditional forms of school authoritarianism have broken down". Thus, traditional forms of authoritarianism should be replaced with more positive forms of discipline to maintain order. The reality is that not all learners come from homes where physical punishment is exerted, hence they encounter violence for the first time at school. But schools that lack positive disciplinary structures enforce violent disciplinary measures that infringe on learners' human rights. With the advent of democratic governments in the 21st century, corporal punishment was criminalised and supplanted by disciplinary measures such as a code of conduct and detention. The focus of a code of conduct is the enforcement of constructive learning rather than making schools punishment oriented. Learners learn trough observation therefore teachers should be encouraged to apply constructive discipline measures and be 'positive' example to learners. However, it seems that some events in schools still force teachers to use a quicker approach such as corporal punishment to get their message across.

The Department of Basic Education called on educators to stop using physical force such as corporal punishment when disciplining learners. Educators that lack the skills to implement constructive disciplinary measures have experienced difficulties in maintaining discipline in the classroom as they are an easy target for the learners. Rampa (2014:21-22) indicates that "the entitlement of 'learner power' often results in intimidation and violence. On the other hand, the lack of support from role players and the lack of proper training to implement alternative disciplinary strategies are all attributable to learner indiscipline in schools (Rampa, 2014). One may argue that, since the abolition of corporal punishment, teachers have not been well-equipped with skills to manage overcrowded classrooms and ill-disciplined learners. According to researchers, teacher assigning that ill-discipline of learners in schools is a result of the abolishment of corporal punishment is worth nothing (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012; Naong, 2007). Research has found that, in the absence of effective disciplinary procedures, most teachers feel stranded and that their low morale impacts negatively on teaching and learning (LeeFon, Jacobs, Le Roux & De Wet, 2013; Maphosa & Shumba, 2010; Smith, 2010). Therefore, other strategies should be put in place to help maintain discipline in schools. If the

strategies fail to work, the Department of Basic Education should explore alternative strategies that can be used in schools. Considering the socio-economic issues that exist in most township and peri-urban communities, these more disadvantaged communities have demonstrated how these issues contribute to the unruly behaviour of learners. Rampa (2014) and Roussouw (2003) found that over-emphasising human rights without regard for responsibilities contributes to a lack of discipline, disrespect for teachers, and the rejection of authority.

Although this section is not keen on further exploring the debate on corporal punishment, the researcher need to reiterate the fact that some teachers and parents still apply corporal punishment to maintain discipline (Wolhuter & Russo, 2013). Some sectors of the South African society have reacted positively to the legislative framework that affirms human dignity. Others, however, have expressed concern and criticised the abolition of corporal punishment, claiming that it was a mistake that now contributes to the deterioration of discipline in schools (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). Many researchers have argued that the abolition of corporal punishment is synonymous with loosening teachers' grip on learners (Shaikhnag & Assan, 2014).

Society might hold opposing views regarding the use of corporal punishment in general, with several teachers and parents still believing that this disciplinary measure should not have been abolished in the first place and that learners have been given too many rights at the expense of their responsibilities. However, one cannot ignore the fatal incidences resulting from the use of corporal punishment over the years. A case in point is 8-year-old Nthabiseng Mtambo, who died in a hospital in the Free State in February 2016 after her Grade 3 teacher had continuously beaten her on the head with a hosepipe for not doing her homework. This incident exposed the horrors associated with corporal punishment (Röhrs, 2016). In another incident, Sphamandla Choma, a 14-year-old boy, was left paralysed and later died after he had allegedly been assaulted by his school principal in Middelburg, Mpumalanga "for stealing R150 from his teacher's bag" (Masweneng, 2017:4). There have been many other incidences of corporal punishment that have resulted in fatal injuries. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are those who believe that many such incidents have remained – and will remain − unreported.

Röhrs (2017) suggests that corporal punishment has detrimental effects on child development, particularly if it is administered at a tender age, because early childhood experiences have a strong influence on behavioural and social skills development. The extensive use of corporal

punishment can have diverse mental effects on children. The constant fear of being shouted at and beaten may cause children not to confide in their parents or teachers and serious matters that need adult intervention may be left unattended, compelling these children to adopt the same violent tendencies. According to Ngubane et al. (2019), not only those continuous use of corporal punishment that preserve the cycle of violence and child abuse, but it also has negative impact on the academic performance of learners. According to Hart, Durrat, Newell, and Power (2005), the use of corporal punishment produces a bad school atmosphere in which students' safety is jeopardized. As a result, students' academic performance will be harmed since they will feel excluded and disconnected from school (Hart et al., 2005). The preservation of a culture of violence in common among vulnerable communities. According to Gibbs (2012: 112), corporal punishment is ineffective in managing student behavior. Gibbs' (2012) argument is based on studies that suggest its use results in immediate compliance or temporarily prevents improper behaviour but does nothing to promote and teach right behaviour in learners.

Schools are agents of change in South Africa. Schools and the education that is received there should guard society against the repetition of mistakes that occurred in the past. Learners need a safe, consistent, and a well-organised environment where they are encouraged to learn in a meaningful way – spaces where they are treated with respect and where their voices are heard. (Mncube & Harbor, 2013). They do not need schools where teachers beat them, abuse them verbally, and humiliate them. However, it is important that learners are taught to express themselves in a respectful manner. Teachers should thus listen and respond to them constructively. In this way, society will eventually be able to deal with social ills. Many teachers still need training to effectively apply disciplinary measures other than corporal punishment. They also need to be sensitised to the educational ineffectiveness of corporal punishment and the negative consequences that accompany its use.

The most profound negative consequence of learners' misbehaviour is punishment, especially when corporal punishment is administered. Punishment for bad conduct may be carried out either by removing a positive reward or by using detrimental effects such as reprimands, isolation or 'time out' (Taylor, 2004). Many opportunities for these measures arise in the classroom and they necessitate appropriate application by the educator (Brijral, 2016). It is important that educators avoid losing their temper and offending learners by name calling when disciplining them. Rather, they should demonstrate actions they expect in the classroom from

learners. When students learn how adults cope with stressful circumstances, they can deal with tension in a calm and positive way (Bray, 2005).

Good communication between learners and educators is vital in ensuring that learners appreciate the fact that behaviour is convertible into appropriate and acceptable codes of conduct. Children should feel comfortable enough to ask for assistance from their parents and educators whenever they are confronted with problems, they should also be equipped enough to solve their problems on their own without the use of violence measures.

2.5.5 Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is form of violence that is focused against a person on the bases of gender which includes acts that cause physical, mental, or sexual harm or threats that lead to deprivation of freedom (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). According to Wilson (2006), GBV that occurs in schools undermines numerous educational benefits such as academic learning and psychological empowerment. GBV includes rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying, and other forms of non-sexual intimidation or abuse such as verbal harassment or exploitative labour in schools. GBV in schools is often associated with everyday institutional structures and practices and sexualised encounters in the school (Dunne et al., 2006). According to Dunne et al. (2006), the hidden curriculum in which feminine and masculine roles are formed and strengthened constitutes gender relations and distinctions within the classroom. This violence is affected by unfair power ties between adults and children at one stage and males and females at another. This form of violence can occur in formal and non-formal spaces, on the school grounds, on the way to and from school, in school boarding houses, social media networks using the electronic devices.

The atmosphere of violence in South African schools is a clear reflection of the violence that occurs in society. To address GBV in schools, long term strategies need to be implemented to address the socio-economic disputes that create the problem of violence. The 'boys will be boys' discourse ought to be examined as the problem is entrenched in the ways in which male learners are socialised to express and defend their masculinity. Society has been constructed to accept the belief that boys should be dominate over girls. Klein (2006) argues that sexual violence by boys derives from the 'boys will be boys' discourse, which teaches male dominance through expressing and defending their masculinity. The discriminatory gender

norms entrenched in society condone boys' risky behaviour which include the oppression and the objectification of girls, sexual partners, GBV and in some context's substance abuse (Porter, 2013). The root causes of GBV lies within patriarchal practices which are learned in society over a period. Sikweyiya, Jewkes and Dunkle (2014), describe such practices to include individuals who are strong, tough and in control. Leach and Humphreys (2007) contend that the school's social activities work inside and help to perpetuate a gender-based regime that encourages violent masculine traditions and obedient feminine constructs while discouraging alternative forms of behaving. Gender-based violence takes many forms, including sexual threats, exploitation, domestic violence, sexual assaults, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, and other harmful traditional practices that increase morbidity and death (Mashiri, 2013).

Mirembe and Davies (2001) argue that school culture often reinforces conceptions of girlhood or boyhood through its policies and practices. For instance, most studies on corporal punishment have shown that boys were often beaten more severely and more harshly than girls (Morrell, 2001; Humphreys, 2008). According to Morrell (2001), the differential use or measurement of corporal punishment on girls and boys in the schooling context teaches boys to be tough and accepting on the one hand, while it teaches girls to be submissive on the other. Humphreys (2008) explored corporal punishment in Botswana with reference to the Education Act of 1978 of this country. This Act sanctions the use of corporal punishment but determines that it should be used differently when applied to boys and girls. At primary school, girls are not supposed to be beaten on the buttocks, but boys are. Instead, girls should be beaten on the backs of their calves or on the palms of their hands (Humphreys, 2008; Morrell, 2001). Dunne, Humphrey, and Leach (2004) posits that gender relations are hidden in schooling curriculum that has been social constructs to reinforce feminine and masculine identities. The hidden curriculum is underpinned by the unwritten social rules and behavioural expectations that all seem to know but are never taught explicitly or overtly in the classroom. The hidden curriculum emerges and is reinforced through the culture of the school (Ngekane, 2010) and may be explained as experiences that learners will encounter by attending school. They are subconsciously ingrained in learners by repeating these activities daily.

2.5.5.1 Gender-based violence in South African schools

In South African schools, gender-based violence is a major problem that needs to be addressed efficiently. For years, the South African government has been promoting gender equality in organisations such as schools and in society. The Department of Basic Education has implemented various policies that seek to address gender-based violence within schools. The Bill of Rights that is entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that, in the school environment, "learners have the right to a clean and safe environment that is conducive to education" (Oosthuizen, 2005:39). Only in an educational setting that is safe and free from violence will successful teaching and learning be sustained. One would surmise that this is difficult to attain because violence has become prevalent in most societies in most parts of the country. According to Reilly (2014), achieving quality education is not limited to the curriculum, learning opportunities, learning outcomes, teaching and teachers, but it also depends on the circumstances under which learning takes place.

The Department of Basic Education has adopted regulations aimed at maintaining violence-free school spaces (Department of Basic Education and LEADSA, 2013). The report includes a sub-section on gender and envisions the training of teachers on the necessary measures to be implemented to prevent sexual violence and harassment in schools. It also proposes discussions with youths on GBV across the country's provinces as another initiative to combat GBV in schools (Department of Basic Education and LEADSA, 2013). However, the implementation of these widely accredited legal requirements seems to be a Herculean task, as male domination and other daily practices of subordination coalesce with political, cultural, and economic factors that culminate in gender-based violence (Bhana, 2012a).

According to Prinsloo (2006), all forms of sexual harassment and violence perpetrated against girls in schools must be discouraged. The latter author maintains that the effects of sexual violence in schools can manifest in different forms such as unwanted pregnancy, emotional pressure and, above all, a loss of self-respect and dignity. The National School Violence Study (2012) reveals that violence is a common occurrence amongst secondary school learners, with female learners being more vulnerable to various forms of violence (Burton & Leoschut, 2012). The findings revealed that 70% of schoolgirls reported being victims of unwanted touching, 6.8% was exposed to verbal abuse, and 4.5% reported being hit, punched, or slapped. In these incidents, 90% of the perpetrators was male.

Sexual violence in schools is a common phenomenon. It's also becoming more common for male teachers to solicit sex from schoolgirls. This demonstrates a selfish disregard for young girls' rights and dignity and having sex with students not only breaches the community's confidence, but it is also illegal and a disciplinary offence (Ngidi, 2018). Pinheiro (2006) submits that gender-based violence derives from gender inequality, stereotypes, and sexual harassment that are all socially imposed on girls and are sometimes encouraged by the desire to penalise girls because of their gender, sexuality, or even sexual interest. The conceptualisation of GBV is, however, not limited to physical force, as it encompasses emotional as well as psychological dimensions like name-calling, insulting, and humiliating the victim. These forms of abuse and violence operate within the bounds of traditional heterosexual gender norms (Bhana, 2009b) and have been made more commonplace by the prejudice that society maintains against women.

Sexual abuse often occurs outside the school when adult men – often teachers – engage young girls in sex in exchange for gifts and money. Aggressive and threatening actions, as well as unsolicited physical interaction, such as groping and touching, forced sex and rape, are both types of violence. These behavioural exploits undermine the role of authority of teachers and betray their obligation to provide for learners. The recognition of violence against girls as a significant barrier to socio-economic development in all parts of the world hinges upon the understanding that the mistreatment of schoolgirls by society is reflected in the culture of the nations that marginalise and lessen the value of women and their contribution to societal development (Maphosa, 2018). Sexual violence on schoolgirls has negative impact especially on the economy and social wellbeing of developing countries. However, there is a slight recognition of the significance to prevent violence against schoolgirls (Wilson, 2006). Sadly, there is neither an articulation of the consequences of gender-based violence in formal educational settings nor enough intervention strategies in place to combat this practice. The sexual assault of girls by male educators or male peers occurs frequently in South African schools. However, the Department of Basic Education seems to focus more on 'what happens after' than on a cure for this scourge. GBV in schools impedes the benefits of education and results in poor health and psychological trauma. Studies conducted in Africa have found that hostile learning environments that are plagued by violence impact significantly on students. In fact, the victims of violence are twice more likely to miss school than non-victims (Dunne & Ananga, 2013). Acceptance of boys' violent behaviours is likely to impinge on girls' class and academic ability (Renold, 2005). Awareness how confrontation and dispute are instigated and

mediated between boys and girls in schooling environments is also important in promoting understanding of abuse and the type of violence that learners are subjected to within the school community.

2.5.5.2 *Violence, masculinity and schools*

Izugbara (2015:5) argues that "masculinity is fashioned and moulded by diverse social and other institutional dynamics and processes". Thus, men often must engage in 'manhood acts' which aim to distinguish themselves from females thus establishing their eligibility for gender-based violence (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009:287). Moreover, hegemonic masculinity is the ideal type of masculinity and determines what it means 'to be a man'. Various studies on violence iterate the role played by schools in promoting hegemonic forms of masculinity that justify GBV (Anderson, 2009; Haber, 2004).

Normally, male educators enforce discipline in schools more assertively than female educators do, which renders female educators more vulnerable to victimisation by learners. Nhambura (2019) indicated that young males tend to be the main perpetrators of school violence in South Africa.   Schools can normalise a violent atmosphere inside and outside the classroom by implementing coercive pedagogy that reinforces an unequal balance of power between educators and learners. This is enforced by allowing corporal punishment and by not properly addressing sexualised bullying (Ibid.). This is illustrated by the fact that some educators either do not believe that harassment occurs, or they see it as constituting the natural order of things, with the expression 'boys will be boys' being commonly used (Mills, 2001). Halson (1998, cited in Ngakane, 2010) posits that many schools do nothing to curb the sexual harassment of young women.

Schools are integral to society and play a part in constructing boy's identity both socially and within the schooling environment. Merry (2009) argues that some boys or men perceive violence as natural to men, as a source of pride, and as a construct that girls or women should respect. Precisely, violence is the prerogative of men or boys who choose either to do good or bad towards one another as males or the opposite gender. Moma (2015:25) avers that, given that schools promote and condone the violent behaviour perpetrated by boys and male educators as normal and culturally acceptable, "…it is imperative to investigate the nature of

gender relationships and the notional constructs of identities as 'gender' within the spatial landscapes of schools in order to understand how violence is gendered within and outside these spaces". Wilson (2006) often school personnel turn a deaf ear to female's leaners complaints which has resulted in several female learners being reluctant to report incidences of sexual violence against them, especially from teachers, but also because they believe that nothing will be done to the perpetrators. This author argues that teachers and principals choose to ignore the violence perpetrated against girls but insists that making schools safe and equitable for both sexes must be prioritised to improve education girls. Leach and Scott (2003) aver that, apart from transmitting insight on how to gain employment and academic knowledge, schools should encourage learners to be socially responsible and, above all, encourage sexes to respect each other.

According to Ingwa (2015), the school plays a dual role in the construction of the masculine identity. It is an agent in the making of masculinity and it also serves as a setting for the making of masculinity by learners, which is done through school structures and practices. Both female and male learners are vulnerable to being victims of sexual abuse with female learners being more likely to being victims to this form of abuse. Schools reinforce traditional gender norms when they expect boys to 'be strong' and to respond violently to conflict. This also encourages males to apply violence when dealing with females as a form of dominance that is entrenched in societies. The link between power and discrimination is that hegemonic authority persuades both men and women to accept oppressive societal norms and ideals (Tamale, 2014). Hegemonic discourses construct acceptable or harmful gender norms.

Media reports frequently expose sexual interactions between learners and teachers in South African schools. The law criminalises sexual relationships between teachers and learners, but these relationships still occur, and the phenomenon seems to have become a trend and is even, my experience, condoned or ignored in some instances. Haber (2004) asserts that although sexual violence in schools is mainly perpetrated against girls by male teachers, it occasionally happens that it is perpetrated by female teachers against boys. While some teachers believe that engaging in sexual relationships with learners is abnormal (Prinsloo, 2006), others condone it, claiming that they merely converse with their learners (Muhanguzi, 2011). Learners and teachers engage in sexual relationships for many different reasons, but the teacher is the one who generally benefits from the relationship. In most of these relationships, the learner is taken advantage of due to the power the teacher has over the student.

Haber (2004) argues that all the sexual relationships that might exist between a teacher and a learner are abusive, irrespective of whether they are consensual, as these relationships are underpinned by power and inequality. In addition, it is alleged that some teachers take advantage of their position of power to sexually abuse penurious learners. Learners engage in relationships with teachers for many different reasons, one being that the teacher supports the learner financially or that the student gets extra credit for tasks (Moma, 2015). Parkes and Heslop (2011) also submit that teachers sexually abuse female learners in exchange for material items and higher grades and sometimes as a means of reprimanding them. Sexual violence perpetrated by teachers is a common practice in South African schools. The unfortunate reality is that such relationships are condoned by some parents as these male teachers provide financial support for girls' families (Prinsloo, 2006). Unfortunalty, sexual relationships between teachers and learners have become so common that both learners and teachers have since refrained from reporting them. Ironically teachers, who are supposed to implement the laws that criminalise gender-based violence and promote zero tolerance of school-based violence (Francis & Mills, 2012), are the perpetrators of this form of abuse. Even though it is unlawful for teachers to engage in romantic or sexual relationships with learners regardless of their ages, teachers are seldomly punished harshly for such acts. They are merely suspended from teaching for a couple of months, only to continue teaching in another school in the hope that they will not commit the same offence.

Patriarchal conventions are still maintained in society through gender roles and through practices that maintain male dominance over women. Ngwa (2015:24) argues that the patriarchal nature of the South African society "…is in tandem with exaggerated gender inequality that promotes violence". Jewkes and Morrell (2012) argue that it influences learners' behaviour in schools. The patriarchal society accords men the power to dominate women. The Centre for Applied Legal Studies (2014) attributes the high level of sexual violence in South Africa to gender inequality due to the patriarchal nature of a society that encourages the domination of males over females. This tradition is passed on to young men by societal norms and by what their elders do.

2.5.6 The nature of sexual violence

Brown, Thurman, Bloem and Kendall (2006:270) define sexual violence as "...a continuum of non-consensual sexual experiences that range from threats and intimidation to unwanted touching and forced sex". However, sexual violence also occurs when a person forces another to touch them, or anyone else, in a sexual manner that is against their will. It also occurs when someone is forced to watch sexual acts, or when a child is exposed to pictures depicting sexual activity. Sexual violence can occur between people of the same sex, it can also occur among people of the opposite sex, but it is most perpetrated by males against female. In most cases girls are fondled, degraded, humiliated, and exposed to different types of sexual harassment. Ngqela and Lewis (2012) indicated that the sexual harassment of girls in various schools occurs within the framework of a patriarchal society that has afforded men the power to exert their sexual demands over women and young girls even without their consent.

Research has indicated that the raping of South African girls has continued unabated. They are also physically abused by male peers and teachers, sexually harassed, and raped in schools. There is evidence that in school bathrooms, hollow classrooms, and hallways, and in hostels and dormitories, girls were abused (Reyneke, 2013). Studies also found that school sexual abuse has many adverse effects on the physical and psychological growth and well-being of affected girls (Ferrara, 2019). Fear and experiences of sexual violence in schools are also major reasons for some girls' underperformance and/or the fact that they drop out of school. Wilson (2006:3) argues that "the levels of violence have increased in society; so, have levels of school-related gender-based violence in schools and the fear of violence is pervasive and has had major impacts on the educational opportunities available to students, because of risks to their security and safety". This is occasionally a reflected in the lower enrolment and dropout rates of girls at some high schools (Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2003).

2.5.6.1 Male teachers as perpetrators of sexual violence

Sexual harassment in schools is mainly perpetrated by male students and teachers (Mwahombela, 2004). Girls, according to Rahim and Liston (2011), are more likely than boys to be victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. The language of harassment, which

includes words like "slut", "bitch", and "whore" among other misogynistic terms, serves as a continual reminder to young women that their environment is one of potentially perilous complexity. It is becoming more common for male teachers to solicit sex with schoolgirls or female educators (Ngidi, 2018). This demonstrates a selfish disregard for women's and young girls' rights and dignity. Having sex with students not only breaches the community's confidence, but it is also illegal and a disciplinary offence (Ngidi, 2018). Leach and Humphreys (2007) state that studies in eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa revealed consistent trends of both male teachers and learners' sexual assault and intimidation of female learners. These studies revealed that in exchange for good grades, preferential treatment in class, and/or income, male teachers sought sexual favours from girls (Ngakane, 2010). In a study that was conducted in Lesotho by de Wet (2007), it was reported that educators in that country verbally, physically, and sexually abused their learners. In Zimbabwean schools, learners were reportedly sexually abused by their educators in dark places such as storerooms and some were raped in maize fields (Mitchell & Mothobi-Tapela, 2004, cited in Ngakane, 2010).

2.5.6.2 Male learners as perpetrators of sexual violence

Cases involving learners videoing sexual acts by co-learners, disseminating videos of co-learners having sex, receiving, or possessing messages containing pornographic images, sexting, and accessing pornographic websites while at school are increasingly becoming "normal" acts for learners (Coetzee, 2013). Boys reportedly called girls degrading names such as 'slut'. Further, boys commented inappropriately on girls' appearance, touched their breasts and buttocks, and commented on or joked about their menstruation to embarrass them. Klein (2006) argues that boys typically model such negative attitudes on their parents', teachers', peers', and other prominent figures' behaviour, thereby perpetuating the widely accepted belief that boys should dominate and control girls.

Mitchell (2005) revealed that many girls have reported to have been sexually victimised by male learners they had been raped, sexually abused, sexually harassed, and assaulted at school. In a study by Abrahams, Mathews and Ramela (2006:753), girls described the horrors of "how boys would grab their breasts, buttocks, and genitals to force them to hand over valuables like money or food". Sexual violence and sexual harassment on the girl child may result in teenage pregnancy (Nhambura, 2019). Dlamini (2016) underscores the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy as society has understood teenage pregnancy as a phenomenon associated with

deviant teenage girls. These teenagers who fall pregnant will become largely alienated and isolated and they will not be able to access the health facilities due to this stigma.

GBV mostly assumes a social, physical and/or sexual type and refers to the implementation or continuation of power imbalances between the two sexes. It deliberately strengthens gender inequality, society-imposed roles, and prejudices (Moma, 2015). Information on vulnerability to learners to sexual abuse in schools is limited because girls are afraid to expose sexual violence for fear of guilt, stigmatisation, disbelief, or revenge.

Sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence in schools explain the low enrolment and drop-out rates among girls. GBV does not only discourage girls from going to school, but it may also compel parents to prohibit their daughters from attending school in fear that they too might be victimised. Sexual violence against boys in schools can be particularly shameful as it is often considered a taboo. Sexual and gender-based violence puts students at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, falling into unwanted pregnancy, experiencing low self-esteem, and diminished academic performance. A victim's performance and attend ance in school may also be affected by sexual violence. The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention study found that 17.4% of school violence victims missed school and 13% of victims reported lower grades because of their experiences with violence (CJCP, 2012). Those who become pregnant may even drop out of school. The 2012 General Household Survey noted that 7.8% of girls between the ages of 7 and 18 who were not attending school cited pregnancy as the cause (General Household Survey, 2011). It also has repercussions on the family and the community. Where the protection and rights are not in place, behaviour in school is likely to reflect the beliefs and norms of the culture, as young girls are exposed to acts of violence, and they are learning to accept it as an inevitable part of their daily lives (Akiba et al. 2002).

2.6 Causes of school-based violence

No single factor can sufficiently explain school-based violence as several different factors contribute to the culture of violence in schools. Crime-related causes are multi-factorial (Singh, 2011) and there is a multiplicity of reasons for the manifestation of violent behaviour exhibited by learners towards other learners and teachers. Burton (2017:12) argues that "a series of

interrelated factors impact on young people in different ways, one of which will be [the threat of sexual] acts against other young people ...”

It is important to objectively look at the larger context in which the school is placed to explain the causes of school-based violence. According to a study conducted by Singh (2006) on the effects of violence on educators, it was found that academic tension and a lack of drastic consequences were the key causes of school violence were the effects of bad conduct and violence modelled by society. The notion also exists that learners who underperform academically are more likely to be associated with violent and aggressive behaviour than top achievers. Keller and Tapasak (2004) assert that there is a close correlation between academic underachievement and learner's anti-social conduct or violence. Absence of educational ambition also contributes to learners' participation in violent activities in schools and the community.

As a theoretical frame, the social ecological model illuminates our understanding of the multi-level causes of school-based violence. Historically, violence has placed learners from poor backgrounds at a disadvantage, which is one of the reasons that this study wishes to contribute towards the transformation of education and the improvement of the learning environment for learners in disadvantaged communities. Dlamini (2014:841) agrees with Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem approach, arguing that school's social and physical settings guide behavioural patterns in schools. She goes on to say that socioeconomic level, poverty, and violence in the neighborhood, as well as family structure and guidance offered to a learner, can all influence behavior (Dlamini, 2014). Research has also established a relationship between behaviour and its social settings. Against this background, the researcher adopted Dahlberg's (2007) bio-ecological systems model to delineate the personal factors that determine how young people may become perpetrators or victims of school-based violence. The model proposes that a home and school environment that is characterised by a lack of love predisposes an individual to becoming a perpetrator of violence. In this vein, the impact of family and the community on learners will be discussed in relation to the bio-ecological system model.

2.6.1 Community-based violence

Community-based violence is not a new phenomenon in the South Africa society. The community violence rampant in many townships in South Africa is not a new phenomenon, as it can be traced back to the time of apartheid when Blacks mounted resistance against the

oppressive apartheid government (Nhambura, 2019). Apartheid racial systems taught black students to resist, resulting in youth violence in South Africa (Ngqela and Lewis 2012:91). Pahad and Graham (2012:12) support Ngqela and Lewis (2012:91) in indicating that apartheid's violent history and more recent societal developments impact the levels of classroom violence in South African townships. Therefore, the high level of violence in schools results from a complex interplay of previous history and present tensions at the individual, school, and community levels. Community-based violence can be defined as "the frequent and constant exposure to the use of guns, knives, drugs, and random acts of violence" (Foster, Kuperminc & Price, 2004:60). Forms of community-based violence include sexual assault, burglary, mugging, gunshots, presence of gangs, drug abuse, racial tension, house breaking, gang violence and murder (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2015).

According to Sibisi (2016), the political struggles that brought political freedom to South Africa left people with the belief that violence is a conflict resolution mechanism. Hence, mass actions that erupt into violence take place frequently in communities, especially in disadvantaged ones, and this results in injuries and even death. A culture of violence has been created by the long-term effects of violence and this culture has been normalised in society. In South Africa, the rate at which children are exposed to violence is disturbing (Ward, Martin, Theron & Distiller, 2007). Moreover, children who are also vulnerable to abuse typically come from disadvantage Black and Coloured communities.

The escalation of violence and crime in communities has contributed to school-based violence. Although it has been more than 24 years since South Africa's first democratic republic was established, the country continues to experience high levels of violence and crime, which are not uncommon considering the country's history (Ngidi, 2018). Poverty is one of the main contributing factors of crime and violence in society. Learners steal from others because they cannot afford the things that other learners have. Some may even openly and forcefully take other learners' belongings. Against the background of high rates of unemployment and the job cuts, violence will continue to impact communities and the school environment in a negative manner. For instance, it was, and still is, "…a very 'normal' experience for township learners to witness assaults, stabbings and shootings" (De Wet, 2007:253). This argument confirms that learners carry weapons to schools and may even be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they commit acts of violence in schools.

In my experience, which has been borne out by research evidence, poverty is a destructive beast that lurks in society and is a main cause of stress and depression among learners (Jensen, 2009). However, it is also a reality that both underprivileged and privileged schools experience violence in various forms and frequencies. All schools are challenged to deal with violence, particularly if the communities in which they are situated are prone to violence. According to Gellert (2010), the issue of violence rocking inner-city schools should not be separated from the issue of violence in society. The violence that occurs in neighbourhoods and communities spills over into schools regardless of the measures these schools may have adopted.

Ngqela and Lewis (2012:87) state that studying the phenomenon of violence in township schools "…is important for research as violence threatens the safe development and mental wellness of learners in township schools". The violence that occurs within schools is a microcosm of what occurs in the broader society. The violence that starts at schools often spills over into the community and it also manifests when learners are travelling to and from school, and thus many routes in and near townships are considered high risk areas (Gopal & Collings, 2013). Children often sell cigarettes and drugs at school as a means of surviving the social and economic challenges they are facing. Learners obtain these drugs from adults in the communities where they live. Schools experience drug problems because the problem of drugs already exists in society where they are freely available.

The ready availability of drugs in communities, as well as the high prevalence of adults involved in crime and drugs, further increases the number of learners who participate in violence (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010). Dlungwane (2017) argues that an increase in the number of informal alcohol outlets and drug sellers on the streets has also contributed to the social conditioning of learners and adolescents who deem it acceptable and even admirable to partner with their observed role models. The modelling of the behaviour they witness in the community spills over into school with learners forming groups or gangs and carrying weapons and drugs to school. Schools interact with the broader communities in which they are located. For this reason, "the social ills prevalent in communities are known to permeate the school environment to varying degrees" (Burton & Leoschut, 2013:54).

2.6.2 Propagation of violence by the media

There are ongoing debates whether television programmes and video games encourage violent and aggressive behaviour in young children and the youth. Advocates of such television programmes deny the notion that these programmes and games condition young children to behave violently. However, it is an undeniable fact that the media plays a significant role in influencing what happens in society. Although there are numerous causes of the violence that is perpetrated by the youth, research has found that the sensitivity of adolescents to television abuse plays a major role in the etiology of aggressive activity in society. According to Singh (2006), scores of psychologists have conducted research that shows a causal relationship between violent behaviour and the influence of television.

International television programmes expose young people to violent images in programmes such as *Dragonballs GT*, Jackie Chan adventures, *Power Rangers*, *Ninja Storm*, and *WWE Smackdown*. Stadler (2012) claims that, according to cultivation theory, long-term experience of violent screen media relates to violent behaviour, exactly because South Africa is already such a violent country. According to Stadler (2012), media violence inspires many South African youngsters to join gangs, penetrating vulnerable communities and schools and turning them into markets for drugs, alcohol, and other illicit activities. *Yizo Yizo*, a South African television series that appeared in the early 2000s, was avidly watched in townships. The programme showcased unruly learners who vandalised property and victimised other learners and educators. Many adults disapproved of the programme, arguing that it had nothing positive to teach the youth and therefore it ought to be abolished. Although some parents barred their children from watching the programme, learners found ways of watching it anyway. Arguably, this programme could have contributed to the development of a spirit of rebelliousness among the youth who watched it.

Research has shown that aggressive behaviour and violence are often stimulated by exposure to media violence, which may in turn 'prime' other aggressive thoughts in learners. Bester and Du Plessis (2010) and Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2010) express concern that the media frequently focuses on the explicit details of violent episodes in schools and profits from the sensation created by these incidents. Many such television programmes have age restrictions, but teenagers watch them anyway.

The problem of media violence is aggravated when children take what they see in films to the streets of their residential areas (Gondola, 2016). The influence of television and films on children evidently manifests as child offenders who go all-out to talk, behave, and dress like their heroes in Hollywood films (Grossman & DeGaetano, 2014). Lichter (2002) conducted a study on the effects of movies on violence amongst young people and concluded that, in action movies, violence was mostly committed by good people who rarely faced the consequences of the criminal acts they committed. It is therefore no wonder that such programmes encourage young people to be violent as well. Moreover, these programmes do not share messages about the consequences of the violent and criminal acts viewers' witness. Against this background, it is necessary to explore the way television programmes, films and video games affect people as, in most cases, these programmes and movies are not educational. Unfortunately, such as investigations was beyond the scope of the current study. These circumstances make it easier for students to be negatively influenced by screen violence and to engage in anti-social behaviour in the classroom, making it difficult for teachers and principals to govern and administer safe schools (Porter, 2016).

Anderson et al. (2003) argue that the sexual content of Hollywood action movies has the potential to influence teenagers to engage in reckless sexual behaviours. These films also suggest that abusive language is acceptable and that insulting other people is the norm. Such movies and television programmes usually have age restrictions, but nothing prevents young people of all ages from watching these programmes if their parents do not monitor their viewing. However, Bleakley, Jamieson and Romer (2012) assert that the extreme levels of violence that result from exposure to violence in movies that depict rape and homicide do not imply that sexual content in movies suggests that young people will engage in sexual violence such as rape. Nevertheless, one may argue that television programmes and movies have the capacity to shape young people's psyche and behaviour, even though not everyone is likely to be negatively affected by what they view in the media.

Gcabashe (2009:43) emphasises that mass media contribute to aggression in learners. This researcher states:

> "There are so many incidences of school violence reported in the media in such a way that in the back of the child's mind it is defined as 'a sign of bravery'. Learners watch and hear incidents about a learner stabbing a teacher, a learner shooting a teacher. In

the mind of a child, this is like a way of dealing with frustration. A child feels like it is widely accepted, so they follow a trend. The more they hear about school violence, [the more] it becomes second nature to learners.*"*

Media play a major role in perpetuating violent behaviour amongst young people. Television, movies, music, and games often reinforce the perception that females enjoy being abused and that it is a masculine right to control women. Women are usually pushed around, always in need of men's protection, at the beck and call of men and, in most cases, they are depicted as sex objects. Most of the programmes young people watch on television portray females as subordinate to males while males dictate females' actions. Television screens much fighting, killing, and sexual harassment and most young males like to identify with male actors who are portrayed as physically strong and sexually aggressive. Many movies depict men fighting to prove their strength and manhood through physical abuse.

Antecedent studies have indicated that the exposure of young people to Hollywood action movies has influenced the development of children's thinking habits (Stern & Morr, 2013). However, the researcher has observed that, due to feminism trends, modern films have started depicting females as strong and powerful and a force to be reckoned with, particularly in the superhero genre. These role models may have inspired escalating acts of violence perpetrated by girls, which have been increasingly observed in media reports on school violence.

In many South African townships, child offenders have been greatly associated with drugs and substance abuse (Espelage, Low, Rao, Hong & Little, 2014). The brutality of acts of violence is usually associated with drugs and alcohol abuse. Anderson et al. (2003) aver that children who spend most of their time watching movies or playing video games display a higher level of aggressive behaviour, thoughts, and emotions than those who are not so extensively exposed to the violence depicted in these action productions. According to Crawage (2005), studies have revealed an underlying link between childhood exposure to violent television programmes and the subsequent violent behavioural traits displayed in adolescence and young adulthood.

Gender stereotypes are abundant in rap music, where women are often presented as inferior to men or are trivialised and marginalised (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009). A number of rap songs can be described as a full-fledged ''status degradation ceremony'' directed at women and most of the lyrics refer to women as "whores" (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009). Lyrics refer to women as

"bitches" and "whores" and boast about male dominance in relationships and sexual prowess (Moody-Ramirez & Scott, 2015). Therefore, various scholars have concluded that rap lyrics often celebrate themes of violence, misogyny, and materialism. Rap music also glorifies killing for sport and, consequently, physical aggression is promoted. Young people tend to emulate the content they watch and hear in rap music videos, and these influences undoubtedly perpetuate gender-based violence. It may thus be argued that all forms of media perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical, and limiting perceptions of reality. At a Congressional Public Health Summit held on 26 July 2000, it was noted that entertainment-related violence can aggravate aggressive attitudes, values, and behaviour, particularly in children (Anderson, Berkowitz & Donnerstein, 2003).

According to *You Magazine* (2005, cited in Singh, 2006), British researchers recently found a link between violent films, television shows, and video games and kids that are bullies, perpetrators of violence, and killers. The case of 14-year-old Michael Carneal from Kentucky was quoted as a case in point. Reportedly, he had never handled a gun before, but fired eight shots and each hit its mark. He had mastered his shooting prowess through television and video games. Television thus directly and indirectly teaches children to use violence to resolve conflict.

2.6.3 Alcohol and drugs

Incidences of substance abuse among learners have increased dramatically over the last few years and the media have reported numerous cases of drug use on school premises in South Africa (Burton, 2008). Drug abuse refers to the use of a substance that has an unintended impact on the person, and the effects of the substance on a person and their life determine whether the substance is abused or no (Mathe, 2008). Substance abuse interferes with the normal functioning of an individual's faculties. Durrant and Thakker (2003:13) defines a drug as "a medical substance and a narcotic stimulant that causes addiction". Schools that are located inside violence-ridden communities make it easy for learners to smuggle anything illegal or prohibited onto the school premises. The most used drugs in South Africa are alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, heroin, cocaine, 'ecstasy', cannabis with mandrax ('white pipe'), inhalants, methamphetamine ('tik') and prescription drugs (such as Xanax) (Jamson, 2013).

Numerous reports of drug abuse among the youth reflect an alarming trend of drug use among the youth of South Africa. They have easy access to different harmful drugs such cocaine, 'nyaope', 'whoonga', and 'ecstasy', which are easily accessible in their communities (Burton, 2008). According to the South African Anti-Drug Alliance Annual Survey (2012), a worrying concern is that 69% of surveyed adolescents affirmed that drugs were accessible in their schools. It is a known fact that incidents of murder frequently occur when people are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol in and around taverns or pubs where no age restrictions are imposed for buying alcohol. A contributory factor is the existence of unlicensed liquor outlets in contravention of regulations. Some such establishments even operate near schools (Seedat et al., 2009). It is because they are under the influence of alcohol where most teens become perpetrators of crime and violence (Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2003). Adolescents now tend to smoke HIV drugs mixed with other substances such as marijuana and heroin, commonly known as 'whoonga', which is a highly addictive drug (Le Roux & Makhale, 2011; Khumalo, Shumba & Mkhize, 2019).

It is common knowledge that some high school learners are already chronically addicted to drugs and alcohol and that some arrive at school already under the influence of such drugs. Many of these teenagers are poly-drug abusers as they use more than one drug. Durban's South African National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependences (SANCA) reported that virtually half of their in-patients were under the age of 30 and that in-patients younger than 17 years of age came from local schools (Sookha, 2006b). The increase in the rates of substance abuse in urban areas and townships raises concerns as this vice remains a huge problem confronting communities.

When discussing substance abuse, one cannot gloss over the possible factors that motivate teenagers to take drugs. Learners from poor communities often fall easily into the trap of selling and distributing illegal substances as a livelihood. Robert (2005) argues that learners buy and deal in drugs on school premises country-wide daily. Moreover, learners in need of income easily fall prey to drug dealing (Shone, 2007). The distribution of drugs in schools stimulates violence and crime in these spaces because it opens links with outsiders who are involved in bigger drug syndicates. The possession of illegal substances on school premises compromises the safety of learners and all school personnel. Disturbingly, the targeted age group of drug dealers and users is becomer younger, as the Chatsworth Anti-drug Forum found that a

concoction of heroin and cocaine was being sold to young primary school learners (Naidoo, 2005).

Learners who are experiencing emotional difficulties and want to escape the reality of their problems often resort to drug use as a coping mechanism. The families from which these learners come are usually characterised by different socio-psychological problems that cause emotional distress among children or teenagers. Societies from which learners come are often riddled with socio-psychological problems (Mathe, 2008). Therefore, some learners reach a point where they feel no longer able to cope with the emotional pain because of the domestic violence at home, and this results in substance abuse.

The greatest contributing factor to the use of illegal substances by young people is peer pressure. Smit (2010:25) expresses concern about the rising availability of drugs and alcohol among students and educators, implying that some teachers use students to obtain alcohol from shebeens or miss lessons to go and drink. According to Sibisi (2016:38), "drug abuse and even alcohol use, if taken to excess, directly contributes to violent learner crime, especially when taken in a group context where there is strong social pressure to conform to the group rules". Learners who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol are more likely to react violently or aggressively to situations because of intoxication. Some learners may be so intoxicated that they hardly remember the sequence of events or the lethal effects of their violent actions.

Research has identified a close link in schools between drug abuse, crime, and violence. Substance abuse increases learners' susceptibility to aggression and makes them more inclined towards the commission of crime. Substance use and abuse are taking a terrible toll on the productivity of the nation's youth, which further undermines the role of the school as a place of teaching and learning (Brady & Sinha, 2007). Teenagers who take drugs are more likely to lose interest in their schoolwork and activities as they tend to focus exclusively on their substance use and the circle of friends with whom they associate. This results in absenteeism, missing tests, failing to hand in assignments, or just performing poorly when it comes to academics. The Drug Control Policy (2002) found that, statistically, students who use drugs are more likely to drop out of school than their peers who do not. They frequently absent themselves from school until it becomes very difficult for them to catch up, which compels many to drop out of school.

Substance abuse is recognised as a major issue in the education system due to an increase in the rates of student dropout, truancy, misconduct, fighting, and a general lack of concern for others (Nelson, Rose & Lutz, 2010). When teenagers drop out of school, they partake in criminal activities which increases the likelihood of them getting arrested and eventually incarcerated. Dropping out of school thus perpetuates the vicious cycle of unemployment, poverty, crime, and violence in society. These interpersonal issues not only have a long-term influence on young people's lives, but they often have a direct link to drug-crime and are frequently linked with the use of guns and several other weapons (Mathe, 2008).

Alcohol is one of the first substances that teenagers experiment with because it is easily accessible. It is a known fact that numerous alcohol outlets in urban areas or townships do not have liquor licenses and that they sell liquor to children even when they are under the legal age. Some teenagers experiment with different brands of wine, cider, beer, and cocktail beverages that are consumed during house parties or sport activities, while many go on to lace these beverages with club drugs. When excessive amounts of alcohol are taken together with a cocktail of club drugs, blackouts and even convulsions may occur, sometimes resulting in death (Medical Research Council, 2003). Currently, a new drug has become pervasive in schools in KZN. Learners take cough mixture which contains codeine to get intoxicated. It is difficult for teachers to detect this drug as learners mix the cough mixture with juice or soft drinks.

According to newspaper reports a new, cheap drug is being sold on the streets which is easily accessible to teenagers. It reportedly has potentially fatal consequences. Xanax, which is used to treat anxiety, panic disorders and insomnia, is obtainable from pharmacies at R1.00 a tablet. This drug is reportedly re-sold on the streets at R7 a tablet. Teachers have reported that this highly addictive drug has taken hold among school children in the province (IOL, 9 April 2019).

It is futile for schools to combat substance abuse if some parents allow their children to drink at family gatherings, house parties, and on weekends. In some communities, it is acceptable and normal for children under the legal age to consume alcohol. Dagga is another illegal drug that is freely accessible, as it is grown even in the backyards of homes. Peer pressure also plays a significant role in influencing learners to take drugs and consume alcohol. The desire to be accepted by peers and being regarded as 'cool' also influences some learners to take substances. As they are still in a developmental stage, it makes children particularly vulnerable when

pressure is exerted on them by their peers. The abuse of substances endangers not only the physiological and psychological health of the individual, but also compromises their emotional and social development, which eventually affects the individual's sense of self and well-being (Burton (2008).

2.6.4 Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowding refers to what happens in spaces that is beyond the usual state of affairs and results in discomfort. Large numbers of learners in classes cause disruptive behaviour and some educators lose control of such large groups. Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe, and Van der Walt (2004) state that overcrowded classrooms impede successful teaching and learning. According to Blatchford, Bassett and Brown (2011), the size of the classroom has a rippling effect on student behaviour. They claim that several research examining the impact of classroom size have found that large classes are harder to cope with problematic learner behavior and learner violence. Marais (2016:2) agrees, stating that large classes have an impact on effective classroom management. Large classes, according to Marais (2016:2), are "noisier and more prone to pushing, crowding, and hitting, to the point where this might significantly effect classroom discipline". Several teachers indicated that teaching in overcrowded classrooms could succeed only on one condition: that authority and discipline are strictly enforced, although this impairs the spontaneity and creativity of the learners. Overcrowding in classrooms has been found to impinge on the disciplinary control of learners.

Most teachers find it cumbersome to enforce discipline when they must teach double the size of learners in one classroom that is humanly possible. Not every teacher manages to cope with the high numbers of learners in one classroom as some of them find the experience very challenging. James (2013) observes that many classrooms are overcrowded, and in many instances in township schools the numbers exceed the national benchmark of 35 learners per teacher in high schools. A teacher in a rural school, who was also the principal of the school, reported that he taught a class of over 80 learners of mixed abilities (Modisoatsile, 2012).

Teachers that have just entered the education system become overwhelmed when they attempt to control overcrowded classrooms. Novice teachers are more likely to be stressed than their more experienced colleagues. As they are still learning the art of teaching, they may not have acquired the necessary coping mechanisms. It becomes very easy for learners to be dismissive

of a teacher's rules and instructions if the number of rebels in the classroom is high. Teachers with overcrowded classes find it difficult to apply teaching methods that engages learners (Nhambura, 2019). Therefore, if learners are unattended, they tend to be disruptive. Teachers fail to give their learners individual attention and to support their academic performance. Overcrowded classrooms are often noisy, and teachers must reprimand noisy learners consistently so that the lesson may proceed. Many learners merely keep quiet for a while and then continue to engage in disruptive behaviour.

Due to a lack of space when too many desks occupy a classroom, teachers are rendered immobile and confined to the centre front of the classroom. Therefore, learners engage in mischief during lessons because it is difficult for teachers to approach them. It becomes easy for unruly learners to violate the rights of others who want to learn. The researcher personally sat at the back of classrooms where, at times, she experienced considerable difficulties hearing the teachers speaking from the front.

2.6.5 Lack of parental involvement

Parents are primary educators or the primary source of a value system for their children. According to Baurnrind, Larzelere, and Owens (2010), uninvolved parents often fail to monitor or supervise their child's behavior and do not support or encourage their child's self-regulation. Uninvolved parents do not engage in structure or control with their adolescents, and often there is a lack of closeness in the parent-child dyad; therefore, adolescents of uninvolved parents often engage in more externalizing behaviors (Hoeve et al., 2009). Sibusiso Mbhele states that the home is the place where the most fundamental values and principles are instilled, and this notion is supported by Kotzé (2013), who states that "discipline and manners start at home". Parents therefore ought to be more active within and beyond the schooling system in the lives of their children. Schools in deprived rural areas face a lack of parental engagement that leads to deviant school behaviour. Koenig (2008) postulates that the lack of parental involvement and support in schools is the key reason why learners misbehave. There are parents who do not want to take responsibility for their children's behaviour and these kids thus become delinquent as a direct result of how they are raised. Ndamani (2008:177) states:

> *"Parents become reluctant to participate in the education of their children [and] have a tendency of shifting their role of instilling good morals in their children to the*

educators, and this causes problems for the educators as they need parental support in dealing with disciplinary problems."

Without the help of other key stakeholders such as social workers, psychologists, nurses, politicians, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and law enforcement agencies, schools and parents will not be able to solve the problem of learner violence on their own (Nhambura, 2019). Such collaboration is also echoed by Adelman and Taylor (2007), who argued that the school safety committee requires the entire community of educators, students, parents, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and faith-based organisations (FBOs) in the fight against school violence. Colvin (2009), states that there is a need for parents and schools to work together on developing and implementing intervention strategies. If parents attend school meetings and maintain contact with the school, school violence problems can be addressed successfully. Parents must support schools for effective interventions to be successful (Nhambura, 2019). Parents will help monitor and support their children at home, while teachers will aid the students at school. As a result, no intervention strategy should exclude the learners' parents or guardians. The argument is supported by the House of Commons (2011), which highlighted that the success stories of Beaumont Leys School and New Woodlands School's discipline intervention programs revolved upon their relationships with parents and guardians of their students.

2.7 Spaces of violence in schools

The school is viewed by Johnson (2009) as a social environment that encourages engagement and a physical space that enables violence to take place. There are two forms of spaces in schools, namely formal and informal (Dunne & Leach, 2007). Often school violence occurs in popular areas such as playgrounds, toilets, classrooms, and passages (Dunne, 2007; Bhana, 2012) For example, formal environments are classrooms where adults often control and supervise. One would assume that violence is more likely to occur in places where there is less authority or adult supervision such as in toilets. However, this is not the case, as violence reportedly occurs more especially in classrooms (South African Council of Educators, 2011).

Research on the geographical factors that contribute to violence in schools, particularly in spaces that expose learners to bullying, is limited. A study conducted by De Wet (2005) identified school toilets as sites of bullying by learners, particularly girls who often use toilet

walls to name-call other learners, calling them 'thieves', 'sluts', and exposing their relationships. A study conducted by Tintswalo (2014) reported that bullying seemingly occurred mostly when teachers were not in class, during break times, and in toilets. According to Rademeyer and Reddy (2006), bullying in South Africa has reached frightening levels.

A media article reports on a 10-year-old Pretoria boy fighting for his life after he had been hanged in the school's bathroom by his schoolmates (De Bruin, 2005). According Chabalala (2011), a study conducted by the National Education Department and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) found that, the toilets for girls and boys is the most unsafe areas in schools in seven out of the nine South African provinces. Bullies use isolated areas such as toilets because they are isolated from the public and adults, thereby limiting their chances of being caught. Bullies usually isolate their victims so that they cannot be seen by teachers bullying other students and most of the bullying takes place on the school grounds and other undesignated places (Ringrose, & Renold, 2010. Ngidi and Moletsane (2018:2) argue that "public toilets are common areas that, while they are used by the public, remain private due to individualised cubicles and the deliberate privacy offered by the building as a whole". In this regard, toilets offer opportune spaces for violence because they are familiar to offenders, yet they are isolated and indefensible.

2.8 Safety and school security

Traditionally, security duties were carried out by teachers and principals during their free time. While on these duties, teachers would patrol the hallways and playgrounds where most indiscipline occurred. According to Netchitahmane and Vollenhoven (2002:313), school safety is not a matter of merely following regulations, but educators, "…in addition to their duty to teach and educate, are also required to ensure the educational, physical, and mental safety of the learners". A socially fair education system, according to Reay (2014), is based on the belief that a good education is a democratic right for all students and tries to appreciate and develop their well-being and intellectual growth. All these ideals are compromised by violent actions in schools, which enact socially unfair practices. The escalation of incidences of crime and violence in schools is indicative of teachers' failure to help prevent such incidences. Many young people in South Africa have weapons, such as guns, to protect themselves, and this has become a common way of life, even among young learners making it difficult for teachers to deal with school violence (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). Schools should have proper security in

place to ensure that unauthorised non-school personnel are denied entry onto the school premises. Many schools that lack an access control system experience the problem of unwanted individuals who enter the school premises to rob, assault, and/or murder students and/or staff members (van Jaarsveld, 2008). To guarantee the safety of both teachers and learners, non-school personnel, especially strangers, should not be admitted onto school premises unless they have an appointment or were invited.

The lack of security in some schools is a matter of grave concern. Several schools reported incidences of break-ins and doors and windows being vandalised, and computers, printers, furniture, and classroom equipment being stolen (Modisaotsile, 2012). Nair (2013) reported that the lack of security at schools in KZN came under the spotlight after gunmen had opened fire on teachers and learners at a primary school in Chatsworth. The criminals reportedly wanted to steal teachers' cars and when learners started screaming, they opened fire on them. Even though no one was injured or killed, teachers and learners were traumatised by the incident. This occurrence showed that schools are no longer safe as criminals can come in and out of schools as they please. In another report, a security guard was shot and killed "…in cold blood by two robbers who robbed a nursery school" (Carstens, 2009:1). Many schools now pay armed private security services to ensure the safety of the school. Another report indicated that schools used private firms "…for security after a spate of attacks by armed robbers targeting parents dropping off and fetching their children" (Hosken & Bailey, 2009:1). Xaba (2006:566) designates that "township schools are especially vulnerable to unsafe conditions and threats of violence due to, among other things, poor resources, infrastructural underdevelopment, and their location in violence–ridden communities". All these incidents during school hours highlight the vulnerability of schools in terms of safety-threatening incidents (Masitsa, 2011).

The physical environment in which schools are located enhances the need to explore societal issues that may require mechanisms to safeguard the building and people using them. Harber (2001) outlines the following measures that schools could adopt to reduce crime and violence:

- Security fences ought to be built or repaired.
- Gates/entrances to schools should be restricted and monitored.
- School security plans and committees should be in place.
- Codes of conduct should exist for staff and students.

- Surveys of the types of crime being committed should be conduted and acted upon.

- Hotspots where crime occurs on the school premises should be mapped and patrolled.

- Admissions should be screened in order to exclude learners with a record of crime and violence.

- Spot-checks of school bags should be conducted by the South African Police Service or trained security personnel.

A safe and secure school environment is sanctioned by law. Sections 24(1) and 28(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996b) provide that "everyone has a right to an environment that is not harmful to their health and wellbeing and every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation". The Gauteng Schools Act (Gauteng Department of Education, 1997) stipulates that all learners and educators shall be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence while at school and other centres of learning. However, the practicality of these provisions may be questioned if there are still incidences of firearm use, threat, rape, and intimidation at schools. There is an urgent need for clean and safe school environments that are conducive to education. This requires the security of property, well-kempt facilities, appropriate furniture and equipment, clean toilets, potable water sources, a green environment, and the absence of harassment (Ngidi, 2018). Apparently, some schools in South Africa lack many or all the above.

The spokesperson of the Gauteng member of the executive council (MEC) encouraged schools to employ their own guards and to obtain the services of security companies linked to armed reaction units (Vally, 2002). However, such funds will have to come out of the pockets of parents which is an untenable proposal in the context of schools that are in poverty-stricken environments. Schools have various challenges and requirements, so the safety measures planned by each school vary based on their situations and environment (van Jaarsveld, 2008). The aim of introducing security initiatives in schools is to build a healthy and stable enviroment that is conducive to teaching and learning, academic growth, and development. Security interventions can aim to reduce the effect of crime and violence on the school community. The protection needs of schools have also shifted over the years, from the focus on protecting school facilities (vandalism, arson, or theft) to the encouragement of the safety of learner and teachers (Xaba, 2006). School protection today includes well-developed security and safety policies as well as sound risk management processes (Lawrence, 2007).

Nonetheless, budgetary constraints prevent most schools from installing the necessary security measures to help curb school-based violence. Schools in disadvantaged communities are less secure and they are prone to gang violence because they have inadequate security personnel, alarm systems and CCTV to safeguard the safety of learners (Mncube & Steinmann, 2014). Schools that do not charge fees but only depend on subsidies from the government face difficulties in procuring the necessary equipment to ensure the safety and security of teachers and learners. Xaba (2006:566) argues that

> *"Township schools are especially vulnerable to unsafe conditions and threats of violence due to, among other things, poor resources and infrastructure, their location in and around informal settlements, the types of buildings, environmental design ... and poor safety and security measures".*

Human resources for effective security systems include guards, community and/or parental participation, school personnel, and security or police officers. One of the important security functions that humans undertake is patrolling. This is when individuals (guards, security officers) move around the premises to inspect and observe activities and to identify any violence-related risks. Incorporating the human security factor may allay the fears of students, staff, and parents, assist in the prevention of crime, facilitate the regular patrol of vulnerable areas, and ease the detection of security-related hazards (Ngidi, 2018).

2.9 Comparison of levels of violence between 'advantaged' and 'disadvantaged' schools

Many South African township schools are dysfunctional because they are facing several challenges. Some of these challenges are poor quality teaching and learning, bureaucratic and ineffective leadership and management, poor state infrastructure, limited resources, low levels of parental participation, violence, and negative social attitudes (Mafora, 2013; Mangena, 2012; Mokonyane, 2011; Pandor, 2006; Williams, 2011). As study has found that geographic proximity influences the degree of violence in classrooms, the rate of violence in advantaged and disadvantage schools are not the same. Township high schools, for example, have been found to be extremely vulnerable to violence (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012). The UNESCO (2007) asserts that when students are part of gangs or live in communities that are poor and disadvantaged, this will directly lead to drugs, weapons, and gang related violence in the schools. A society with features such as high levels of social disorganisation, violence and access to illicit guns and drugs raises the likelihood of learners being vulnerable to violence in

their schools. (Burton & Leoschut, 2012). This suggests that learners from deprived public schools are more likely to initiate violence against educators than learners from advantaged or semi-private and private schools due to a variety of reasons, such as the following:

- Underprivileged schools typically have higher enrolment rates than advantaged schools, which means the classes are overcrowded and impossible to manage.
- High levels of violence are faced by the communities in which poor schools are based.
- Any learners in underprivileged schools may lack strong role models to prevent them from engaging in any form of violence.
- Underprivileged schools lack appropriate protective mechanisms that lead to abuse in school premises.
- There is a shortage of support personnel, such as school counselors or social workers, in underprivileged schools due to a lack of financial aid from the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

Whereas the rate of violence in disadvantaged and disadvantaged schools differ, the major causes of violence in all groups are identical. According to a study conducted by Singh (2006), the lack of discipline at home is the primary source of abuse in both categories. This implies that the family has a great influence on learners' behaviour at school. According to Mthiyane (2013), overcrowded or large schools in urban environments where children either have little room or too little space to play is a factor that leads to school violence. He also claims that in schools where classes are big, teachers tend not to have enough time to attend and get to know all their learners by name, and this typically leads to negative results, such as truancy and class bunking.

The level of violence in a school is subject to the number of learners enrolled at the school. For instance, Singh (2006) found that schools with an enrolment of 500 and below generally displayed a lower percentage (52%) of types of violence compared to schools with higher enrolment numbers. Philips (2005) states that statistics suggest that teenagers in South Africa are following very closely in the footsteps of British teenagers who ignore authority in the classroom. Singh (2006:92) argues that "advantaged schools generally draw learners from above average income families and are therefore financially secure, which enables them to employ more educators to reduce the number of learners per class". These schools have the

financial capability to implement coping mechanisms that will help reduce incidences of violence within their schools. They can also appoint security guards and can enforce their disciplinary code of conduct in a court of law. For example, Maritzburg College challenged the Department of Education in court after its refusal to suspend and then expel two boys for deviant behaviour (Bolowane, 2004). Disadvantaged schools do not have this privilege as they require legal fees that the school may not be able to pay.

The violence that prevails in township schools evokes pervasive apprehension among learners, which ultimately prevents them from understanding their potential. (Ngqela et al., 2012). This seems warranted as researchers such as Masitsa (2011) believes, rightly so, that South African township schools are susceptible to violence. Nhambura (2019) reported that educators who are exposed to school violence might experience physical, emotional, and psychological consequences such as discomfort, low self-esteem, depression, suicide and others get killed by learners.

2.10 The impact of violence on learners and educators

Learners and teachers spend most of the day and most of the year in the schooling environment, it is important that the atmosphere in which teaching, and learning takes place is safe, trusting and nurturing (Davids, 2017). However, the reality is that schools in South Africa are not as safe as citizens would like them to be, as teachers and learners must constantly look over their shoulders due to the level of violence that exists in schools. While some schools have succeeded in maintaining order and ensuring the safety of staff and learners (Wolhuter & Steyn, 2003), several schools across South Africa are witnessing a spike in learning difficulties and poor instruction, which have adversely impacted learners and teachers (Tintswalo, 2014).

Extensive research has highlighted a range of consequences associated with the victimisation of learners that affects their physical, emotional, and academic well-being. All these consequences have a diminishing effect on learners' motivation and desire to excel academically – a factor that has been found to increase young people's resilience when it comes to their involvement in criminal and delinquent behaviour. Violence impacts educators in a similar way – in fact, prolonged sensitivity to school-based violence has also contributed to the evolution of the so-called 'battered educator syndrome' (Mncube & Harber, 2010).

Table 2.1: Effects of school violence on learners and teachers

Learners	Educators
Physical pain due to injuries	Stress reactions increase anxiety headaches
Feelings of fear and anxiety	Negative social behavior
Symptoms od depression	Symptoms of depression
Feelings of low self-esteem	Reliance on unhealthy coping mechanisms
Social isolation from peers	Diminished social functioning
Trouble concentrating at school	Less supportive interpersonal relationships
High absenteeism and dropout rates	The presence of eating disorders
Poor academic performance	Decrease in academic achievement

Source: Leoschut (2008)

2.10.1 Impact of school violence on learners

Learners who fall victim to persistent school-based violence find themselves emasculated as they often feel that no one can rescue them from the vicious cycle of violence. Educators and parents feel powerless and vulnerable and cannot effectively address the much-dreaded phenomenon themselves (Mncube, Harber & Du Plessis, 2011). According to Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (2010:1),

> *"...not all adverse effects of violence are visible. Exposing the youth to school and other forms of violence can lead to a wide array of negative health outcomes including, but not limited to, depression, anxiety and other psychological problems linked to fear".*

In essence, victims of violent behaviour may experience feelings of anxiety, insecurity, fear, and sentiments of inferiority and guilt, leading to a loss of self-esteem and predisposing children to be depressive and develop suicidal inclinations (Singh & Steyn, 2014). Mkhize (2012) further argues that exposure to violence has been linked to anti-social behavior in South Africa, including a cycle of abuse in which victims are more likely than their non-victimised peers to commit further acts of violence.

Corporal punishment and physical violence should be considered unjustified as means of maintaining discipline in the classroom as they may cause learners to dislike school because of fear and anxiety associated with going to school. Learners who have never been directly

affected by violence suffer negative consequences after witnessing incidences of violence, which can also be devastating. Klomek, Sourander and Gould (2010) indicated that school violence has a negative impact on a learners' self-esteem and can lead to depression and at times forces the victim to commit crime by stabbing the individual bullying them, Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) found that victims of peer victimisation were haunted by fear of what would happen during lessons or during breaks, and this disrupted their focus in the classroom .Other consequences of violence include psychosomatic symptoms "…like stomach ache or headache, feeling isolation, reluctance to attend school, feelings of depression including suicidal tendencies, and impaired relationships with their parents" (Van der Westhuizen, 2009:48; Tumwine, 2015:32). Learners may consequently be absent from school or bunk classes to avoid being humiliated and becoming uncomfortable in the school setting. Fear of being threatened and attacked by the perpetrators of violence adversely impacts the focus of victims in the classroom.

According to Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), school-based violence has diverse effects on teaching and learning. Educators argue that the effects of school violence on teaching and learning include the following:

- The environment becomes unsuitable for learning.
- There is a lack of effective teaching and learning which leads to poor school attendance and a resultant high failure rate.
- Learners become uncontrollable and difficult to manage.
- Time is wasted on conflict resolution meetings instead of learning and teaching.
- High rates of absenteeism and school dropout are witnessed.
- A lack of discipline in evident in school in general.
- Non-compliance by learners leads to non-submission of school tasks or not doing homework.
- School-based violence leads to poor academic performance which is not in line with the goals and aspirations of the school.
- Learners who fell victim to bullying at school bunk classes and end up dropping out of school.
- Lack of concentration occurs on the part of the learners as they are in constant fear of the perpetrators.

- An unpleasant classroom atmosphere exists which leads to poor results.

2.10.2 The impact of school-based violence on teachers

A comparison between teachers' mental health and that of other occupational groups revealed a higher level of mental fatigue, psychological distress, and burnout among teachers than among the comparison groups (Kovess-Masfety, Rios-Seidel & Sevilla Dedeui, 2007). The level of psychological distress often differs depending on the school level that a particular teacher teaches. For instance, teachers who teach higher grades are more susceptible to distress than their counterparts who teach in the lower grades. Female teachers tend to be more sensitive to misbehaving learners than their male colleagues, hence they exhibit signs of distress earlier and more intensely than their male counterparts. Kovess-Masfety et al. (2007) also iterate that female teachers tend to be more sensitive to misbehaving learners than their male counterparts.

The increased fear of verbal or physical abuse by their students' parents also impacts the mental health of educators (Lloyd, 2018). The safety of teachers has become a cause for concern as a number of incidences have indicated that teachers are victimised at school. Teachers who are affected by school violence exhibit the same signs of distress as any other victim of violence. The omnipresence of school violence and stress obviously aggravates educators' state of stress, which has emotional as well as physiological consequences on their everyday work efforts (Hill, 2010). Like all other victims of violence, teachers are constantly reminded of the trauma they experienced if they remain in this environment. Interacting and building trusting relationships with students may become more difficult if the trauma is not appropriately dealt with (Ting et al., 2002). Teachers who have never been directly affected by physical violence are also concerned about their personal safety.

According to Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2003:65), "based on the terrifying conditions in many South African schools, educators' fears are genuine as some educators have been stabbed, assaulted, and robbed during school hours". Schonfeld's (2006) study supports the idea that threatening or experiencing violent aggression among people in the school setting without being attacked may have detrimental effects on teachers. According to Behre, Astor and Meyer (2001), teachers frequently refrain from acting because they risk personal injury and obligation or because they do not feel that it is beyond their ethical code of ethics to interfere as teachers.

Many teachers must deal with distress when they had to intervene when learners were fighting. Shield et al. (2014) found that educators in Cape Town schools were subjected to high levels of learner aggression and violence, including verbal harassment by students and high levels of physical violence amongst students and violence directed at educators. In class, a grade 8 boy at Glenvista School in Johannesburg attacked an educator with a broom, forcing the educator to flee while the youngster pursued him and kept throwing the broom at him (Kara, 2013). These researchers have observed that causes in the school setting were positively correlated with teacher anxiety. According to Smith and Smith (2006), recognizing the effect of school violence on teachers is vital as teachers play a significant critical role in society. The available literature suggests that teachers are no longer secure in their profession and that they are unable to cope with the burden of incessant violent incidences and attacks.

According to Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), school-based violence has diverse effects on the processes of teaching and learning, educators listed the effects of school violence on teaching and learning as follows:

- Effective teaching and learning activities hardly take place when learners are uncontrollable, ill-disciplined, and unmanageable.
- Educators become demotivated and their morale becomes very low because they may arrive in their classrooms only to find them unoccupied as learners may already have left school during teaching time.
- Educators find it problematic to complete the syllabus because of poor attendance by learners and due to the time wasted resolving problems emanating from school violence.
- There are no textbooks because the rates of theft and burglary are very high and, in addition, books and school property are deliberately damaged by disruptive learners which negatively affects teaching and learning.
- The effect of school-based violence is reflected in decrepit school buildings that were vandalised. This environment is not conducive to teaching and learning.
- The non-existence of respect for others by learners results in fighting which affects teaching as learners are always at loggerheads and the atmosphere in the classroom is punctuated by tension.

- Educators are increasingly absent from school as they are not only demotivated, but they are also afraid of being attacked by learners.

- Educators are unable to plan their lessons thoroughly and they end up improvising lessons as they never know what the next day may have in store.

- Educators refrain from taking any conclusive action against delinquent learners in fear of their own safety.

- School-based violence affects teaching and learning negatively as it is destructive and debilitating.

- Teaching and learning are compromised as educators feel helpless, demoralised, and disillusioned.

- School-based violence breeds non-respect for seniority and age as well as the position of education officials.

2.11 Curbing school violence

The multidimensional nature of school-based violence means that a cluster of interventions is required to handle it. There is no single cause that accurately represents the anti-social conduct of high school learners and that contributes to school-based abuse. Collective action on the part of school principals and other partners is needed to mitigate and efficiently handle school abuse. Pereznieto, Haper and Coarasa (2010:56, cited in Maphulo, 2018:38) argue that it is important that government, non-government stakeholders, education authorities, schools, and civil society foster non-violent culture through:

- the development of context-specific codes of conduct for schools;
- ensuring the participation of children in prevention measures through their knowledge and empowerment;
- broadening school curricula to include learning about gender equality, conflict resolution, children's rights, participation, and active citizenship;
- enabling children, as the main victims and perpetrators of school violence, to play a critical role in shaping the resolution of violence issues in schools;
- promoting support for children's families and the communities in which they live by taking measures to reduce school violence through the dissemination of positive forms of discipline and by fostering an atmosphere of peace;

- involving relevant opinion shapers such as the local media, traditional and religious leaders, and CBOs in order to challenge negative norms that are conducive to the violation of children's rights.

2.12 Conclusion

The prevalence of insecurity in South African secondary township schools needs attention before it spirals completely out of control. If learners' right to education and teachers' right and obligation to provide that education are allowed to assume substantive meaning, the Department of Basic Education should ensure that schools are safe and secure during and after school hours. Schools are state-owned and therefore the government should provide the necessary resources to schools to always ensure the safety of all learners and educators. The Department of Basic Education and school governing bodies, in collaboration with parents, should act swiftly and decisively in dealing with a learner (or anyone for that matter) who is disruptive, who engages in violence, or who is found guilty of serious acts of misdemeanour that threaten the safety and lives of teachers and/or learners. It is important that parents and teachers send a strong message to children that home and school are working together in ensuring that there is safety and security in the school environment for everyone involved in education. Schools should build strong relationships with their external stakeholders, parents, and the community, and the police should hold regular meetings with stakeholders to discuss strategies to address community and school safety. The police should also take decisive action against individuals who pose a safety threat to schools, as this is their responsibility.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"Thou shalt not be a victim, thou shalt not be a perpetrator, but, above all, thou shalt not be a bystander."

-Yehuda Bauer-

3.1 Introduction

Utilising a theoretical framework in research demonstrates an understanding of concepts and theories that are relevant to the study and relate to the broader areas of knowledge being considered. The selection of a theoretical framework depends on its appropriateness, ease of application, and explanatory power. Peacock (2013) postulates that the theoretical framework strengthens the study in three ways. First, an explicit statement of theoretical assertion helps the reader to evaluate the theory critically. Secondly, a theoretical framework connects the researcher to existing knowledge. Therefore, being guided by a relevant theoretical framework, one is given a basis for a hypothesis and choice of research methods. Lastly, having a theoretical framework helps one to limit generalisations. Therefore, the theoretical framework incorporates and outlines the theory that illustrates why the research problem investigated by the study exists. Dunne et al. (2013:286) argues that "school violence is a global phenomenon that has severe and negative consequences on learners and educators as their social and socio-economic lives and the school's functioning are affected". This discussion will provide the reader with an overview of three theories that underpinned this study, namely the social learning theory, the bio-ecological system perspective, and the culture of violence theory.

3.2 Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory was propounded by Albert Bandura (1976). According to Bandura (1976), behaviour is learnt through observation and imitation of behaviour that occurs in the immediate context to the individual. This theory holds that cycles of violence are transferred from one generation to the next through observational learning. This theory sees the environment as the major force in human development, more especially that of an adolescent.

Scholars have categorised the social learning theory as 'behaviourism' which can broadly be understood as a social behavioural approach that emphasises the "reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental determinants of human behaviour" (Bandura, 1977: vii). The theory is generally used in the study of criminal or deviant behaviour (Akers, 1973). The researcher utilised this theory based on the premise that learners experience and develop aggressive behaviour from the experiences they have with others in a social environment or social context.

It is believed that the concepts of social learning work in the same manner throughout individual's lives as observational learning may occur at any age. Therefore, insofar as exposure to new, effective models that govern capital will occur at any point of life, new learning through the modelling process is often possible (Newman, 2007).

Social learning posits that people learn from one another via:

- observation
- imitation
- modelling.

The social learning theory, learning is a cognitive process that happens in a social setting that may take place through observation and direct learning (Collins, 2013). When violence is linked to the family, people will model behaviours that they were exposed to or witnessed as they were growing up. For example, children model behaviour that they witness in the family. Thus, parents who are violent in the presence of their children are highly likely to influence their children to show violent behaviour, while it is also learnt by observing a violent but heroic individual in for instance a film. Imitating violent behaviour will depend on whether the studied model achieves positive incentives for its actions. The observer would possibly mimic such actions if the individual has benefited from the violent behaviour, but if the model is disciplined for his/her violent behaviour, the risk of imitation will decrease (Mothibi-Mathopo-Mofokeng, 2017).

The frequent use of violence and aggression in home settings thus results in children normalising this behaviour and they become violent towards their teachers and other learners at school. Parents who model good behaviour and conflict resolution with the expectation of mitigating violence are more likely to have children who obey school rules and adhere to the

positive norms of society. Violence is learnt by directly or indirectly witnessing violence. It is a behavioural norm that is repeated throughout adolescence and persists in adulthood as a coping response to tension or as a means of dispute resolution (Bandura, 1973).

There are no specific models of school violence, but there are models of child and adolescent aggression and delinquency. The violence in which children and adolescents engage transcends the school-community boundary. Peers also have great influence on adolescents' behaviour, and children who associate themselves with delinquent peers, will engage in anti-social behaviour as well. The desire to belong to a certain group can lead them to engage in aggressive and violent behaviour regardless of knowing that what they are doing is wrong. Violent behaviour is observed and learned from individuals, parents, peers, the media, and other members of the community. Anti-social peer association precedes and paves the way for a person to participate in anti-social behaviour (Kelloway, Barling & Hurrell, 2006).

The relationship between inter-parental violence and aggressive behaviour can thus be explained using the social learning theory, which purports that children learn behaviours through observation and role modelling (Monks et al., 2009). Children may learn to accept bullying and aggression as legitimate ways of interacting with their peers as they also observe violence in the family. According to Bandura's (1973) theory, as learning progresses over time, the child is gradually becoming a socially self-regulating person who establishes internal expectations against which to judge his or her own behaviour.

The family is the primary source that exposes children to violent behaviour and techniques, yet it is the most important institution in the socialisation of children into society (Ngidi, 2018). Children learn that violence is acceptable within the home and that it is 'an effective method' for solving problems or changing the behaviour of others. Children should learn social skills in the home and follow beliefs, principles, and social customs to make them active members of society (Beferani, 2015). However, children who are socialised in an environment of domestic violence, dysfunctional families and lack of parental engagement are likely to be the perpetrators of school-based violence (Pahad & Graham, 2012; Burton, 2008). The primary hypothesis for the intergenerational cycle of violence is that violent and abusive adults learned this behaviour because of being the victims or witnesses of aggressive and abusive behaviour as children. Individuals who were abused by their parents may have internalised beliefs and patterns of violence, and this makes them abusive themselves. Thus, children who endured a

high frequency of physical punishment are more likely to be violent towards other children at school than those who were not exposed to such levels of violence.

Boys who frequently witness their fathers or male role models abusing their spouses are likely to be aggressive towards female teachers and girls at school. Boys who have been exposed to both direct and indirect forms of family violence are also likely to be perpetrators of violence in school. Fathers who model good behaviour in the presence of their boy children teach their boys that a man does not raise his hand to a woman. Learnt behaviour, whether from a parent or the community, may teach a young boy that it is acceptable to hit a woman, hence young men are prone to hitting female teachers and girls.

Bandura's theory (1973) also points out that in many situations, violence is not simply imitative action, but that new forms of violence are evolving that generalise the model effect. Exposure to violent models not only offers knowledge about how to behave, but also what the effects of those acts are. From this perspective, behavioural theories play a significant role in understanding the socialisation in which agents such as parents, teachers, peers and the media are a central part of a child's learning experience. Positive reinforcement, for example, happens by peer praise and applause when a learner displays violent activity at school or when adults accept violent behaviour at home (Estévez et al., 2008).

Both boys and girls rely on parents as sources to model beliefs and behaviour in society. Both sexes may be vulnerable to the same degree of violence depending on the amount of marital violence they witnessed in their childhood. According to Herd (2009:30), modelling is probable to happen when "the violent behaviour is performed by an attractive, respected, or prestigious model; the model is one that the observer identifies with, the aggressive behaviour is rewarded, the aggressive behaviour is perceived as 'real', and the observer is physiologically aroused". Parents and the community at large play a very big role in modelling appropriate behaviour in young people. Ngidi (2018) argues that, apart from the family, the community in which children find themselves can influence them to engage in violent behaviour. The social learning theory stipulates that members of society learn from other people, and there are many ways to learn from others, such as by listening, witnessing, or imitating.

Based on the social learning theory, various scholars reported the effects of exposure to violent television show (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006). To a lesser extent, violent video games also impact childhood violence (Anderson & Bushman, 2001). Being consistently surrounded by individuals that are aggressive and violent is bound to have a negative effective on a young person. Strasburger and Wilson (2002) propose that the social learning theory states that we learn from others, either through direct or indirect observation, or through our model experience. The effect of exposure to social violence on later aggression is also often due to the degree to which children have witnessed aggression, which indicates that children's cognitions mediate the relationship of early exposure to later aggression (Guerra, Huesmann, & Spindler, 2003).

According to Bandura (2012:20), "if a model is producing a behaviour that is appropriate, responsible and positive overall, the observer will mimic that positive good behaviour". Considering this, the current study aimed to show that the things we do, whether good or bad, are under the constant watch of others, and children can mimic bad behaviour. The social learning theory is thus" premised on the idea that it is learners' associations with violent others (family and friends) that contribute to their learning and subsequent acceptance of deviant conduct" (Akers and Sellers, 2004: 85).

It has also been proposed that without previous exposure violence, young people can acquire deviant attitudes and values, but then seek out peers with similar attitudes and behaviours. Not all deviant leaners have parents with hostile and abusive behaviour. In fact, the study will reveal that the absence of parents, who thus do not guide their children, can also result in poor role model behaviour. Thus, children learn aggressive and violent behaviour from people close to them at a particular time. Consequently, delinquent peers form intimate relationships with each other and frequently encourage the onset and continuation of delinquency in these relationships (Estévez et al., 2008).

3.3 The Ecological Systems Theory

The ecological systems theory was propounded by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1979; 1986; 1989). Bronfenbrenner proposed the theory to point out that evolution cannot be discussed or clarified by a single principle, such as genetics, but rather by a more multidimensional and dynamic framework. The theory of ecological systems envisages an individual's presence in a

network of intertwined interactions at four key stages. These levels reflect four contexts of behavioural influence. The importance of this theory lies in the fact that it acknowledges that there is an interplay between different human, relational, group and societal influences (NSSF, 2016). The growth of an individual is influenced by different mechanisms within the ecosystem and by the inter-relationships between these structures.The individual factors contributing to school-based violence can be defined as "...the individual's biological and unique characteristics that increase the chances of being a perpetrator of violence" (Burton, 2008a). The ecological systems theory is relevant in understanding school violence because the underlying factors that prompt school violence may often originate from multiple factors that are personal and stem from the environment from which individuals emanate (Khani, 2016).

In the data analysis of the current study, violence was also interpreted from a bio-ecological perspective viewpoint as this integrative theory provided for the consideration of several influences and their effect over time on the development of violent behaviour. In this study, the focus was on learners and teachers. This theory is used to describe how and why school learners and educators were affected by violence that had been perpetrated by learners and the impact of their environment on the behaviours they displayed. It is important to note that this theory promotes the concept that an individual and his or her environment are separate units that interact and affect each other dynamically (Stead & Watson, 2006).

As the basis of the eco-systemic theory sees the interdependence of interactions as occurring between various individual and their physical environment, these are essential aspects. (Crawage, 2005). The bio-ecological framework model often positions people within a social context. With reference to this study, learners and educators were positioned in schools in a township setting. According to this model, the way in which learners living in townships think, feel, behave, and develop is influenced by relationships with their peers, the community, and the family, and this system is underscored by the systems theory (Donald et al., 2002).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) differentiates between five levels of dynamic interacting environmental systems that impact the developing child:

1. The *microsystem*: This is a pattern of activities and daily interactions within the child's immediate setting such as the home, school and neighbourhood.
2. The *mesosystem*: This is the interaction between two or more microsystems.

3. The *exosystem*: This is the interaction between two or more settings that do not contain the child.

4. The *macrosystem*: This is broader societal cultural patterns.

5. The *chronosystem*: This is the dimension of time that affects the developing child.

These systems, together with relevant examples of factors that are found within each, will be discussed in more detail below.
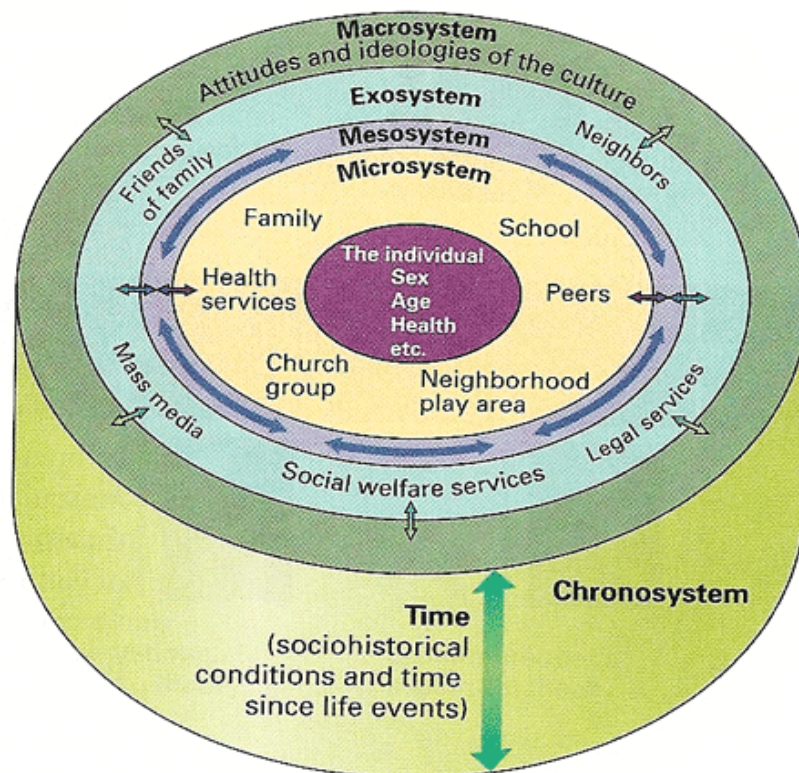
Figure 3.1: Summary of Bronfenbrenner's five interlocking contextual systems that influence the developing child

3.3.1 Microsystem

The microsystem is the closest layer to the child and has the most direct influence on its behaviour. It is composed of the immediate background of the person or group of individuals (e.g., home and school) with which young people communicate. It is the web of relationships that the developing person has with essential people in his or her life, such as caregivers, parents, siblings, friends, classmates, and teachers (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2009). It

comprises of patterns of behaviours and internal relationships between individuals in the home, school, society (Du Plessis, 2008). This entails all the events, positions, and interpersonal interactions that the participant encounters in his or her immediate community (Mothibi-Mathopo-Mofokeng, 2017). At this stage, relationships impact children in two ways: *from* the child and *towards* the child.

The family is the most influential in the socialising context during childhood and throughout adolescence and plays a critical role in modelling adolescents' behaviour. According to Gasa (2010), the family is the most powerful component in modeling behaviour and moderating other factors that may raise the likelihood of school violence, such as poverty, school absenteeism, and peer pressure. Burton and Leoschut (2013) agree, stating that a young person's family and home environment have a significant impact in their risk of being victims and violent perpetrators. Family, according to these scholars, is the major context in which young people learn about socially acceptable and inappropriate behaviors. They believe that children who have experienced or witnessed some type of familial violence are more prone to reproduce and imitate that violence. The South African Council for Educators (2011) agrees, indicating that family exposure to violence and crime increases the likelihood of becoming victimized at school.

Parent-level factors, such as negative adult influences, lack of parental involvement, and lack of parental support are associated with the perpetration of violence by young people (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2001; Barboza, Schiamberg, Oehmke, Korzeniewski & Heraux, 2009; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003). The ill-treatment of all children places them at great risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. Constant mistreatment may lead to the creation of negative types of peer interaction widespread among bullying victims, since it causes them to feel helpless because they unable to defend themselves from harm (Duncan, 2004).

Scholars also indicated that experiencing violence at home between parents is a contributing factor for peer conflicts, such as adolescent violence and aggression (Baldry, 2003; Bauer et al., 2006; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003). These studies show that young people who are subjected to inter-parental violence at home are prone to participate in aggressive activity at school or may become victims of bullying.

Certain circumstances such as domestic violence that impact children at an early age can place an adolescent on the path of violent behaviour. Certain circumstances such as domestic violence that impact children at an early age can place an adolescent on the path of violent behaviour. Baldry's (2003) study, which investigated the association between inter-parental violence and bullying using a sample of Italian youth, found that both boys and girls who had witnessed violence between their parents were significantly more likely to bully their peers compared to those who had not been exposed to interparental violence. Thus, because of the violence that children experienced at home, they tended to become bullies at school. They also tended to be problematic in class. As the only form of discipline that they understood was violent in nature (e.g., corporal punishment), they became aggressive when an educator meted out discipline and they did not take the educator seriously. Blaser (2008) suggests that many children emerge from violent experiences with an insatiable appetite for violence.

Family circumstances can therefore contribute to the development of aggression and violent behaviour as children may accept such behaviour as the only problem-solving mechanism available to them. A study revealed that for a wide group of middle school children, vulnerability to family confrontation (e.g., sibling violence and yelling) was correlated with greater bullying (Espelage et al., 2013). The latter study proposes that parents who don't model good behaviour but instead become involved in criminal activities such theft, drug use and illegal firearm possession will instil such behaviours in their children. Family influences affecting parental activities, such as infrequent reasoning and excessive spanking, tend to increase adolescent aggression and violence (Tolan & Gorman-Smith, 2001).

The ecosystems theory proposes that children with either one or both absent parents are likely to be problematic both in schools and in the community. Thabethe (2010:38) states that "learners from a single-headed household, from families with ruptured family ties, and families without a father figure are more at risk of involving themselves in antisocial behaviour". Adolescents who reported lack of parent-child interactions and communication were more likely to participate in delinquent acts, including violence (Davalos, Chavez & Guardiola, 2005). Those adolescents who strong bonds with their parents during preadolescence had extended these bonds into adolescence and were less likely to be inclined towards violent behaviour (Hoffmann, 2003; Smith, Flay, Bell & Weissberg, 2001). It is thus clear that parents who manifested abusive behaviour, either physically or verbally, are more likely to have children with these behaviours as well (Schreiber & Schreiber, 2002).

3.3.1.1 Peer relationships

Peer relationships are argued to be the second most influential factor that shapes behaviour in an adolescent's life. Peer pressure, according to Bhana (2013), is a significant contributor to school violence. Burton and Leoschut (2013) concur, that during adolescence, friends have an increasingly essential influence on students' beliefs and behaviors. Adolescents who attend school spend more their time with their peers than with their parents and may turn to their peers and sibling for social support rather than to their parents, particularly if their family is discorded. Adolescents also seek autonomy from their caregivers and then turn to their friends and peers for social support. It therefore comes as no surprise that negative peer relationships and lack of peer support are significant risk factors for bullying behaviour. Children in townships create play groups as a way of gaining social acceptability and support due to a lack of parental control and supervision. Leaders and the so-called "stake-out turf", which maximizes fighting possibilities, are developed in play groups (Gasa, 2010:18).

Being accepted by their peers is important for adolescents. What their peers say and think of them impact their behaviour, especially when they are in high school. One of the causes of juvenile violence might be interpreted as a desire for status and dominance within peer groups (South African Council for Educators, 2011). Male and female learners, according to Bhana (2013), have different demands to avoid peer marginalisation: male learners want to be regarded as bold and macho to be accepted, whereas girls are pressured to be sexually active to be accepted as true women in a group. Therefore, boys are expected to be brave, tough, and masculine to be accepted into a particular group, and the need for acceptance may thus compel them to demonstrate aggressive and violent behaviour to prove their masculinity. Demaray and Malecki (2003) suggest that young people with poor levels of peer recognition and social care are at heightened risk of bullying and victimisation. The relationship that an adolescent has with his/her peers has the potential to elicit violent behaviour. Learners who have friends that participate in immoral behaviour are also more likely to eventually partake in immoral activities and youths who associate with their peers who have tendencies towards violent behaviour are particularly prone to engage in both destructive and abusive behaviour (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). The quality of friendship is significant, in addition to peer recognition and social support, as supportive friendships can act as an effective protection against peer victimisation (Bollmer, Milich, Harris & Maras, 2005; Schmidt & Bagwell, 2007).

The association and power of the peer group is therefore significant during adolescence. Peer groups are established based on gender, ethnicity, and behaviour similarity (which are referred to as the homophilia hypothesis), and peer pressures play a major role in encouraging or inhibiting the behaviour of bullying (Espelage et al., 2000; Espelage, Holt & Henkel, 2003). Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim and Sadek (2010) found that learners who threatened other learners had a higher social status with their classmates, whereas younger children who were bullied were socially rejected. Associating with the incorrect peer group in school has a detrimental influence on both learning activity and academic success.

3.3.1.2 School environment

The environment at the school is also beneficial to investigate how learners contribute to the bullying actions of aggressions, adult role models and personalities (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). The latter research suggests that unfavourable school environmental variables (e.g., lower levels of adult surveillance) will increase the prevalence of violence and decrease the probability of learners feeling secure in the school settings. Another study proposes that youths with positive perceptions of their school environment are less likely to have externalising behaviours (e.g., aggression) (Kupermine, Leadbeater, Emmons & Blatt, 1997).

3.3.2 Mesosystem

Mesosystem level requires an understanding of the inter-relationships between two or more microsystems, each involving an entity (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). A mesosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more of the microsystems − in other words, it is the interrelations between these systems such as the family, the school, and the neighbourhood (Thomas, 2005). The mesosystem encompasses the ongoing interactions and interrelatedness of the child with his or her family and the immediate environment (Böning & Ferreira, 2014). It refers to the interactions that occur between microsystem contexts such as communication between the family and the school (Mofokeng et al., 2017). For instance, parents who are involved in the development of their children can assist with the type of peer friendship they choose. The structure of the mesosystem determines effects of the family influence on peer friendship selection or the interaction between family characteristics and individual attributes (Espelage, 2014).

Due to frequent interactions between school learners and teachers, it is important to consider the behaviours of teachers and their role in the lives of adolescents. Given their contribution to the school culture, teachers and school officials can influence students' relationships with their peers and their perceptions of the school environment (Lee, 2009). Children who seek assistance from their teachers when faced with challenges are less likely to engage in violent behaviour. A study conducted by Hong and Eamon (2011) found that teachers' involvement in their students' academic and social lives significantly decreased students' feelings of being unsafe in their school. The connection between learners' teachers and their parents and between their church and their neighbourhood will also have an impact on their behaviour Studies have provided empirical evidence that teacher support and a good child-school relationship are protective factors for adolescents' behavioural and mental health (Longobardi et al. 2016).

3.3.3 Exosystem

In this system, the individual's development is influenced by events occurring in settings in which the individual is not present (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Beyond the immediate structure containing the person, including communities, the exosystem contains aspects of the community. For example, exposure to community violence and environmental influences in the area, all of which may or may not directly concern young people but may affect them, could negatively influence how they interact with their peers in school. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2006) assert that the exosystem involves other structures with which the child is not directly involved but which can impact individuals in the microsystem who have proximal relationships with the child, such as the parent's workplace.

Ward (2007 cited in South African Council for Educators, 2011) states that young people in South Africa grow up in a society where they are trained to be aggressive, where violence is praised, and where they believe violence will solve their issues and make them feel powerful and important. Gasa (2010) argued that political violence, social violence, suicide, and crimes such as hijacking, kidnapping, rape, hostage-taking, housebreaking, needless killing, and gangsterism contribute to a community's instability. According to Gasa (2010), most learners engage in violent behaviour because of the behavior of the community in which they were raised. Learners may become involved in violent acts if the community in which they grow up is marked by violence. If students are afraid of being assaulted, they may feel compelled to master survival skills to protect themselves (Gasa, 2010). To protect themselves, some of them

join community gangs, and violence begins to define their life; hence, such a society or environment may put learners in a difficult situation, forcing them to be aggressive (Gasa, 2010). In addition, bullies tend to have parents who do not have sufficient supervision time or who are not actively involved in their children's lives (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000; Georgiou & Fanti, 2010; Low & Espelage, 2013). Parents who work too long hours or overtime and those who do not live with their children because of work do not get enough time with their children for proper parenting, which results in them either enforcing or withdrawing from discipline.

Contextual factors such as low a socioeconomic status and family stressors (e.g., the death of a loved one) set the stage for harsh discipline and physical punishment, which in turn, influences childhood aggression that is exported to schools (Lansford, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates & Pettit, 2004). These children are influenced by various individuals while their parents are absent. In this context, Hurd et al. (2011) assert that early adolescents who reside in low-income communities may be greatly influenced by the behaviour of non-parental adults in their day-to-day lives. There is strong reason to postulate links with both perpetration and victimisation, given the disruption in adaptive peer relations and behavioural control that may be associated with features of community violence exposure (Espelage et al., 2000).

Both the community in which the child resides and educators' attitude impact whether adolescents will be encouraged to adopt violent behaviours, drug use, and carrying illegal guns and weapons used in incidents of violence in the community and at school. Children may be influenced by violence at home, but they can observe and learn violence in the community on their way to and from school as well. Studies have indicated that violent and aggressive behaviour such as bullying is conditioned by experiences of out-of-school settings such as communities and clubs **(**Bacchini, Esposity & Affuso, 2009). Films and television programmes also play a strong role in this regard, as was discussed earlier.

Schools in township settings experience more incidences of school violence than those in other areas because violence is more prevalent in township communities. This also implies that educators working in township areas are more likely to be subjected to violence than their colleagues who work in urban areas. Teaching in schools with large classes also exposes teachers to violence-prone learners. The school context is thus linked to the development of aggression. Schools with protective precautions, such as metal detectors and armed guards,

frequently witness greater levels of aggression than schools that do not because the presence of security protocols is likely to be a result of school violence in the first place. The ecological model emphasises that schools that are embedded in violence-prone communities must accommodate those surroundings for better or for worse.

3.3.3.1 Violence in the media

Recent events of violent incidences in schools have focused attention on the link between violence in the media and violent behaviour among teenagers. Research has consistently indicated that youths' exposure to violence on television, in video games, and on the Internet increases the likelihood of aggressive thoughts and behaviours (Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski & Eron, 2003). As more and more young people have access to the Internet, text messages, chat rooms and websites, cyber bullying has arisen as a new type of youth brutality (Williams & Guerra, 2007). This form of bullying is closely linked to the attitudes of students in embracing bullying activity, supporting a toxic school atmosphere, and adverse peer reinforcement (Williams & Guerra, 2007).

3.3.4 Macrosystem

The macrosystem refers to the outer layer of the child's environment and comprises "the dominant values, beliefs, customs, and economic and social systems of a culture or subculture that filter down in countless ways to individuals' daily lives" (Papalia, 2006:37). It is considered as "a cultural blueprint that may determine the social structures and activities that occur within the immediate systems level" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977:30). Behaviours are established in the corporate culture and there is a great need to consider the organization rather than just the employee (Monks et al., 2009). Aggressive conduct and violence differ across cultures and backgrounds (McConville & Cornell, 2003) and sociological researchers thus suggest that school norms can promote differences, isolation, aggression, and inequality among learners in relation to their race/ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic context (Leach & Scott, 2003).

Structures that contribute to the creation of a climate of violence are for instance legislations, policies, norms, a patriarchal system, and social and economic inequities (Jameson, 2014). The macrosystem is made up of the features of the micro, meso, and exosystems, all of which are

heavily influenced by the culture in which a person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). It is seen from a sociological perspective, which considers the broad socioeconomic elements that contribute to a climate that encourages violence. Political and economic reasons are just two examples of societal influences on violence (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Inequality, poverty, and unemployment, which were exacerbated by the apartheid rule in South Africa, have a direct impact on the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

As a result, school violence may be caused by wider community and societal problems beyond which the school has very minimal control (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012). Political violence in South Africa from 1948 onwards, according to Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 91), resulted in high levels of hostility and, as a result, widespread violence, particularly among the black community. Apartheid racial systems taught black students to resist, resulting in youth violence in South Africa (Ngqela & Lewis 2012). Pahad and Graham (2012) agree with Ngqela and Lewis (2012) that apartheid's history of violence and more recent societal developments have influenced the prevalence of school violence in South African townships.

According to Van der Merwe (2012), the key hurdles to this shift were high rates of poverty, inequalities (both social and economic), and joblessness, all of which persist today and drive youngsters to criminal and violent behaviour. According to Van Der Merwe (2011), unemployment among parents of learners in South African townships is likewise highly high. It may be claimed that apartheid bred a generation for whom violence was (and continues to be) the only way to effect change. Children who are living in less than ideal conditions may view their environment as more threatening as they are frequently "...directly and indirectly exposed to negative events such as violence, crime, rape, and health problems..." (Muris, Du Plessis & Loxton, 2008:151). Differences in the quality of their education may also lead to differences in their interpretation and responses to violence (Papalia, 2006). A study by Burkhardt (2007), which compared children from different ethnic groups in South Africa, found that Black South African children reported a higher number and intensity of fears than those of other ethnic groups. Moreover, the apartheid regime created a dysfunctional society and family structures which have resulted in parents who now lack the necessary resources and skills to provide for the optimal development and adjustment of their children (South African Council for Educators, 2011).

3.3.5 Chronosystem

The final stage of the ecological framework, the chronosystem, is related to persistence or transition (e.g., historical or life events). It influences the person and the community throughout the course of life (e.g., changes in family structure). For example, it argues that parent-child relationships may be more powerful during early childhood and pre-adolescent years, and that children may be negatively impacted by changes in the family system over the years. According to Hetherington and Elmore (2003) pre-adolescent children in divorced or remarried families exhibit higher levels of aggression, noncompliance, disobedience, inappropriate classroom conduct, and diminished levels of self-regulation. This may be a result of internal factors such as the developing child's physiological changes, or external factors such as the death of a parent (Jameson, 2014). Other chronosystem factors relevant to the South African context include changes that occur in the family structure, such as "a decline in the extended-family household in developing countries" (Papalia, 2006:38).

When a child displays violent behaviour at school, it is important to consider this comprehensive view of interrelated factors that influence both the perpetrator and the victim of violence (Du Plessis, 2008). This theory is a vital tool that can be used by educators and departmental officials to design effective programs to deal with school violence. Although the theory puts emphasis on the microsystem and how people in the immediate vicinity of an individual contribute towards their behaviour, it is an undeniable fact that violence occurs because of multiple factors from different systems.

Therefore, to understand school violence, the current study took cognisance of all the systems equally to propose changes that need to be made at all levels of the ecological model. For instance, changes in the family structure, among the school staff, and in the community will eventually contribute to the prevalence and types of violence that occur on school premises.

3.4 The Subculture of Violence Theory

The subculture of violence theory was propounded by Marvin Wolfgang and Francis Ferracuti in 1967 to examine and explain high rates of violence among structurally marginalised populations and in such neighbourhoods. For this study, the researcher utilised the subculture of violence theory to examine the prevalence of violence within a particular community and

how it contributed to school violence in the study sites. The subculture of violence theory proposes that through distinct organizations, sub-groups within societies learn and build specialized norms and values that highlight and legitimize the use of violent aggression much beyond what is considered normal in society (McGloin et al., 2011).

Violence is used as a means to resolve conflict instead of using non-violent problem-solving techniques. According to this theory, violence and aggression are maintained and reinforced in society as it is used by both guardians and parents as mechanisms to enforce obedience and conformity in their children within family settings and in the broader society. Pinchuck (2004:2) maintains that "children acquire their attitudes from a range of sources, most notably in their significant relationships with parents, relatives, and guardians".

It is also used by educators in the forms of verbal aggression and corporal punishment to discipline learners, but in the process, they sustain violence in schools. Taole (2016) argues that the normalisation of corporal punishment in schools reflects how violence has been encouraged by South African communities. Govender and Sookrajh, (2014:1) argue that "teachers' perception of their own childhood experiences of corporal punishment is thus that they were subjected to harsh forms of discipline and corporal punishment and that, getting a hiding, is normal." Teachers and parents who are products of corporal punishment will advocate for its use as a way of enforcing discipline at home and at school. Ngubane (2018:137) mentions that "on their past experiences, many teachers perceive that corporal punishment was used effectively to control behaviour, to encourage normalised behaviour through obedience to school rules, and to establish the authority of the teacher as a giver of knowledge".

Learners living in low-income neighbourhoods are frustrated and end up involved in criminal activities, such as abuse and robbery, to feel motivated and to be in control (Power, 2016). Pahad and Graham (2012) suggest that school-based abuse is highly common in low-income neighbourhoods as opposed to more wealthy communities. Children who grow up in deteriorated neighbourhoods are very vulnerable to poverty and criminal crime as those around them struggle to make ends meet by whatever means possible. The child is then socialised into a life of violence which becomes normalised. Vold, Bernard and Snipes (2002:270) refer to "certain historical experiences as causal factors in the emergence of the subculture [of violence]" and suggest that historical experiences have transformed into a culture which has been "transmitted from generation to generation as a set of ideas even after the original causal

social conditions have already disappeared". Hence, we have learners who are aggressive at school and use violence as a means of conflict resolution. In short, they have been exposed to a culture of violence to the extent that they have normalised it.

Theorists claim that the extraordinarily high rates of violence within a single race could be related to the normalisation of the subculture of violence within that race. High rates of crime and violence in communities contribute to the prevalence of violence in schools. Gang and faction fights that start in the community spill over onto school premises and cause violence and disruption. The culture of violence that is prevalent in South African societies and in schools continues to prevail despite measures by the government to address it, because some learners perceive it as normal and a means to resolving their conflicts (Van der Merwe, 2010).

Simply put, people who are members of or accept these delinquent subcultures are far more likely to participate in illegal behavior than people who do not follow these subcultural standards (Eric & Simons, 2006). In other words, adhering to the violent subculture elevated the risk of engaging in violent and nonviolent criminal action. According to this viewpoint, violence arises because followers to the violent subculture value a set of standards that reflect a particular fondness for this activity. Therefore, members of this subculture will not necessarily act in violence exclusively but given that the code's core prerequisite is the manifestation of a specific inclination to violence, these principles should plainly anticipate an abnormally strong systemic propensity for violence and aggressiveness (McGloin et al., 2011). Hence, in South Africa children exposed to violence in townships, tend to normalise this and act it out at schools. Moreover, most of these children become part of a subculture in the form of a gang, which lacts as a catalyst for school violence in South Africa. Dekeserday, Perry, Barbara, and Walter (2006) argue that the sub-culture of violence theory suggests that a lot of deviant behaviour reflects normative support for deviant values by a sub-group and even of encouragement by certain groups to uphold it in a social structure.

The definition of 'violent culture' is used in South Africa to describe the high prevalence of violence in the region. The entire society (especially children) is continuously subjected to an atmosphere of violence that is fuelled by mass media and by first-hand observations of public and domestic violence. Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967:158) state that the "...overt use of force or violence, either in interpersonal relationships or in group interaction, is generally viewed as a reflection of basic values that stand apart from the dominant, the central or parent culture".

Thus, violence has become a way of life for most young people in this country. 'Killer', a gangster working for a car hijacking syndicate in Johannesburg, stated: "I was born in a cruel world, I'm living in a cruel world, and I'll die in a cruel world. I must steal that car to get money to support my wife and children and my brothers. They are all looking up to me" (BBC News, 2002: l).

The subculture of violence ideology centers on the recognition of 'pro-violent' ideals. The observation of principles is assumed to offer insight into group expectations that perpetuate the former by rewarding adherence and penalising non-conformity. Thus, the key to explaining the social phenomena of society is human behaviours.

Schools that are situated in a community that has high rates of crime and violence are more likely to experience incidences of violence than schools that are situated law-abiding communities. A community that has a long history of violence will impact the children that reside within that particular community negatively. Anderson (1990) notes that Black youths in highly disadvantaged circumstances can have their source of respect and success snatched away in a moment, thereby forcing them to develop a willingness to ward off perceived threats and reinforce their reputation with violence. According to McGloin, Schreck, Stewart and Ousey (2011:710):

> "Those who adhere to violent norms, mundane interactions that are trivial at the outset can easily escalate into serious violence, given the normative status aggression has with regard to interpreting and responding to social situations."

The assumption that greater rates of violence among lower-class and racialised communities could be explained by the fact that these groups have accepted attitudes and practices that are more permissive of violence was central to Wolfgand and Ferracuti's subculture theory (Eric & Simons, 2006). This theory presupposes the development of unique subcultural, pro-violent ideals in opposition to hegemonic or middle-class norms and values (McGloin et al., 2011). They further outlined that the victims of this violence suffer from psychological challenges such as depression and anxiety.

Despite the normalisation of violence in the community, it continues to have adverse effects on people, particularly those who have been exposed to violence for a long period of time.

3.5 Strain theory

Individuals in society are driven to accomplish specific goals, such as economic success, according to general strain theory, which was founded by Robert Agnew in 1992. However, there are often events beyond the individuals' control that get in the way. Agnew presents three types of strain: failure to achieve positively valued goals, removal of positively valued stimuli, and presence of a negative stimuli (Bragg, 2020). The first is traditional strain, which is defined as an incapacity to achieve culturally normative goals by legal methods. The elimination of a positively valued stimuli, on the other hand, refers to the removal of a valued construct in a person's life (such as loss of a loved one). Finally, the existence of negative stimuli denotes the occurrence of an unpleasant event in one's life (such as being bullied at school). When a person is under stress, regardless of the source, they have negative emotional effects (such as anger or depression). When an individual is in a negative affective state and lacks coping strategies, he or she is more prone to engage in deviant activity as a means of regaining a normal affective state (Thompson, 2015).

According to the strain theory, delinquency is caused by a major negative effect/relationship, and dissatisfaction can lead to criminal escape attempts or anger-based misbehaviour (Bragg, 2020). The theory describes delinquency as a result of a person's social ties, which leads to delinquency and the concentration is on bad interpersonal ties that inhibit an individual from reaching desirable goals. According to the strain theory, negative affective states such as rage and related emotions, which emerge from poor relationships, pressure teenagers into delinquency (James et al., 2014).

There are several ideas in the field of criminology that link poor life experiences to delinquent and criminal behavior (Agnew, 2006). To better understand crime and criminal behavior, Agnew (2006) applies ideas from many theories (e.g., social control, social learning). Stress from unpleasant life experiences can weaken social control, necessitate social support, increase social learning of criminal and delinquent actions, and contribute to negative personality qualities that are permissive to crime (Briggs, 2020).

According to Agnew (2006), teenagers may be more capable of aggressively responding to peer abuse due to a lack of parental coping support and increased exposure to delinquent coping. Younger teenagers are more prone to adopt a more internalized type of deviance in response to peer abuse, such as drug usage in response to depression. Moreover, the views of

teacher and rule fairness are major deterrents to school violence, but these linkages are also supported by criminological theory (James et al., 2014). Therefore, strain theory predicts that teenage perceptions of unfair treatment at school enhance the chance of delinquent behavior, such as in-school violence (Briggs, 2020).

Victimization by bullies is said to be a major source of stress for certain teenagers (Agnew, 2006). Furthermore, it is suggested that it is a cause of considerable detrimental impacts on psychological health, putting one at risk of delinquent coping (Thompson, 2015). Many types of bullying (violent, verbal, relational, indirect, cyber) are regarded criminogenic because they enhance the likelihood of the victim employing coping techniques that do not produce a favorable outcome. It is possible to rely on "externalized" delinquent coping mechanisms which are actions of aggression against others. Alternatively, "internalised" delinquent coping might be used. These are activities committed against oneself with the intention of harming or alleviating the negative affective states brought on by the strain (Tenenbaum, Varjas, Meyers, & Parris, 2011). Coping techniques can include the use of drugs to relieve emotional and psychological pain, as well as more extreme coping techniques involving violent behavior (e.g., assault) to relieve psychological pressure directed towards the actual source of strain or a proxy of the original source of strain (Agnew, 2006).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter shows how several socio-economic conditions and other pressures faced by young people in South Africa are motivating school violence today. The various theories underpinning this study were important in highlighting the drivers of school violence in South Africa. Learners should not be blamed for the school violence and viewed as problematic, however the theories utilised in the current study indicated that learners' violent behaviour should be understood as complex behavioural patterns that emerge in the context of various environmental, social and community factors. These theories demonstrated the intersection of environmental constraints and school violence in South Africa. The theories further highlighted how young learners living and growing up in predominantly rural, poor, marginalised neighbourhoods, such as townships, exhibit high rates of behavioural and anti-social problems learned from the environment they live in.

CHAPTER FOUR
METHODOLOGY

"We do not need guns and bombs to bring peace, we need love and compassion."

-Mother Teresa-

4.1 Introduction

The methods that the researcher adopted as the foundation of this research study made the highly successful fieldwork that was engaged in possible. The methodology that the researcher employed provided a systematic guide for the data collection procedures that were used to meet the goals and objectives of the study. The data that obtained were thick and comprehensive and enabled the researcher to investigate the topic of interest in depth and to generate meaningful findings. In a qualitative study of this nature, the data that are collected help a researcher to understand how people in each society produce knowledge, attach meaning to certain events, and understand reality. To fulfil the aims and objectives of the current study, it was imperative to select appropriate methodological procedures and techniques and therefore an appropriate research design was adopted. The research design of a study outlines the framework or plan that will be used to achieve the objectives. Bayens and Roberson (2011) argue that a good research design encompasses adherence to the rules of scientific investigation along with a level of creativity, and this allows the researcher to be flexible within the context of the study.

Considering the above, this chapter describes the research design and methods as well as the assessment instruments that were used to address the aims and objectives as outlined in Chapter One of this thesis. The characteristics of the selected participants are described and the procedures to analyse data are explained in detail (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The description of the various logical steps that were followed and the justification provided for each of the steps resonate with Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006:6) definition that "methodology specifies how researchers may go about practically studying whatever they believe can be known."

4.2 Research approach

There are two main preferential methodologies for conducting research, which are the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. Prospective researchers are advised to orient

themselves to the differences between these approaches and decide on the one most suitable for their research purpose. A combination of these two methods (refered to as a mixed methods approach) may also be used (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011). However, the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach as the most suitable for this study.

This approach facilitated in-depth understanding of the participants' subjective views on and experiences of the phenomenon of school violence. Merely gathering numerical data would not have produced such thick and responsive findings. Creswell (2007:37) states that, "to study the problem, a qualitative research approach is to be used to inquire the natural setting compressing human subjects and places that inform the collection of data…and inductive data analysis establishes the study themes". The study aimed to present an understanding of learners' and educators' subjective experiences of school violence in a narrative manner. According to Fortune and Reid (1999, cited in De Vos et al., 2005:73), when using a qualitative research approach "…the researcher attempts to gain a first-hand, holistic view of the phenomenon of interest by means of a flexible strategy of problem formulation and data collection [that is] shaped as the investigation proceeds".

4.3 Research design

This study adopted a phenomenological research design. Phenomenologists work with participants' specific statements and experiences rather than abstracting their statements numerically to construct a model from the researcher's interpretations (Creswell, 2007). The researcher focused on teachers' and learners' experiences of school violence in four schools in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Considering the basic purpose of phenomenology, the researcher was able to reduce the experiences of these people within the studied phenomenon and to describe its universal essence. In this process, the researcher identified crucial elements of the phenomenon as "an object of human experience" (Van Manen, 1990:163). These human experiences focused on phenomena that manifested in the four schools such as aggression, bullying, gang violence, and the use of weapons.

Working from a phenomenological standpoint, the researcher collected data from persons who had experienced the phenomenon and this allowed the researcher to examine the values, feelings, perceptions and motives of the participants under study (Cant et al., 2011). Individuals who had either been exposed to or experienced the phenomenon of school violence were

selected as they would give the best descriptions of what occurred in the schools regarding the topic under study. This assumed that school violence had become a regular experience for most learners and teachers in these schools. Across all the perspectives that were elicited, the researcher also employed philosophical assumptions to provide emphasis on context and subjective experiences of individuals as the basis for obtaining a rich and detailed description of events (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The researcher was thus able to arrive at descriptions and insights of the essence of these experiences. Phenomenology attempts to understand problems, ideas, and situations from the perspective of common understanding and experiences rather than differences among them.

Exploratory research, as the name suggests, seeks to explore the research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to existing problems. According to Bryman (2004), exploratory research is conducted to determine the nature of the problem and is not intended to provide conclusive evidence. Instead, it facilitates better and more in-dpeth understanding of a problem that may already have been explored to some extent. Instead, it facilitates better and more in-depth understanding of a problem that may already have been explored to some extent. Explanatory research indicates a progression in the investigative process as it attempts to explain certain phenomena in terms of the presence or absence and nature of certain relationships among key variables

Considering the above, when conducting this study, the researcher was willing to change direction as a result of new data and new insights that emerged. The researcher therefore ensured the participants' acquaintance with the topic to increase their understanding of school violence.

4.4 Research paradigm

Glesne (2016: 5) defines a paradigm as, "Philosophy of science that makes assumptions about the nature of reality and truth, the kinds of questions to explore and how to go about doing so." Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2012:11), consider a paradigm to be a set of viewpoints or perspectives about reality. This study was located within a descriptive interpretive paradigm with the emphasis on experience and interpretation. Hammersley (2013:26) argues that the interpretivist paradigm "...is originally rooted in the fact that methods used to understand knowledge related to human and social sciences cannot be the same as its usage in physical

sciences because humans interpret their world and then act based on such interpretation, while the world does not".

To reach the study's goal, a qualitative research method was used, which was based on an interpretive paradigm and conformed to a constructivist philosophical epistemology that views reality as subjective (Ritchie, Lewis, Ormston & Nicholls, 2013). As a result, there can be no objective viewpoint according to the interpretive paradigm. Interpretive researchers, according to Phothongsunan (2010:1), do not consider the social environment to be "out there", but rather believe that humans construct it. The researcher wanted to obtain participants' descriptive interpretations of their understanding of school violence. Interpretive scholars study how people perceive and make sense of their surroundings because humans contribute meaning to their social reality. According to Maree (2016), social life is a uniquely human product. Humans are in charge of providing meaning to their regular social interactions. Hence, humans are understood within their own environment. Henning (2004) points out that the interpretive paradigm does not concern itself with commonly established laws and regulations, but rather attempts to create a descriptive study that provides an in-depth explanation of social phenomena. According to Bayens and Roberson (2011:86), "descriptive research may be characterised as simply the attempt to determine, describe, or identify what is, rather than establishing why it is that way or how it came to be".

In this study, both learners and educators who understood the phenomenon under investigation were selected as participants. This sample selection was in line with the focus of the study and its purpose to again an understanding of school violence in selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Their awareness was addressed through an extensive interview and focus group schedule of questions aimed at defining their perspectives on the issue and presenting in-depth and detailed information on the causes and consequences of school violence on both learners and educators in the selected high schools. The schools under study had all experienced incidences of violence prior to the investigation, but they were in different communities. Therefore, the social contexts of the participants were not the same. For this reason, various and different conditions may have contributed to the participants' experiences of and insights into violence. Hammersley (2013:30) emphasises that, because multiple interpretations are developed among humans' relationships, "interpretivist researchers should try to understand the diverse ways of seeing and experiencing the world through different contexts and cultures".

This research paradigm diversifies views to offer an extensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. Interpretivist researchers cannot only describe objects, human behaviour or events, but they also need to deeply understand them in the social context in which they occur (Pham, 2018). Therefore, to conduct the research in its natural settings, the researcher visited the schools where the interviews with teaches and focus group discussions with key informant teachers and learners were conducted.

4.5 Study population and sample

White (2005:113) defines a study population as "all possible elements that can be included in the research…the population can be people or a television programme, or curricula or anything that is investigated as a focus of the research project". For this study, the population consisted of all the learners and educators in violence-ridden township schools in KZN. Pretorius (2014) defined township schools as disadvantaged poor resourced schools with overcrowded classrooms making it difficult for adequate learning to take place. However, it would have been impossible to interview the entire population, and therefore a sample was recruited from selected schools in this province. The sample of participants was representative of the population. Participants were selected based on their ability to share relevant data in relation to the research problem under investigation.

4.5.1 Geographical demarcation of the study

One township school from each of four districts represented the study site. These districts were: UGu, UMgungundlovu, Pinetown and Zululand. The schools were selected based on the number of incidences of violence that had been recorded in that school. Upon inquiry, the names of the schools, the nature of the violence, and municipal demographics of each school were provided by the Department of Basic Education under strong conditions such as confidentiality of the participants and those involved in these incidents, unless the event had been reported in the media.

Figure 4.1 Below is a map of KwaZulu-Natal Province which indicates the geographical position of the four districts.

Figure 4.1: Map of KwaZulu-Natal Province

Source: NASA, 2010

4.5.2 Sample size

The sample is a set of items (members or units) from the population which is used to make a point about the population as a whole. Barreiro and Albandoz (2001) describe the study sample as part of the population with the characteristics needed to include the details to be included in the study. Blaickie (2003:161) argues that "the ideal sample is one that provides a perfect representation of the population, with all the relevant features of the population". The research involved both teachers and learners from four selected high schools (one in each of four districts) in KZN. The teachers were recruited with the assistance of the principal and the selection of learners (after permission had been granted by the DBE, the principals and parents) was done with the assistance of teachers on the basis on who had experienced or had witnessed acts of violence in the schools. While there are several forms of sampling methods, they can be generally classified into two groups: probability and non-probability. The researcher chose probability over non-probability sampling because it offered more advantages in exploring the topic in question.

To select the participants, the researcher used purposive sampling. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) and Bryman (2016) claim that the best method to use in selecting participants is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, according to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018),

is when the researcher picks and chooses the participants based on the researcher's assessment of their suitability. Participants and settings are chosen based on their relation to the research questions (Bryman, 2016). Participants are recruited based on their in-depth understanding of the problems that the study addresses. Thus, purposively selected teachers and learners from the four secondary schools in KZN were interviewed to get full understanding of the research problem and the research questions. The learners were from Grade 9 to 12 and between the ages of 15 to 18 years. The researcher included learners from each grade because it was difficult to assume which learners would share more insight in terms of the research problem. This method was found to be sufficient for this study because educators and learners from these selected high schools would comply with the main eligibility criteria, which was that they had to have been] personally or implicitly impacted by school violence. The teachers were also purposively selected based on their years of teaching at the respective schools and their assumed experiences of working with both victims and perpetrators of school-based violence.

According to Folkestad (2008), a research sample characterized by a high degree of homogeneity allows for a free flow of information and offers an incentive to discuss variations of opinion within the same group. This study comprised a homogenous sample based on the following criteria:

1. Secondary school educator or learner;
2. Working or studying at a secondary school located in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa;
3. Teachers with more than three years of teaching experience;
4. Learners in Grade 9 – 12
5. Must have witnessed or experienced school violence.

Gender was not a criterion and thus both male and female teachers and learners were able to participate in the study. In total, 56 participants were recruited: 32 teachers (including the four principals) and 24 learners.

4.6 Data collection

The data collection instruments and methods used to collect data are described in this section.

4.6.1 Data collection instruments

The research instruments were the researcher as the data collector, the interview guide (or schedule) that was administered to the teachers and the principals, and a focus group discussion guide that was administered to the learners who were involved in focus group discussions. Four key informant teachers, who had indicated that they were knowledgeable and would like to participate, were also additionally engaged in key informant interviews. Questions in the interview and focus group guide were generated after a thorough review of relevant literature and a scrutiny of the research problem, the research questions, and the study objectives.

4.6.2 Data collection methods

In qualitative research, the researcher may use a variety of methods to collect data such as field notes, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, narratives of personal stories, observation, document analysis, and audio/video recordings (Maxwell, 2005). In the field of social sciences, the two main methods of collecting qualitative data are individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), which the researcher used. However, the researcher also utilised key informant interviews (KIIs), and participant and general observations. During the semi-structured interviews with the teachers and principals (face-to-face interviews) and the focus group discussion with the learners, the researcher aimed to make subjective meanings of the participants' perceptions of reality through social interaction. Qualitative data collection techniques are ways of seeking out what people do, know think and their experiences by interviewing and observing them, and then recording, transcribing, and analysing data (Patton, 2005). The researcher utilised a combination of the above approaches to achieve a deeper understanding of the research problem.

4.6.2.1 Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with teachers

Interview is defined by Creswell et al. (2014:87) as a "two-way dialogue in which the interviewer asks participants questions to collect data and learn about their ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behavioural patterns". Creswell et al. (2014: 87) identify three forms of interviews which include open-ended, structured, and semi-structured interview. The researcher utilised the semi-structured interview method to collect data. This approach is very effective "when the researcher knows enough about the study topic to frame the discussion in

advance" (Morse & Richards, 2002:97). Interviews have long been viewed as the "gold standard" for qualitative research (Barbour, 2008:113). Similarly, Harding (2013) asserts that they are the most generally utilised method of gathering knowledge for qualitative research. Yin (2009) states that an interview is a form of direct communication whereby a researcher asks his or her participants questions and keeps a record of the answers. Qualitative in-depth interviews are primarily used when the researcher seeks to capture people's lived experiences considering a given topic (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). The interviews conducted were semi-structured in-depth interviews. The study utilised the semi-structured interviews to generate in depth knowledge on the topic at hand on school violence. According to Harrel and Bradley (2009), semi-structured interviews are used to get extensive information by delving deeply into a topic and thoroughly understanding the responses supplied. Semi-structured interviews, according to Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (2009), consist of open-ended questions that focus on the subject that the researcher wants to address. Therefore, in this study, in-depth interviews were used to understand teachers' and the principals' perceptions of school violence in the selected high schools, while focus group discussions were conducted with learners to elicit their views. The learners were not engaged in one-on-one interviews as the topic required sensitive information and the learners had to be protected by not exposing them as individuals to an interview session.

According to Leedy (2014), semi-structured interviews, are more flexible and more likely to give abundant information above what the interviewer had anticipated. The interviewer has the option of following up on any point that they believe is important; such approach is not available in scheduled interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Denzin and Lincoln (2018), further state that, in contrast to unstructured interviews, the interviewer in a semi-structured interview has a greater influence in steering the interview on study-related matters.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the recruited teachers and the principals on a one-on-one basis. Before starting each interview session, we held informal discussions about petty issues that were outside the research topic to make the participants feel comfortable. According to Niewenhuis (2007), qualitative data collection instruments demand a certain level of social communication between the researcher and the participants. The interviews were conducted in venues that were convenient to the participants and each lasted beteen 40 to 50 minutes, depending on how much information was forthcoming.

Before each interview, the researcher informed the participants of the reasons for choosing this particular topic and why she was passionate about it. Storytelling can be a useful tool to create a reciprocal relationship between the researcher and study participants (Stake, 2010). King and Horrocks (2010) point to the importance of researchers being aware of contextual factors during interviews. With the permission of all the participants, the interviews were audio-recorded using a digital audio recorder, transcribed, and catogorised according to the different themes that emerged from the data. According to Crawage (2005), audio-recordings do not only provide a complete and accurate record of the interview, but also facilitate the preservation of the emotional and vocal character of the responses.

Interviews were conducted using open-ended questions for the purpose of planning. This proved to be the most appropriate approach, as the researcher could probe for more in-depth responses relating to certain situations that yielded appropriate responses and thick nuggets of data. These in-depth interviews provided a platform for discussions that guided the participants to provide useful information that the researcher had not considered earlier. In this context, the researcher as the interviewer became a facilitator in the interview process rather than a questioner.

 Each session started with less sensitive questions to ease the conversation between myself and the interviewee. The researcher thus created an informal, friendly atmosphere that enabled a natural flow of ideas and opinions. An interview schedule guided me to ensure that key questions were asked and that the conversations did not digress (see Annexure: D). It also served as a memory aid, thereby ensuring that the relevant questions were reflected on and adequately explored (Hennink et al., 2011). The sequence in which the questions were asked was not fixed and the flow and sharing of views were largely natural. Administering a questionnaire would not have been beneficial to this study because it would not have elicited the participants' authentic feelings, nor would it have allowed for an interpretation of how the participants made sense of their world. The face-to-face interview mode of data collection with the teachers was also highly appropriate because it offered a full range of communication techniques that enabled both parties to respond to non-verbal cues transmitted by the other (Harding, 2013). Thus, the researcher had to be clear on when and how to include paralinguistic features in the transcripts when processing the data.

The audio-recordings were listened to more than once to pick up information that might have been missed previously without distorting the original information. The advantage of using an electronic recorder was that it allowed me "...the opportunity to listen to the flow of discussion and the exact vocabulary used by informants" (Centre for Civil Society, 2003:74).

4.6.2.2 Focus group discussions with learners

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a method of collecting qualitative data and often involves engaging a relatively small group of people in an informal discussion that is centred on a specific topic (Wilkinson, 2011). Focus group discussion (FGD) is a qualitative data collection strategy that often entails engaging a small group of people in an informal discussion about a certain topic (Wilkinson, 2011). While Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2012) define a focus group interview as an interactive discussion between six to eight pre-selected participants, supervised by a trained moderator and focusing on a specific set of issues. Focus group was separated into focus and group by Hennick, Hutter and Bailey (2011). With focus, implying concentrating on a specific subject with a small group of people. According to Patton (2015), the focus should be on a small group of participants who possess a shared experience. The participants in focus group interviews are organised with the goal of acquiring data from them through an interview supervised by the researcher. The focus group interviews allow participants to communicate with one another and with the facilitator while addressing a current issue. Patton (2015: 475) reiterated that participants in the focus group will have time to hear each other's responses and will have the option to provide additional remarks. As a result, the interviews are interactive and provide opportunities for discussion. However, it is not an informal data collection tool because there is a moderator in charge of the discussion and a topic guide is used to steer the discussion in the desired direction. Scholars argue that moderating an FGD requires skill because the quality of data collected mostly depends on this agent's competence (Harding, 2013; Polkinghorne, 2005). FGDs allow for the collection of information from different individuals that have something in common, or from a group of people for the same reason (Foster, 2010). Morgan (1988:9) states that

> *"Focus groups are a form of group interview, though not in the sense of a backwards and forwards discussion between interviewer and group. Rather, the reliance is on the interaction within the group discussing a topic supplied by the researcher, to yield a collective rather than an individual view. The participants interact with each other [sic]*

rather than the interviewer, so that the views of the participants can emerge and the participants' agenda, rather than that of the researcher, can predominate. It is from the interaction of the group that the data emerges [sic]."

Morgan and Krueger (2014) dismiss the myth that people are reluctant to discuss sensitive issues in group settings. The researcher chose FGDs involving the selected learners because it allowed these participants to question one another's views about the topic and formulate a discussion, not only because the group environment provided support to individuals within the group, but also because they promoted greater openness in one another's responses (Green & Hogan, 2005). A group interview is thus a discussion in which a small number, usually between six and twelve participants, under the guidance of a moderator, talk about a topic that is of special relevance to the study (Crawagae, 2010). Although there is no consensus regarding the ideal number of participants in each FGD, Krueger (2014) argues that FGDs typically consist of seven to ten participants, but that anything within the range of four to twelve is acceptable.

For this study, only learners were involved in the focus group discussions. They were divided into four groups of six members each (thus 24 learner participant) that consisted of both girls and boys. The aim was not to make the number of participants in each group too large so that each member of the group would get an opportunity to share their views. Several authors caution that an FGD must not be too small as this may engender a desire to generate meanings beyond the topic (Harding, 2013). Group size must not be too big either, because the moderator must afford all the participants an opportunity to adequately contribute to the salient issues (Krueger, 2014). It is important for each participant to feel that their opinions are valued, thereby creating an environment where participants can share their experiences. It allows the researcher to direct the interaction and inquiry in a flexible way and to ensure that the group remains stimulated and interested. However, it is still acknowledged that the learners who participated in the focus group discussions may have withheld some information in the presence of their peers, but this was largely overcome by creating rapport with the learners before commencing the discussions and assuring them of the confidentiality of their participation in the reporting of the data.

The focus group discussions took place during school hours at the schools in secure venues where the learners would feel safe and could talk freely. Dantzek and Hunter (2012) mention that the best way to structure focus group discussions lies in interviewing individuals in one

setting. Each discussion lasted between 60 and 80 minutes. The focus group participants were learners from Grade 8-12. Participants across these grades were selected and grouped together to obtain diverse views and not to miss any valuable information. Ideally, total strangers make the best FGD participants (Finch & Lewis, 2003; Krueger, 2014). The researcher was aware that the younger learners might feel intimidated by more senior learners and, for this reason, the researcher ensured that the learner participants felt comfortable from the ouset and throughout the interview sessions. The researcher encouraged the learners that, whatever information was to be shared within the group discussion, they should treat as confidential. As the researcher had vast experience working with children, it was best to have icebreakers before each interview session to make the learners feel comfortable and ready for the discussions. The researcher then guided and facilitated the discussions on school violence to understand the situational interactions among the elearners.

Morse and Richards (2002:194) state that it is "the role of the researcher to take care of the quality of data obtained, that the conversation is balanced among the members, and that the dialogue stays more or less on topic and does not get stuck on one point for too long". Furthermore, in a focus group discussion, participants listen to other participants' responses and "make additional comments beyond their own initial responses" (Morse & Richards, 2002:195). It encourages participants to share their own views and own personal experiences about the topic under discussion. Patton (2005) states that the "objective is thus to get high quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in light of [those of] others". The researcher therefore asked the participants to introduce themselves and share their views about school violence. The researcher made notes during and after the group discussions to facilitate data analysis. Krueger (2014) notes that tape recorders are vital for focus group discussions, and the researcher thus obtained the learners' permission to tape record the discussions.

4.6.2.3 Observation

The third data collection method was observation. The researcher closely observed the surroundings in the study location as well as participants' non-verbal cues during the interviews and discussions. Yin (2012) states that observations usually consist of detailed notations of specific human actions/behaviours, physical environments, real-world events, and the context surrounding the events and behaviours. Observation data collection method enabled the

researcher to immerse herself in the schools setting and took detailed notes in an unstructured way without any pre-determined objectives. These notes were key, and they were important in determining some of the questions in the focus group. Therefore, the researcher gained knowledge by being in and around the social setting that was being investigated.

The researcher thus observed the participants' non-verbal cues transmitted by their body language, their voice tempo and tone, as well as their facial expressions during the interview and discussion sessions. The researcher noted the school environments and how certain physical and intangible aspects could promote violence in the schools. The researcher thus used an observation schedule that was used to highlight my observations.

4.7 Research instruments

This section focuses on the study's research instruments, namely the interview and focus group discussion guides. These two instruments were used to elicit the participants' views regarding school violence. All the questions were generation through a review of the literature and with reference to the research questions and objectives. The responses thus allowed my in-depth understanding of the topic. The following instruments were used to collect the required data:

  i.   the researcher as the key instrument,
  ii. an interview schedule
  iii. a focus group discussion guide.

4.7.1 The researcher as the key instrument

According to Patton (2005), the researcher is the key research instrument in qualitative research. In other words, the researcher is the primary conduit to data collection, otherwise stated as "researcher as key instrument" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), meaning that the distance between the qualitative researcher and the participant in a qualitative study is close, interactive, and openly subjective. This requirement makes the researcher inseparable from the research. The researcher was thus the main instrument to facilitate data collection and analysis. The researcher conducted all the interviews and the FGDs, and was prepared for these data collection processes. When collecting qualitative interview data, the main instrument for data

collection is the researcher. The researcher observes, takes notes, talks to people, conducts interviews.

4.7.2 Interview schedule

Interviewing is consistent with an interpretive approach which "aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006:7). One data collection tool that the researcher used in this study was an interview guide (Annexure: B). This guide was developed by the researcher to explore the understanding and experiences of participants regarding school violence in the selected high schools in KZN. Before developing the interview guide, the researcher conducted a thorough literature search to identify gaps and give direction to the questions that needed to be asked. Krueger (2014) identifies a typology of opening, introductory, key, and ending questions, which was a system the researcher followed. Similar issues were explored in the key informant interviews and the focus group discussions.

4.7.3 Focus group discussion guide

Bryman (2004) states that FGDs permit a richness and a flexibility in the collection of data that are not usually achieved when applying an instrument individually. This method also permits spontaneity of interaction among the participants. The researcher thus used a focus group discussion guide (Annexure: C) that was developed to explore the experiences of the participants regarding school violence in the selected high schools in KZN. Before developing this guide, the researcher conducted a thorough literature search to identify gaps and to give direction to the questions that needed to be asked to the learners in these focus group discussions. Krueger (2014) identifies a typology of opening, introductory, key, and ending questions, which the researcher utilised.

4.7.4 Field notes

The researcher took notes of the impressions gained that might not appear in the audio-recordings. These notations were recorded in a field journal and referred to non-verbal signals in most instances. These notes were intended to harness some of the contextual factors that were not verbalised, such as gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, change in tempo of

speech, and general body language (Du Plessis, 2008). When the researcher report on the findings in the next chapter, the non-verbal gestures are linked with the information provided by the participants. This enhaces the researcher's general conclusions and evaluations. The researcher used this strategy because the lack of reaction or body langage reactions to a question could not be captured on the voice recorder. Studying the notations of the non-verbal gestures at the end of each session helped to guide the researcher in the data analysis and interpretation processes. When the observation was combined with the interview data, it allowed a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 2009).

During the time that the researcher spent at the schools, the following were observed:

- *Setting*: The physical condition of the schools was noted, such as the condition of the buildings and fences and the daily functioning of the school. The size of the school and the appearance of the environment the school was situated in were also noted.

- *Activities and interaction*: The activities the learners and staff were involved in as well as informal interactions between the learners and educators were noted. However, attending any formal classroom lessons was beyond the scope of the study.

- *Body language*: During each interview and discussion session, the researcher listened and observed attentively and examined facial expressions their body language when questions were asked and responses were offered.

4.8 Data analysis procedures

Merriam (2009:175) defines data analysis as

> *"The process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of the data involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the research has seen and read - it is a process of making meaning."*

Therefore, data analysis involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting the significant from the trivia, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005). Qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for, and explaining the data. In short, data analysis is making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of situations, and noting patterns and themes, categories, and regularities. Qualitative data analysis is distinguished by its merging of analysis and interpretation and often by the merging

of data analyses (Gibbs, 2007). It entails the development of ideas and theories about the phenomenon being studied and, by the time one reaches the data analysis phase, one should already have a preliminary understanding of the meaning of the data.

For this study, thematic data analysis was adopted. According to King (2003), thematic analysis is a process of analysing data using themes that naturally emerge from the data. It is a method used for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). The data analysis process was commenced shortly after the researcher had completed the research interviews. Thematic data analysis was used by referring back to the field notes, transcripts, and voice recordings. The researcher engaged in familiarisation and immersion, induced themes through a coding process, and finally elaborated on, interpreted, and checked the findings. These processes are briefly explained:

a) *Familiarisation and immersion*: Marshall and Rossman (2011:158) state: "Reading, reading, and reading through the data once more forces the researcher to become intimately familiar with those data; people, events, and quotations sift constantly through the researcher's mind". While the researcher was reading and re-reading the data, comments relating to my initial understanding of what emerged were made.

b) *Inducing themes*: The researcher collated codes into potential themes and gathered all data relevant to each potential theme. Identifying themes and categories from data was "tough intellectual work" and, as such, the researcher used a coding technique as proposed by Marshall and Rossman (2011:160).

c) *Coding*: Coding means searching for interesting patterns or features across the entire data set. The codes "may take several forms: abbreviations of key words, coloured dots, numbers − the choice is up to the researcher" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:160). The researcher coded the data using labelling and different colours. The key research questions were used as a guide to identify themes and sub-themes.

d) *Elaboration and interpretation*: According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), writing about qualitative data cannot be separated from the analytic process and it is central to this process to summarise and reflect on the complexity of the data. The researcher thus engage in the interpretive process by contracting the mass of raw data into focused text, tables, and figures (Duma, 2013) in this thesis.

e) *Checking*: This process entailed meticulous checking to see if the themes worked in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set.

The data were read carefully and thoroughly and then transcribed and analysed. When the data were coded, the researcher looked for patterns and, when detected, arranged them into different categories. The researcher then grouped similar categories together and again arranged them under the four main themes that emerged. Each theme is discussed in detail in the next chapter. Thematic analysis ensured a rich description of the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis provides a rich thematic description of the entire data set so that the reader gets a sense of the predominant and important themes.

4.9 Data utilisation process

Data utilisation refers to the selection of the units of analysis and the isolation of material into coded units for the sole purpose of forming categories and connecting relations in such a way that they emerge as units, as opposed to individual entities (Maluluke, 2016). In the initial stage of data analysis, the researcher thus utilised all the data that was obtained from the interviews, discussions, and field notes (White & Marsh, 2006; Srnka & Koeszegi, 2007). During the interviewing and focus discussion processes, a voice recorder was used, and the conversations were transcribed in preparation for data analysis. The researcher then organised the data according to categories and themes while looking at what emerged through the lenses of the theories that was employed. Leedy and Ormord (2005) argue that data analysis takes place whenever theory and data are compared.

For clarity, it is reiterated that the interviews and discussions were conducted in the language that the participants were most comfortable in, which was primarily IsiZulu. The recordings were then transcribed and translated to English by the researcher and a proficient editor.

4.10 Trustworthiness of the study

The study utilised focus groups, individual interviews with teachers, and key informant interviews with four highly knowledgeable and experienced teachers as the key data collection methodologies. Raw data were recorded on tape and transcribed later.

According to Kumar (2011), a main difference between quantitative and qualitative research is the importance given to the concepts of validity and reliability. Reliability and validity are

essential criteria for quality in quantitative research, whereas in qualitative studies, terms such as credibility, dependability, applicability, transferability, confirmability, and consistency are important issues. According to Guba and Lincoln (2005), trustworthiness in a qualitative study is determined by four indicators: its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Mthiyane (2013:125) suggests that "for qualitative research to be credible (in preference to internal validity) and transferable (in preference to external validity or generalisability), it should be dependable (in preference to reliability)". If these four indicators are present, they reflect validity and reliability in a qualitative study. Trustworthiness seeks to address issues of accuracy when analysing data to assess the identified proposition taken by the researcher.

The researcher thus ensured that the data collection methods met the requirements of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was maintained by not relying on my own underlying assumptions but on the responses offered by the participants. This was done by maintaining a record of the interviews and discussions and documenting the data analysis process in detail. The researcher ensured that the particpants listened attentively during the interviews and that their repsonses were as authentic and honest, which contributed to the trustworthiness of the study.

To ensure that anything that might have been missed during the transcription process was again picked up, the researcher went back to the recordings and checked the transcribed information. The researcher maintained the accuracy of the findings by reporting the responses verbatim and seeking the respondents' feedback when the need for clarity arose. The facts, perceptions and experiences of the participants are effectively integrated in the discussion of the data analysis and evaluation sections (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 6).

4.10.1 Dependability

Positivists employ techniques to show that if their work were repeated in the same context, using the same methods, and with the same participants, similar results will be obtained. The researcher thus ensured the dependability of the study by providing an audit trail to show how the data were gathered and and describe the methods that were used. An audit trail is a transparent description of research steps taken from the start to the developing and reporting of the findings. Another researcher should thus be able to use the data and to confirm that the

conclusions made by the principal researcher were correct. The two key data collection methods (in-depth interviews and focus group discussions) and the way they were conducted, and the data recorded thus ensure dependability. The researcher is confident that similar results will be obtained if the study is repeated using participants from the same or similar contexts.

4.10.2 Confirmability

Confirmability is "the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher… [It is also] other strategies used by qualitative researchers to enhance trustworthiness" (Mthiyane, 2013:126). The concept of confirmability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern for objectivity. Here steps must be taken to help ensure, as far as possible, that the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. The role of triangulation in promoting confirmability is emphasised, as this reduces the impact of investigator bias. The detailed explanations of how the data were collected and analysed thus contribute to the confirmability of the study as this information will enable future researchers to scrutinise the design and methodology that the researcher employed and to determine if the same data collection methods will arrive at similar conclusions.

Furthermore, the researcher adhered to the principles of confirmability as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) in the following manner:

a) The researcher acknowledged the beliefs underpinning decisions made and methods adopted.
b) The researcher explained the reasons for favouring one approach over the other and acknowledged the weaknesses in the techniques that were employed.
c) In terms of the results, preliminary theories that ultimately were not borne out by the data were discussed and discarded. Much of the content in relation to this was derived from an ongoing 'reflective commentary'.
d) A detailed methodological description was presented. This will enable the reader to determine if the data and constructs emerging from it may be accepted. Critical to this process is the 'audit trail' which allows any observer to trace the course of the research step-by-step by scrutinising the decisions made and procedures described. The researcher selected a data-oriented approach and showed how the data eventually led

to the formation of recommendations that were offered because of the processes followed during the study.

4.10.3 Credibility

According to Shenton (2004), in qualitative research credibility deals with the question, "How congruent are the findings with reality?" Lincoln and Guba (1995) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Credibility in naturalistic inquiry can be attained by the following: prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). For these reasons, the researcher interpreted the data in a theoretically sound manner. Three theories (as discussed in the previous chapter) that articulate the realities of school violence were employed and the study also used multiple data collection tools (i.e., focus group diccussions, individual interviews, and observation).

The following principles of credibility were adhered to, as suggested by Dlamini (2017:101):

a) The researcher adopted research methods that are endorsed by scholars and proponents of the qualitative research approach.

b) The researcher developed early familiarity with the culture of participating organisations before the first data collection activity occurred.

c) The researcher utilised purposive and simple random sampling methods in the selection of participants for this study. Although qualitative research generally involves the use of purposive sampling, a random approach negated charges of researcher bias in the selection of participants.

d) The researcher used triangulation using different methods, particularly FGDs, KIIs, and observation data collection methods. Whilst the focus groups and individual interviews may have suffered from some common methodological shortcomings as both are typical interviews, their distinct characteristics also resulted in individual strengths.

e) Tactics to help ensure honesty by the informants when contributing data were developed. Each person who was approached was given an opportunity to refuse to participate in the project to ensure that the data collection sessions involved only those who were genuinely willing to take part. They were prepared to offer data freely. The

participants were encouraged to be frank from the outset while the researcher established good rapport in the early stages of each session with the participants.

f) Frequent debriefing sessions involving the researcher and the study supervisor were held. Through our discussions, the researcher's vision widened as the supervisor brought to bear her experiences and perceptions. These collaborative sessions were also used to discuss alternative approaches and to draw attention to flaws in the study and to correct or circumnavigate them.

g) Scrutiny of the research project was encouraged as opportunities for scrutiny of the project by colleagues, peers, and academics were created. Feedback was offered to me at presentations (such as colloquiums, symposia, and conferences) over the duration of the study period. The different perspectives that these individuals brought often challenged the researcher's assumptions as her closeness to the project frequently inhibited my ability to view it with real detachment.

4.10.4 Transferability

Transferability is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to another similar institution or a wider population. Thus, transferability refers to "…the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents" (Babbie et al., 2004:277). Guba and Lincoln (2005) contend that, in qualitative research, transferability may be established by thick descriptions and purposive sampling. Qualitative projects are specific to environments and individuals; hence it is difficult to prove that findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations and populations. However, the findings of this study could be transferred to other areas/provinces experiencing high prevalence of school violence, and this may include schools in Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Limpopo, and other settings because violence remains a countrywide epidemic in South African schools. Transferability was addressed through a thick description of the data pertaining to each case to allow readers to make their own judgements about the transferability of the findings, as proposed by Gray (2004). As indicated earlier, purposive sampling was utilised in the selection of the cases for this study. If the findings are credible and transferable, they are also likely to be dependable and confirmable (Babbie et al., 2004).

4.11 Ethical considerations

In adherence to ethical requirements for studies of this nature, the researcher started by applying to the Department of Basic Education for permission to conduct interviews with teachers and learners in scholls in KZN. Gatekeeper permission was granted. The researcher also applied to the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee for ethical clearance to conduct the study, which was also granted.

When meeting with the participants for the first time, the researcher distributed informed consent forms to them so that they were able to read them and make sure that they were comfortable about participating in the study. Learners were given consent letters that their parents/guardians needed to sign before they could take part in the study. As a result, the process includes not only signing the consent form, but also describing the protocols and methods of participating in such study to the potential participants. The option must be truly free, with no negative consequences for refusing to participate in the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Best practice requires that potential participants must be informed about all the procedures of the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; Depoy & Gitlin, 2016). The researcher presented the research's goal, data collection methodology, and reporting processes. The researcher underlined that there were no risks associated with participating, and that if any did occur during the process, they were to be addressed. Their right to freely participate in the study and withdraw at any moment without repercussions, as well as how anonymity was ensured was explained to the participants (Cohen et al., 2018). The informed consent form includeed the project title, a brief statement of the study's aim and objectives, and affiliation of the research with qualifications and contact details. Along with the supervisor's details, a brief explanation of how the subjects were selected, a clear explanation of what the subjects would be require to do, permission to make audio-recordings, and the confidential nature of their participation were presented. It also included information about the time that would be required from the participants. The participants were also be given a chance to withdraw from the study at any given time.

The researcher applied and was granted permission to conduct the study. The researcher abided strictly by the Consolidated Department of Basic Education Research Protocols of August 2017, particularly in terms of the following requirements:

a) Researchers should abide by the relevant professional and ethical guidelines and codes of conduct for their respective sectors and professional bodies.

b) Research should be undertaken with integrity and honesty with respect to human rights and differences in culture, customs, religious beliefs, and the practices of all participants.

c) Researchers should be mindful of gender roles, ethnicity, ability, age, sexual orientation, language, and other differences when designing and carrying out their research.

d) Researchers should gain approval from an ethics committee where necessary, prior to commencing with any research.

e) Informed consent should be obtained from all DBE officials who have been identified as participants for the research.

f) The aim of the research as well as the anticipated outcomes should be conveyed to participating DBE officials in a clear and concise manner.

g) The research tools and techniques used should be transparent.

h) The researcher/s must honestly and accurately represent their affiliations, skills and experience to those involved in the study.

4.11.1 The University of KwaZulu-Natal Policy on Research Ethics

Ethical Clearance was granted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Annexure A). The researcher adhered to all the UKZN Policy on Research Ethics (2014:np) requirements. Research at UKZN is conducted and governed within the framework of policies and guidelines that promote impeccable ethical standards. All research protocols, irrespective of the level (undergraduate, postgraduate, post-doctoral, staff research) are reviewed, using a standard predetermined set of criteria. Studies are categorised as either: Green: No Risk (no human participant involvement); Orange: Minimal or Low Risk and Red: Increase over Minimal Risk or High Risk. Expedited reviews are conducted on protocols in the Green and Orange categories. Any research protocol classified as Red is subject to a full committee review. Studies classified as Red include the following but are not limited to: children (depending on the nature of the enquiry), teenagers (under 18 years of age), pregnant women, women living in unequal relationships, people living in poor socioeconomic conditions, people living with HIV, prisoners, and mentally compromised individuals.

In terms of this study, the Ethics Review (2014) process included the following:

4.11.2 Gatekeeper permission

 Gatekeeper permission refers to access into an institution/organisation. This access can either be physical or informational. All institutions/organisations have the right to be aware of and be given the right to grant or decline permission to a researcher to conduct research in their domains. Research being conducted in public settings do not usually need gatekeeper permissions, but one must be aware that some 'public' spaces, for example malls and theatres are private spaces where management's permission is required to conduct research.

Gatekeepers can only provide access permission and do not provide consent for the study. Consent is only obtained from the individual participants, caregivers, and guardians, among others. The gatekeeper permission letter must ideally be presented as an official document bearing either a school/company/clinic stamp or letterhead.

4.11.3 Consent

The consent process consisted of two documents, namely the information sheet and a declaration of consent. The information sheet that the researcher presented covered the aims of the study, data collection instruments, duration of data collection, risks/benefits of the study, HSSREC contact details, principal investigator (PI) or supervisor and student contact details. The sheet also included information on how confidentiality and privacy would be maintained, how the psychosocial needs of the participants would be addressed, confirmation that available referral patterns/mechanisms were in place, costs and benefits involved, and what would be done to actively minimise potential risks. Other considerations in the form included how the study findings would be appropriately disseminated among the research participants as well as the social value of the study.

The declaration of consent solicited participants' confirmation that they understood the research process and affirmed their rights (including the right to refuse participation and/or withdraw from the study without any negative consequences). It also included a request for permission to audio-record/video record an interview. The form bore the signatures of the participants and date. Parental consent had to be obtained for learners under 18 years. Consent

forms submitted to for ethics review were not signed as recruitment started after the study had been approved.

4.11.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

According to Hennick et al. (2011), confidentiality and anonymity are used interchangeably in research literature, but they are different phrases in research ethics. Confidentiality refers to not releasing to anybody the information acquired from participants that could lead to their identification or relationship to the reported information, and only members of the research team with specific permissions have access to the data (Cohen et al., 2018; Hennick et al., 2011; Depoy & Gitlin, 2016). Anonymity, on the other hand, means that participants can be identified from study data without knowing their actual identities; names are not revealed in the findings reporting (Hennick et al., 2011; Cohen et al., 2018). Therefore, the confidentiality of the participants was respected by the researcher. Failure to honour confidentiality leads to researchers having difficulties in acquiring data from the participants and gaining the cooperation of participants. Only the study team and those who are transcribing should have access to the recordings to ensure confidentiality. According to Hennink et al. (2012), interview tapes must be preserved in a secure location to which only authorised researchers have access.

Protection from harm

Participants involved in this study had the right to be protected from harm and discomfort (Botma, Greef, Malaudzi & Wright, 2010). The researcher assured that the participants would not suffer any harm because of their participation in the study, which was entirely voluntary. The researcher collected data in a way that did not endanger the participants' lives. Hence, the researcher ensured that there was no harm to the participants in the research and participation was voluntary. The researcher respected the dignity of participants.

4.11.8 Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) policy on research integrity

The Preamble of this policy suggests that the value and benefits of research are vitally dependent on the integrity of the research. While there can be and are national and disciplinary differences in the way research is organised and conducted, there are also principles and professional responsibilities that are fundamental to the integrity of research wherever it is undertaken. These principles are founded on the following:

a) Honesty in all aspects of research;

b) Accountability in the conduct of research;

c) Professional courtesy and fairness in working with others;

d) Good stewardship of research on behalf of others; and

e) Protection from harm.

Researchers should not expose research participants to unnecessary physical or psychological harm (Babbie & Mouton, 2011; Jonson & Christensen, 2008; Ormrod, 2010). The participants were not subjected to unusual stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem. They were informed that they would not be coerced to give information that wooould embarrass them or endanger their home life, friendships, jobs, and so forth.

The researcher was aware that psychological reactions might occur in some participants during the interviewing process because the study was sensitive in nature. A social worker was present for the duration of the interviews to deal with any emotional distress that might have arisen. The fundamental ethical rule for social research is that it must bring no harm to the participants (Babbie, 2007). Educators and learners were given contact details of the social worker to ensure that further assistance would be available if required after the interviews. This is one way to ensure that the research project did not cause any harm to the participants. The researcher attained the participants' protection against harm from this research by ensuring that:

- The rights and dignity of participants were respected.
- They were not be discriminated against in terms of race, gender, age, ethnicity, religious belief, language, social or economic standing.
- The information gathered would not cause embarrassment or endangerment to any participant or other person.

4.12 Conclusion

The methodology of the research was discussed in this chapter of the dissertation. The present chapter described the research design, epistemologies (epistemic positions), methodologies and procedures employed in selecting sample, data collection and analysis. The chapter was concluded with a reflection on how trustworthiness of the study and ethical consoderations were ensured. The next chapters present the finding.

CHAPTER FIVE
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND
INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"
-Nelson Mandela-

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the primary findings that emerged from data collected from teachers and learners from four selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Two qualitative modes of data collection, namely focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews with teachers and key informant participants were used to obtain the data. The study sought to investigate the causes of school violence by eliciting the authentic views of teacher and learner participants from four selected high schools in four educational districts, namely UGu, UMgungundlovu, Pinetown and Zululand.

Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006:82) posit that a theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set". While many of the themes overlap, the discussion is clustered in terms of the objectives and aims outlined in Chapter One. These are, with reference to school violence, as follows: to identify the nature, to assess various causes, to assess the responses, to establish the effects, and to examine the effectiveness of current measures to curb school-based violence in the selected high schools in KZN. According to Mouton (2001), data interpretation enables the researcher to address research questions in a comprehensive manner. The anonymity of the respondents was maintained in this reporting process.

In the presentation and analysis of the data, the researcher integrated corresponding and contradictory data as they emerged with other scientific research findings in the field. Backed by an extensive enquiry into the related literature, the following five imperative research questions were developed to guide this study:

- What types of school-based violence occur in the selected high schools in KwaZulu-Natal?

- What are the causes of school-based violence in the selected high schools in KwaZulu-Natal?

- What are challenges faced by the selected high schools in their response to school-based violence?

- How are learners and educators affected by school-based violence in the selected high schools in KwaZulu-Natal?

- What strategies are used to mitigate school-based violence in the selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal?

The data analysis yielded a total of five forms of violence prevalent in the selected schools; various causes of school-based violence, the challenges faced by these high schools in combating school-based violence, the effects of school-based violence on educators and learners, and the strategies used to mitigate school-based violence. This chapter presents three forms of violence under broad themes, together with various causes of school-based violence and the challenges faced by the selected high schools in combating the phenomenon. The responses of the participants are presented verbatim for the sake of authenticity and may contain inadvertent linguistic errors. The interviews and discussions were conducted in IsiZulu language, which the participants were conversant with. The transcriptions were then translated into English by a person who was proficient in both languages.

5.2 Participants' demographic information

Table 5.1 provides the respondents' profiles and briefly describes the sample of participant educators. The information includes the educators who were also key informants in the focus group discussions. All the educators taught in the selected schools in the four districts. Two of these participants were principals. Table 5.1 indicates adult participants who participated in the interviews as educators and key informants. The table shows the demographic information of the selected participants by presenting their pseudonyms, sex, years of service, and the district in which the participant worked. A total of 32 educators participated in the interviews as key informants. This number also included two principals from the selected schools. Also, 24 learners participated in four groups of six learners in the FGDs.

5.2.1 Educator participants

The following table provides the educator respondents' profiles. All the educators were employed by the DoBE and worked in the selected schools in the four districts. Table 5.1 below indicates the educators who participated in the focus group discussions. The table shows the demographic information of the selected educator participants in terms of their pseudonyms, their sex, and the number of years they have been teaching in the schools being studied. A total of 32 educators participated in the study.

Table 5.1: Demographic information of educators

S/N	Name (Pseudonym)	Sex	District	Years of service
1.	Mr Nzuza	Male	Pinetown	6 Years
2.	Mr Nsele	Male	Pinetown	4 Years
3.	Mr Khoza	Male	Pinetown	18 Years
4.	Mrs Ndaba	Female	Pinetown	3 Years
5.	Ms Nkabinde	Female	Pinetown	6 Years
6.	Mrs Zulu	Female	Pinetown	7 Years
7.	Ms Luthuli	Female	Pinetown	8 Years
8.	Mrs Shezi	Female	Pinetown	17 Years
9.	Ms Kunene	Female	UMgungundlovu	3 Years
10.	Ms Ndlovu	Female	UMgungundlovu	7 Years
11.	Mrs Nkabinde	Female	UMgungundlovu	24 Years
12.	Mr Zulu	Male	UMgungundlovu	6 Years
13.	Ms Khumalo	Female	UMgungundlovu	2 Years
14.	Mr Ngcobo	Male	UMgungundlovu	35 Years
15.	Ms Ntshingila	Female	UMgungundlovu	4 Years
16.	Ms Mbambo	Female	UMgungundlovu	15 Years
17.	Mr Mlambo	Male	UGu	26 Years
18.	Mr Mkhize	Male	UGu	20 Years
19.	Mr Nkosi	Male	UGu	01Years
20.	Miss Jele	Female	UGu	10 months
21.	Mr Bhengu	Male	UGu	15 Years
22.	Mr Mhlongo	Male	UGu	12 Years

23.	Mr Hlope	Male	UGu	23 Years
24.	Mr Mbhele	Male	UGu	6 months
25.	Mrs Gama	Female	Zululand	2 Years
26.	Ms Sibiya	Female	Zululand	15 Years
27.	Ms Buthelezi	Female	Zululand	16 Years
28.	Mrs Biyela	Female	Zululand	9 Years
29.	Mrs Mkhwanazi	Female	Zululand	13 Years
30.	Mr Ntuli	Male	Zululand	2 years
31.	Mr Khuzwayo	Male	Zululand	5 years
32.	Mr Mncube	Male	Zululand	6 years

Source: Researcher's illustration

5.2.2 Learners' demographic information

The following table provides the learner respondents' profiles. All the learners were enrolled in the selected schools in the four districts. Table 5.2 indicates the learners who took part in the focus group discussions. The table shows the demographic information of the selected learner participants in terms of their pseudonyms, sex, and level of education (grade). A total of 24 learners participated in the study.

Table 5.2: Demographic information of learners

S/N	Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	District	Grade
1.	Nonhle	Female	Pinetown	Grade 9
2.	Noxolo	Female	Pinetown	Grade 10
3.	Sifiso	Male	Pinetown	Grade 9
4.	Nelisiwe	Female	Pinetown	Grade 9
5.	Anelisa	Female	Pinetown	Grade 9
6.	Sanele	Male	Pinetown	Grade 10
7.	Zano	Female	UMgungundlovu	Grade 10
8.	Anele	Female	UMgungundlovu	Grade 10
9.	Mphendulo	Male	UMgungundlovu	Grade 11
10.	Vuyo	Male	UMgungundlovu	Grade 11

11.	Zama	Male	UMgungundlovu	Grade 10
12.	Nana	Female	UMgungundlovu	Grade 10
13.	Akhona	Male	UGu	Grade 10
14.	Sihle	Male	UGu	Grade
15.	Nozipho	Male	UGu	Grade 11
16.	Ntokozo	Male	UGu	Grade 11
17.	Sabelo	Female	UGu	Grade 11
18.	Melokuhle	Female	UGu	Grade 11
19.	Samke	Female	Zululand	Grade 12
20.	Londiwe	Female	Zululand	Grade 12
21.	Ayanda	Female	Zululand	Grade 12
22.	Njabulo	Male	Zululand	Grade 10
23.	Minenhle	Male	Zululand	Grade 11
24.	Muzi	Male	Zululand	Grade 12

Source: Researcher's illustration

5.3 The nature of violence in schools

Many schools in South Africa have been transformed into spaces riddled with violence. The literature has revealed that most schools in South Africa experience violent acts such as bullying, vandalism, gangsterism, sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, fighting, and drug abuse (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010; Mncube & Herber, 2011; Miller & Kraus, 2008; Taole, 2016). Studies have revealed that the most common types of violence are learner-on-learner violence, learner-on-teacher violence, non-school related personal violence among learners, and teacher-on-learner violence. Shabalala (2016) observes that both boys and girls are victims of physical violence involving acts such as hitting, slapping, and pushing. The current study corroborates these findings as it found that a common way of resolving conflict among the learners was to use interpersonal violence, which included kicking, pushing, slapping, biting, and pulling. However, the use of weapons to inflict pain and cause bodily harm and injury was also prevalent. Two of the schools had earlier on been closed due to rampant violence. A school in King Cetshwayo District was closed twice within a period of six months. Another school in Pinetown was also closed a couple of days after the researcher had completed the data collection process there. Participants had experienced either direct violence aimed at them or

indirect violence aimed at the school premises. The findings revealed that the rate of school-based violence had increased due to various factors that will be unpacked in the following sections. The violent acts that occurred in these schools threatened the lives of learners, educators, and the ancillary staff. The categories of violent acts that were highlighted by the participants are discussed below.

5.3.1 Overview of the types of school-based violence that were highlighted by the participants

The findings revealed that violence in the schools under study mainly occurred at an interpersonal level. In the words of Espelage et al. (2013:21), "interpersonal violence refers to direct violence from one person to another in an identifiable situation and is often physical in nature". Physical violence at these schools occurred in the form of hitting, kicking, stabbing, slapping, and other acts that caused physical pain or injury. Verbal violence occurred in the form of verbal threats and abusive and hurtful remarks. Violence in this study is therefore understood to be both physical and verbal in nature − that is, the infliction of bodily and emotional harm on another person.

Figure 5.1: The nature of violence in the schools under study

Source: Researcher's illustration

5.3.1.1 Carrying weapons to school and fighting

The educators claimed that they were bullied by learners; the learners, on the other hand, indicated that they were bullied by other learners and educators. The reality is that learners carried weapons such as knives and guns to school to intimidate other learners and educators. A number of learners took weapons like guns to school with the aim of causing harm to their peers and school personnel. Some people had been injured and even killed due to shootings occurring in the schools. According to Braun (2007:13), "learners [use] serious weapons such as guns to vandalise school property, which is an issue of great concern". The author states that learners also use scissors to stab one another. This practice was threatening to such an extent that at one time some schools completely banned learners from bringing scissors to school. Dangerous weapons are not limited to traditional items such as guns or knives, but learners in South Africa reportedly use benign objects, such as bottles and pencils, as weapons to resolve conflicts within the school premises (Khosa, 2006). This was also the case in the schools under study, as is illustrated by the following interview excerpts:

"The fights happened throughout the year. They started with a fight between two boys and one was beaten up. The one who was beaten up notified his brother, who came to school and beat the boy in revenge for his brother's defeat. Now, it was a repetition which sucked in outsiders and the school was divided into two rival groups. The fight was basically over a lollipop. Two Grade 8 learners were fighting over a lollipop and one went to tell his brother who was in matric about it. His brother confronted the other Grade 8 learner and asked him to pay for his brother's lollipop, but when the learner refused, the older brother slapped him. Now the slapped learner called his outsider relatives, who attacked the other side and it went on like that till the school was divided into two rival groups. They started bringing weapons such as guns, knives, and machetes to the school. One kid even lost a finger during the fight and our school was nearly closed down" (Zama: Learner).

"Outside the school fence by the gate, there is always commotion after school. At one time there was a Coloured student who fought someone outside the school fence, who went on to fetch a weapon and injured the other student. I am not so clear with the details of the story. Even in November last year, I heard of an incident when students killed each other" (Mr Mbhele: Educator).

"There was a case of a faction fight last year. It only started with two people but it escalated so quickly that the school was divided into two rival groups. They started bringing weapons to school and outsiders started roaming outside the school gates with golf clubs and suchlike weapons. As a result, we had to involve other stakeholders such as the traditional leadership and the School Governing Body because those two play an important role in the community and school. We had to find and investigate those who initiated the fights and when we found them, it was bitter because we had to expel them" (Mr Mlambo: Educator).

Anele, a Grade 10 female learner at a school in King Cetshweyo District, mentioned that she had witnessed violence in her school. The participant explained that the fightinghad become so tense that it dragged on for a couple of hours. She also mentioned that girls were also involved in the violence occurring at school. The following discussion excerpt illustrates this point:

Researcher: *"Do girls also participate in the fights that occur in the school?"*

Anele*: "Yes, they do, but it never blows out of proportion like boys' fights".*

Researcher*: "What do they mostly fight about?"*

Anele*: "Our fights are mostly about food, or boys, and sometimes when one gossips about someone. Those are the key reasons for girls' fights, but it never blows out of proportion like boys' fights."*

Peer pressure largely contributed to the school-based violence amongst learners. Some learners mentioned that peer pressure resulted in them being perpetrators of violence both on and outside the school premises. Learners tended to seek autonomy and recognition from friends, which resulted in acts of violence. As Espelage (2002) observes, peer acceptance, popularity, and friendships are crucial for many adolescents. Peer acceptance is recognised as a protective factor against peer victimisation. Incidences of violence, such as bullying, increase when endorsed by a peer group and are regarded as a group norm (Duffy & Nesdale, 2008). This notion was also supported by this study. The following interview excerpt with a learner called Zama illustrates this point:

Zama: "*It's the spectators that cause it to be like this. Instead of breaking the fight, they actually encourage them to fight and they laugh at the loser; so no one wants to be laughed at, and that way, they encourage them to try and take revenge. They beat each other up so seriously to make sure that they leave a mark for others to see.*"

Researcher*: "And is that the end of it?"*

Zama: *"No. They go and call their squad for assistance and that's how gangs start. The only people who can break up these groups are the police. I was also involved in a fight due to peer pressure and I regret it even now. I was thoroughly beaten".*

Researcher: *"What happened?"*

Zama: *"I had an altercation with a learner from our neighbouring school and I knew he would beat me up, so I yielded; but my friends convinced me to do otherwise and I listened to them for acceptance, only to be thoroughly beaten like never before. The worst part of it is that they didn't assist me when I was injured. I was alone in the hospital because my eye was badly injured and I vowed never to fight again."*

Romantic relationships among learners were also identified as one of the main causes of fights in these high schools. This is illustrated by the following responses from high school learners:

"Sometimes they fight over girls and even girls fight over boys" (Akhona: Learner).

"*We once fought over a girl in class. The girl was new in our school and she was with two boys already. The other guy she was in love with came in and tried to stab me with a knife and scissors, but we stopped him*" (Sifiso: Learner).

"*Yes. It happens that the Grade 11 learners at the school fight and they end up carrying weapons and usually these fights happen outside the gate, and that is where the fights are really intense. They may start on the school premises and usually it is boys who fight over a girl or vice versa*" (Zama: Learner).

In the foregoing discussion, the interviewed teachers indicated that they had witnessed learner-on-learner violence in their teaching experience. The educators claimed that they had witnessed gruesome scenes of learners stabbing, fighting, and bullying one another. The study also revealed that the teachers had been victims of violence either in the form of physical or verbal abuse. Learner-on-learner violence was the most prevalent in the schools, and this had a negative effect on teaching and learning. Some educators mentioned that the fights that occurred among learners could happen for petty reasons that could easily be resolved in another manner. Most of the incidents of violence that occurred among learners involved boys, but both the key informants and participants in the FGD mentioned that girls also took part in physical altercations. These fights threatened to be fatal, as learners at times used objects such as pencils, scissors, and sticks in these altercations. Since violence was the only culture learners knew, they would resort to fights to 'resolve' differences and conflict. The study also revealed that violence had become a 'norm' amongst the learners.

"*These children carry weapons and sometimes they come and fight over community issues in the school; they hurt one another extremely and it is quite traumatising. I remember one time a student even got shot in the foot*" (Ms Ndlovu: Educator).

"*One of the learners hit a student with a plank and a nail went through the skull. We rushed the child to the hospital and updated the parent, but the aggressive learners who had attacked the student turned up. We only handled it as an internal issue*" (Ms Buthelezi: Educator).

"I've witnessed both learner-on-learner violence and learner-on–teacher violence, including the case of a teacher who was stabbed. Even though some cases are verbal, there are so many physical cases where students are constantly fighting, and it is quite frightening" (Ms Kunene: Educator).

In South Africa, crime rate is high and it is no surprise that schools are experiencing high levels of violence. Crime statistics (Crime Statistics South Africa [Crim Stats], n.d:1) indicate that about 5 900 crimes are reported to the SAPS every day. Crime Stats SA also reveals that over 43 people are murdered on average every day in South Africa. Nearly 16 000 people were murdered in the twelve months between 2011/2012 and KZN Province had the highest number of murder cases in South Africa (SAPS 2018/19 Crime Statistics). The violence that occurs in schools is a true reflection of accepted 'social norms'. Duma (2013) also argues that if schools function within societies where male dominance rules supreme, it should not be surprising to find that the perpetrators of violence in these schools are males. Boys have been found to be more aggressive than their female counterparts, and are more likely to be involved in fist fighting than females.School violence has been reported to be more common among boys as perpetrators, a culmination of their socialised violent behaviour from the community (Silva, Pereira, Mendonça, Nunes & De Oliveira, 2014). Rahim and Liston (2011) further reported that male students learn about violence outside of school through their families, communities, and the media. This author argues that many South African learners display aggressive behaviour because of their exposure to extreme levels of violence and crime not only in their homes but in the country in general. This is supported by Nhambura's (2019) study on school violence in North West secondary schools, which found that schools were unsafe places infested with gangsterism and gun violence.

5.3.1.2 Physical and verbal abuse by learners

Carroll-Lind et al. (2011) define physical violence as being punched, kicked and beaten, or hit, or getting into a physical fight such as a punch-up. According to Shield et al. (2014), educators in Cape Town schools are exposed to high levels of learner aggression and violence, especially verbal abuse and physical violence directed towards them. Learner-on-learner violence is also rife. Research has revealed that most educators in South African schools live in fear as they face many threats on a daily basis because of the perception that learners' indiscipline might

degenerate into a crisis (Sibisi, 2016; Ngidi, 2018). Educators have to treat each learner with caution to avoid annoying any learner as they are not aware of who belongs to a gang and who does not. This also makes it difficult for teachers to instil discipline among learners. The following responses from the interview sessions illustrate this point:

> "*It happens that learners fight and hurt each other. I witnessed an incident where a learner entered my classroom and thoroughly beat another learner who had to be rushed to the clinic for medical help. I've also witnessed learner-on-teacher violence. We sometimes think the learners are motivated by drugs, because teachers and learners often get involved in altercations; learners end up physically attacking a teacher*" (Mr Ngobese: Educator).

> "*Where I taught before, learners used to dodge or just bunk lessons but when the year came to an end, they would come back to beat up the teachers. They sometimes fought on their own and we had to separate them*" (Mrs Biyela: Educator).

> "*First of all, when learners fight one another, we end up getting involved because they sometimes seek refuge in the staffroom and it is usually very scary. Also, the students are very rude and they answer back. I remember in 2014 when I had an argument with one student who had not done his homework. He even hit me with his book. The learners have no regard for their elders whatsoever. They humiliate us in front of other learners*" (Ms Ndlovu: Educator).

The responses above highlight the physical violence used by learners on other learners and teachers. Physical violence in the form of fights seems to be common in schools and whenever there is a fight, learners get excited and run out of their classrooms, which means that valuable teaching and learning time is lost. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) note that the effects of school violence negatively impact learning as learners become uncontrollable and difficult to manage. Such an environment is not favourable to teaching and learning. According to Maphumelo (2018:67), "teaching and learning opportunities that are available are unproductive due to disturbances, non-attendance, and learners' unruly behaviour, and these in turn aggravate poor school attendance and ultimately lead to a high failure rate". These responses demonstrate the fatal dangers that cooperative teachers and learners are exposed to at school. Incidences of

physical assault perpetrated by learners on teachers humiliated teachers and negatively affected their self-esteem. There were clear indications that learners had lost respect for their teachers:

"*Maybe my encounters haven't been that bad, besides verbal arguments and as an elder, I end up ignoring them because I can't use any other disciplinary action, because of the rules the Department of Education has set out. I've had a case where a learner swore at me but there was nothing I could do, except to inform his class teacher who would refer the matter to the deputy heads*" (Ms Nxele:Educator).

"*I was invigilating in a Grade 12 class and a learner arrived late for an end-of-year paper in September. When he entered the exam room, he started moving the furniture around and when I tried to reprimand him, he went outside, came back with a glass of water and poured it on the classroom floor. He did that three times and the fourth time I left the class and went to report him to the office. Eventually the principal invigilated the paper*" (Ms Luthuli: Educator).

"*I think the standard abuse is verbal. These learners make remarks that provoke you, just to get your attention. We end up ignoring them although it does affect us personally. Physically, there has not been that much. I haven't seen much physical violence*" (Mr Ntuli: Educator).

"*These learners are just rude, though not all of them. However, we do have some good ones. They think they are at the same level as teachers, and they quickly lose respect for the teacher. They do not consider our feelings as teachers*" (Ms Khumalo: Educator).

The teachers narrated high levels of verbal violence in their schools as a result of learners' disrespectful attitude towards them. It is an accepted fact that teachers spend most of their time at school and that, whatever transpires in their working milieu, influences their lives. The participants agreed that the physical and verbal abuse that teachers endured at the hands of learners resulted in teachers condemning the behaviour of learners, ruling out any hope that they may be of respectful citizens.

5.3.1.3 Gender-based violence

According to Russo and Pirlott (2006), gender-based violence is a form of violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender, including acts that cause physical, mental, or sexual harm; it includes threats that lead to deprivation of freedom on the basis of gender. Hegemonic masculinities play a key role in encouraging and legitimising violent practices perpetrated by men towards women and children (Clowes, Lazarus & Ratele, 2010). The authors further argue that the construction of masculinity attributes cultural power to men over women. In the current study, educators had differing views about the suggestion that the violence directed at them was gender-based. The male educators believed that it was partly gender-based because learners would normally verbally abuse female educators by saying things to them that they would not say to male educators. The male teachers were deemed the enforcers of discipline in the schools and thus learners tended to be more respectful towards them than their female counterparts. Some educators believed that any teacher was vulnerable to school-based violence, irrespective of their gender, while others believed that female teachers were more often victims of school-based violence than their male counterparts. The following responses from the interview sessions illustrate this point:

> "*There is an old case that we heard about something that happened behind the toilets. Students used to sleep with each other in and behind the toilets when they were new. The reason they did this was that most of the times the girls lived far and could not come and sleep over at their boyfriends' houses. Sometimes the boys did not want to pay for the girls they did not love. Those students were expelled from school. I was almost expelled because I was wrongfully accused*" (Sanele: Learner).

> "*I have been a victim of insults. I remember last year when we were doing class allocations and one of the students the stubborn and disrespectful learners refused to take orders from a woman. We even called in the parent and even in the presence of the parent, he still showed absolute disrespect, but the parent still defended the child, which means that we don't get enough parental support as teachers. There are very few cases where parents discipline children in front of the teachers. Sometimes, these children get engaged in street fights, fighting over turf*" (Ms Buthelezi: Educator).

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"A student recently hit a female teacher who fell onto the floor and even kicked her while she was down. After that incident, the school was shut down as we were demanding the Department of Education to do something about the matter. An official was sent through and instructed us to go back to work. On seeing that her case was not being resolved, the teacher left the school. We had to keep the student whom we see running up and down in the school every day. Eventually, they transferred the student to another school, but he keeps coming in, walking into whatever class he wants. We were informed that he was supposed to come with a letter of acceptance, but because he knows that we can't do anything about it he comes whenever he wants without even greeting us. So, that being the case, I don't think the Department of Education is doing enough to end school-based violence; they are only looking out for our mistakes. Since the student is in metric, he is only allowed to come in for assessments. We don't feel safe with him on the school premises" (Mrs Ndaba: Educator).

Schools turn a deaf ear to female learners' complaints and many girls do not even complain because they fear reprisals, especially from teachers, and also because they believe that nothing will be done (Wilson, 2006). Some schools choose to ignore violence perpetrated against girls, but making schools safe and equitable for all learners must be the goal; thus, this improves education for the girl-child and the working environment for female teachers as well. In a country riddled with gender-based violence, the school should be stricter about this issue, so that children are aware that gender-based violence is unacceptable. Leach and Scott (2003) stated that apart from imparting academic knowledge and how to gain employment, the school is responsible for teaching learners to be socially responsible and, most of all, to be respectful to one another.

The research findings revealed that learner-on-learner gender-based violence was often fuelled by love affairs in the school. The following responses illustrate this point:

"There was one case involving both genders. The girl was abused physically by the boy. She was slapped countless times. The matter was investigated and it was found that the boy had been angered by the girl who had been cheating on him" (Mr Ngcobo: Educator).

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"*Sometimes girls gossip about us. When you confront them they become defensive. Some of the girls even hit us or call us out to a fight. Sometimes a slap does the job. The boys can be very disrespectful especially because they know that we can't do anything to them*" (Zama: Learner).

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) and (LEADSA) (2013) adopted regulations aimed at maintaining violent-free school spaces. These include sub-sections on gender, the training of teachers on the necessary measures to prevent sexual violence and harassment in schools, and holding youth discussions on gender-based violence across the country's provinces (Department of Basic Education and LEADSA, 2013). However, this was not effective as females in some schools were still being harassed by both teachers and male learners based on their sexuality. This is supported by the following responses from the interviews:

"*They ill-treat us whenever they want and they even insult us, calling female students 'bitches' and whatever they please. Mr Zondi is even worse. His heart is so cold and every student fears him. No student should live in fear of their teacher. We have rights, you know*" (Noxolo: Learner).

"*The boys always talk about our bodies and touch us in awkward ways, and they pick a fight when we tell them to stop touching us. Some think we are just playing hard to get. Some become physically abusive when we report them*" (Londiwe: Learner).

Children have been exposed to so much violent behaviours at home and in society that they have normalised violent behaviour towards the opposite gender. According to UNESCO (2007), the violence taking place outside the school environment, for example, gang violence, political conflicts, police brutality, and domestic violence is replicated in the school environment. In essence, the Culture of Violence Theory argues that children growing up in poor communities witness frequent acts of violence and are victims of violence (Jenson & Fraser, 2011). Therefore, the exposure to violence reinforces the message of violence amongst the children.

The study was conducted in high schools where the majority of the learners were Black Africans. A large number of them had been exposed to environments where it was 'the norm' to call women names, make sexual gestures, or to physically harm them. Dekeserday, Perry,

Barbara and Walter (2006) state that the Culture of Violence Theory suggests that the prevalence of deviant behaviour is a reflection of normative support for deviant values by a sub-group, and even of encouragement by certain groups in a social structure.

5.3.1.4 Bullying

Bullying has been identified as the most common form of school-based violence among learners and educators in South Africa (Prinsloo, 2005, 2006; Greeff & Grobler, 2008). According to the 2015 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Report (Reddy et al., 2016:13), "close to one in five learners (17%) experienced bullying on a weekly basis" in South Africa. Findings from the current study revealed that the manner in which learners treated educators differed. Educators who were regarded as 'soft' and not strict were more likely to be the victims of bullying. One of the participants supported this observation by mentioning that young educators were more likely to be victims of bullying by learners than mature educators. Younger learners in Grade 8 and 9 were also deemed more likely to be victims of bullying by older learners, while some learners mentioned that they had been verbally and physically bullied by their educators. These views were expressed in the interview and discussion sessions:

> "*We have a lot of learners who bully teachers here at school. And it gets to a point where, when we try to reprimand them, they do not want to co-operate. They end up threatening teachers. Sometimes they insult teachers, although they would not say it to their face*" (Mrs Kubheka: Educator).

> "*The older learners tend to bully the younger ones and take advantage of them because they know that they are new; and that makes the new learners develop a low self-esteem and end up not wanting to come to school*" (Zipho: Learner).

> "*It does happen that the younger learners are intimidated by the older ones and it happens that we Grade 11 kids bully the younger ones though it's not intentional, sometimes. For instance, older kids usually joke and say that the Grades 8 and 9 learners are just kids who don't know much, and that might affect the younger learners in a negative way even when you were joking*" (Zipho: Learner).

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The above comments concur with Ncontsa and Shumba's (2013) observation that young learners, especially those in Grades 8 and 9, are vulnerable to school-based violence. Indeed, having learners who are much older than other children in the school poses a problem for both teachers and younger learners. The power imbalance emanates from differences in physical strength, socio-economic status, age, popularity, and body size (Banks, 2014). According to Singh and Steyn (2014), learners with poor academic skills become frustrated and less academically motivated and, as a result, they eventually resort to violent behaviour. This makes school life difficult for those who perform well but are victimised because of it. Indeed, the difficulties of not coping well in school can also cause behavioural challenges for learners who might feel alienated and unwelcome in the school. This suggests that, because not all children are academically gifted, they may therefore require a different educational system that will be suitable for their needs, such as vocational training centres. These sentiments were also raised by participants in the interview sessions, as illustrated by the following response:

> "*They need to evaluate the age admission requirements because we have 23-year-olds who no longer see themselves as students and influence the younger ones negatively. They are very influential since they have been in school for a very long time, and they get bored easily. There is a 23-year-old student who is in a lower grade too*" (Mr Mhlongo: Educator).

Apart from the distress and unhappiness caused bullying, this could also result in absenteeism and some victims moving away to other schools to escape the problem (Bloom, 2009; Duncan, 2006). Burton and Leoschut (2013:70) assert that there are high chances of the victims experiencing long-term mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, self-injuries, and suicidal idealisations. Burton and Leoschut (2013) further stress that victims are likely to behave differently from their normal conduct, some can become passive and may isolate themselves from their peers. When an individual is isolated from peers, it makes them vulnerable and as a result, one might commit suicide.

5.3.1.5 Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying has emerged as a new form of bullying that poses a public health risk (Chang, Chiu, Miao, Chen, Lee, Huang & Pan, 2014). The increased use of the Internet and mobile phones has undoubtedly exacerbated cases of cyber-bullying in schools. According to De Wet

(2016:31), "cyber-bullying includes unwelcome texting, cyber stalking, posting embarrassing content about someone, stealing personal information, unreasonable intimidation during gaming, creating fake profiles on social network sites, and sending threatening, mean or defaming text messages or images". Participants in the focus groups highlighted the fact that both learners and teachers are victims of this particular type of bullying. The following responses illustrate this point:

"They create a fake account and then start making fun of us learners. They would do it for both genders both male and female learners, and even teachers and the security guards. If the person sees you right now, they might even leave a remark about you on the page" (Zano: Learner).

"We do tell each other but we sometimes keep quiet and the sad thing is that it is for the world to see. We just wish that we know the person who is behind it. They might even be here as part of the group. We can't even respond because we don't know them. There are three of them because there are three accounts and we suspect they know each other because they comment on each other's posts on Facebook" (Mpendulo: Learner).

"Last year some learners caught one of them and they beat him up. When we caught him, the whole school was in uproar as we were chasing him. The police took him and he never came back. If we find this one, we will do the same thing because it's not like he/she makes light jokes, but they are very disrespectful and that plunges some of us into depression thus lowering our self-esteem" (Nana: Learner).

The participants mentioned that learners posted anonymous messages on social media, usually on Facebook, mocking other learners, teachers, and school personnel. According to Burton (2008), perpetrators make malicious, anonymous comments or threats and they tease and engage in gossip through online chat rooms such as Facebook and Twitter, or they use e-mail or WhatsApp to intimidate others. On the first day that I visited one of the schools, there was a fight between two boys over what one had been writing about the other on social media. The boy who had been cyber-bullied decided to approach the suspect in class and they had a fight. One of the key informant participants mentioned that they were frequently dealing with cases of cyber-bullying in the school.

It emerged that the key informant participants were not bothered so much about what was written about them on social media, but they found that physical bullying affected them more, whereas the focus group participants (the learners) mentioned that it directly affected them. One of the reasons might be that learners who are more active on social media than their teachers do not want to be embarrassed in front of their peers. On the other hand, most teachers are not as active on social media as their learners and those who own Facebook accounts do not have their learners as friends. Therefore, they are not aware of what often happens on such networks.

5.3.1.6 Verbal abuse by teachers

Verbal abuse perpetrated by teachers appears to be a common form of violence in schools. Educators call learners undesirable names, use vulgar words or swear, make inappropriate comments about learners' parents, and are rude to learners (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2015). Teachers should always set a good example to their learners on how one is supposed to behave and handle oneself. The environment is influential in shaping the behaviour of learners (Nabavi, 2012). Hence, learners observe the violent behaviour depicted in society through various figures who are their models. After observing these violent behaviours, children imitate and act them out at school. This resonates with the Social Learning Theory. For the most part, learners need to look up to their teachers as good role models. Learners spend most of their time at school and noticing how teachers behave and this has an immense impact on how they also behave later in life. Therefore, educators must act as role models for learners. Role models might be figures that children observe every day or certain symbolic figures they might be reading about or watching on television or film (Nhambura, 2019). These figures are portrayed by society as role models, and they are held in high esteem by the society. Most children, especially those who come from disadvantaged communities, do not have good role models and therefore teachers fill this gap. Kapueja (2017:74) argues:

> *"The collapse of moral values in society has a great impact on learner discipline in schools. The absence of consideration for one another in the society, the high crime rate, and the incidents of violence, all prove that there is lack of values which are conducive to a healthy society and a well-disciplined school community."*

However, this was not the case for some learners in the schools under study. The following responses reveal that learners had negative experiences of teachers who verbally abused them:

> "*There is particularly one teacher who makes sure that they leave a remark that will sting. Sometimes you can't even raise your hand to participate in class because he/she might pick on you if your answer is incorrect. They tell us that we stink and that we are ugly. I had a case this morning when a teacher told me that I resembled the way mucus sounds when one coughs or has influenza and that didn't go down well with me*" (Zama: Learner).

> "*Sometimes, during the lesson, the only thing he talks about is that he comes from a well-off family and that he would never marry a girl from a poor family who hasn't experienced any love and affection from her parents. He brags about how he interacts with celebrities and how most of us wish to have that life. He makes fun of the other kids without parents, and he tells us that we seem to lack some love and affection and that we didn't get it from our parents. So, imagine, as a child without parents, how does that make you feel in class? He is inconsiderate towards our feelings. The pain resurfaces and some of us think about how the situation would be different if our parents were still alive. This is very provocative*" (Sifiso: Learner).

Such behaviour by educators does not demonstrate mutual respect; it contradicts the professional code of conduct for educators. It is a form of unprofessionalism that contributes to an atmosphere where violence is acceptable. The theory avers that biological factors are influential in instigating violence. The assumption is that children are not born violent, but they learn it through direct experience and interaction with others or by observation (Nhambura, 2019). When teachers are harsher towards their learners than they should be; they should expect the very same behaviour from their learners. Hence, children exposed to violent influential figures like community leaders, celebrities, teachers, and other role models are more likely to acquire the violent behaviour through observing their aggressive behaviour (Nhambura, 2019). Some learners are already experiencing all kinds of abuse at home and they do not need to be abused at school. If anything, a school should be a place where learners feel comfortable to share their troubles. But it is difficult if their teachers are harsh and unkind to them. Learners with inadequate academic skills feel discouraged by the verbal abuse perpetrated by teachers, which galvanises them into resorting to anti-social and violent behaviour (Bester & Du Plessis, 2009). When learners are humiliated in front of their peers, they stop enjoying coming to

school. When teachers use discouraging and demotivating words when they address learners, it affects them emotionally and that can result in failing a grade or dropping out of school (Teeka-Bhattarai, 2006). This view is supported by the following responses from the interview sessions:

> *"I think that would be one of the main reasons. Some teachers don't see us as kids, or rather as their kids. They don't treat us the way they are supposed to at our age, and the things they say or do not show that they are speaking to their peers. When a teacher is in disagreement with a learner in class and they speak in a bad manner or use a tone they are not supposed to be using, learners usually stand by the person who is of our age group. For instance, I had an altercation with my IsiZulu teacher over a file. She was checking everyone's work in class and I had my work done. When she came to my desk, she asked for her homework and I showed her the homework. She then looked at my file and asked me where the new file she had asked for was. I told her that this was the only file I could get and afford at the time and I indicated that once my mom could buy a new one for me, I would be able to get a new one. She then wanted to hit me because of that. She told me that that was not her problem and she only wanted what she had asked for. She then told me to leave her classroom because I did not allow her to hit me. Since that day, she always chases me out of his classroom"* (Sabelo: Learner).

One may argue that teaching is a calling; nonetheless, not every teacher has a calling for the teaching profession. Some teachers choose the profession as a second option and they never really wanted to become teachers, but due to limited employment opportunities, they took teaching as a last resort. This is evident in the way they behave and treat their learners as they do not have the patience and empathy the profession requires. This point is illustrated by the key informant participants' responses that highlight various reasons why some teachers acted as they did towards their learners and how that could potentially harm them, academically:

> "*Some learners who have potential end up failing. Even our teachers sometimes fail us, especially the new graduate teachers. They don't have patience and they don't want to admit it when they were wrong. They tend to think they are more powerful than us and they misuse their power at times. They sometimes provoke learners because there is no need to shout at a learner who has not understood the lesson. Teachers are supposed to work with them and assist them. Another thing is that some teachers provoke these*

kids, knowing that they are of a high social standing. I don't see a reason to argue with learners; rather, the teacher should go outside and take a breath to show that they are mature. Sometimes they even call them names and that usually angers learners, which leads to some learners becoming violent. We deal with kids and I think the minute that the teachers understand that, there will be peace" (Mr Hlophe: Educator).

"No. We do not drink with him; the majority of us don't drink. He drinks with his friends. Sometimes during the lesson, the only thing he talks about is that he comes from a well-off family and that he would never marry a girl from a poor family who hasn't experienced any love and affection from her parents. He brags about how he interacts with celebrities and how most of us wish to have that life. He makes fun of the other kids without parents and he tells us that we seem to lack some love and affection and that we didn't get it from our parents. So, imagine, as a child without parents, how that would make you feel in class. He is inconsiderate towards our feelings. The pain resurfaces and some of us think about how the situation would be different if our parents were still alive. This is very provocative" (Mpendulo: Learner),

"He speaks in a general form but sometimes he is specific because he does his research and he knows who has what problems at home and he uses that to demotivate and insult us. For instance, when I came to register, he didn't even know me but he asked the other teachers who were present at the office: "How am I going to teach with this pupil present in my class?" Since then, I have told myself not to pay attention to him, but when he makes references to it, I feel hurt. We sometime feel like we even have to use 'muthi' [charms or holy water] to cleanse ourselves so that he will leave us alone" (Vuyo: Learner).

One may argue that teachers differ in terms of their personality and professionalism; therefore, they do not act in the same way all the time. A fact, that may contribute to teachers' negative behaviour towards learners (such as exuding violence and disrespect), as if they experienced it in their own early lives. Teachers also require professional support to deal with the bad experiences they may face at school to ensure that the learning environment becomes conducive. Discipline also involves self-discipline as it applies to both teachers and learners. Teachers cannot expect to be successful in creating a rewarding learning environment if they are constantly engaged in power struggles and adversarial relationships with learners (Savage

& Savage, 2010). Successful classes are those where the teacher and the learner are working together rather than working against each other. Teacher-learner relationships should be characterised by mutual understanding, caring, and a positive classroom environment. Schools should create platforms where learners are encouraged to express their views and explain what they are unhappy about. In this way, teachers become aware of the impact of their actions and how they contribute to misbehaviour among learners.

The interviews showed that teachers were struggling to find ways of successfully dealing with misbehaving learners. They appeared to be highly stressed and frustrated in their attempts to bring order to their classrooms which tended to instigate aggressive reactions in their efforts to maintain order and discipline in their classrooms. Du Plessis and Loock (2007) observe that zero tolerance on the part of educators does not increase school safety; neither does it improve learner discipline. Instead, it leads to an increase in school violence. Teachers are under compulsion to maintain discipline in the class and to create a safe environment for every learner in class and this is achieved by developing a respectful and collaborative relationship with learners (Nhambura, 2019). They do not need schools where teachers do not turn up or are regularly late, ignore their needs, or treat them in a violent and disrespectful manner (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2015). Learners also do not need schools where teachers beat them up, abuse them verbally, and humiliate them. Evidently, educators need to adopt a classroom management style that is different from the aggressive one they often seemed to employ. The use of punishment, anger, and intimidation is not effective. If anything, this approach serves to exacerbate the problem of learner-discipline and increases learners' aggression. According to Campbell (2012:1), "discipline without anger is what educators need to successfully manage their classes". This means that teachers do not necessarily need to become bullies in order to keep order.

5.4 Various causes of school-based violence

5.4.1 Overview of the causes of school-based violence

In accordance with the ecosystem model, the figure below illustrates the interrelatedness of the causes of school-based violence across the four (4) levels of the Ecological Systems Theory. The illustration reflects the researcher's interpretation of the data collected via in-depth interviews and focus group discussions held with learners.

Figure within diagram contains the following text:

Poverty
Social Media
Socio-economic issues
Cultural beliefs &
practice
Poor support services

SOCIETY

Peer pressure
Gang?sterism
...d of the child

COMMUNITY

RELATIONSHIPS

High...
Unemploy...
Drug dealing
Community violence

...ing
Alcohol
Smoking
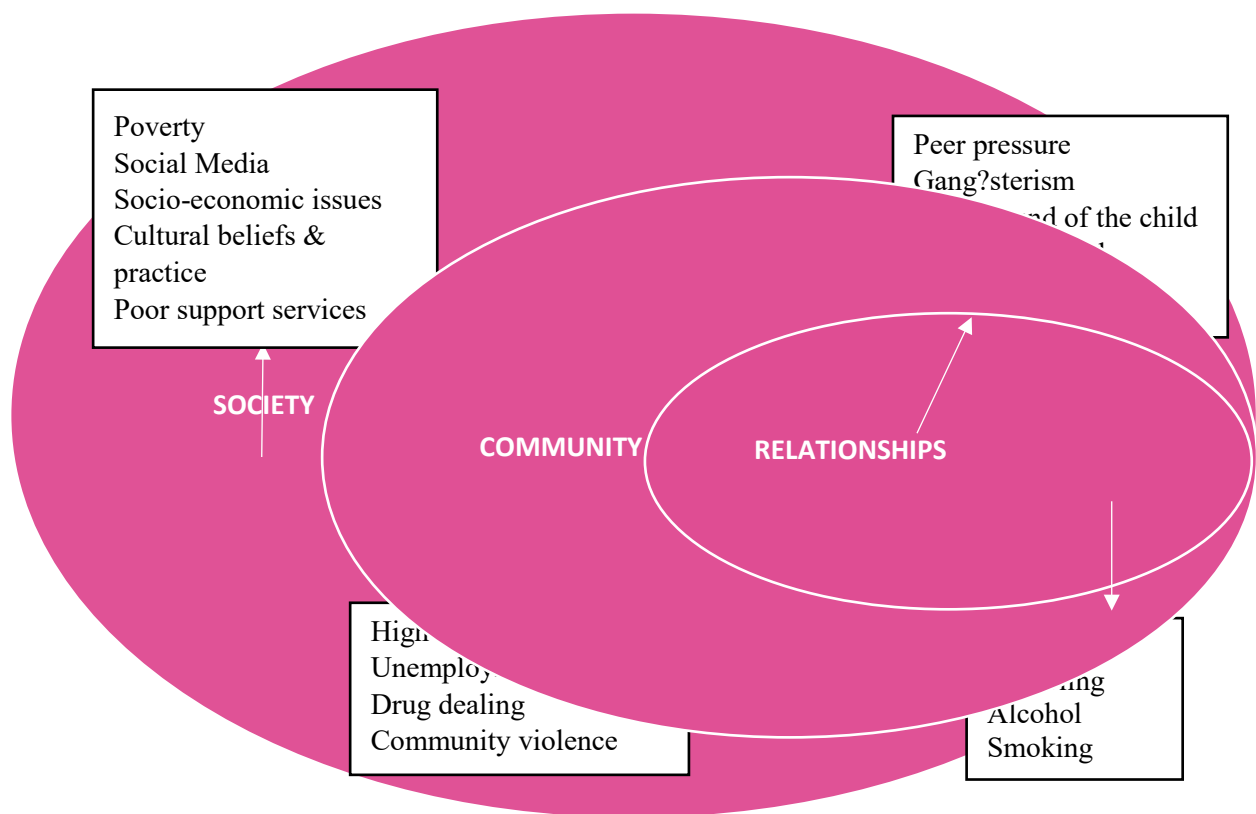
Figure 5.2: Causes of school-based violence

Source: Researcher's illustration

5.4.1.1 Drug abuse, gambling, alcoholism, and smoking

It has been reported by numerous studies that learners are exposed to various illegal substances and are known to take them during school hours (Dlungwane, 2017; Ngidi, 2018). When learners are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, the teaching and learning process is seriously compromised. Various drugs have different effects on learners as some of them become highly aggressive and violent when intoxicated. Most of the educators who were interviewed identified the use of dagga and smoking as common among learners. Something simple, like a fizzy drink, could be mixed with cough mixture to turn it into a powerful drug that makes the youth feel excited and in control. One of the participants in FGD mentioned that this drug completely changed a person's personality into 'someone else'. The participants made the following comments:

> "*Drug abuse here at school is a problem. We even have people who sell them now, and not only use them. The other problem is that some learners tend to disturb teachers*

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when they are teaching and that affects us as learners, who actually came to school to learn because it takes our teaching-learning time. You would find that during the lesson, the teacher only ends up teaching for 25 or 20 minutes. So, it takes up a lot of our time. A lot of learners take Xanax here at school and by looking at them, you can tell that they are still affected by it. They seem to be in another world or on a different planet. Even when you try and talk to them, they are not with you at that moment. Their eyes usually turn white and they are forgetful" (Njabulo: Learner).

"Mostly, it's learners who sell [drugs] to other learners, but at times there are outsiders who supply them too. Some girls were affected by Xanax here at school and it seemed they were losing their minds. They had to be hospitalised and one of the teachers confiscated the tablets but they still managed to smuggle them onto the premises. Some even fight over drugs" (Minenhle: Learner).

"One child took a dose of the drug early in the morning when they came to school and was excited the whole day. At around 2 o'clock, the learner fainted and was in a coma. We tried to contact his parents but we could not get hold of them. When we informed the parents to check their kids out for these drugs, most of them did not even bother" (Mr Hlope: Educator).

"They are very violent. They can physically assault you for the smallest of things. They are always annoyed. The problem is that when they are affected by Xanax, they are very weak and cannot even raise a finger, but one can tell that if they could they would. Even those who take marijuana are always angry and aggressive, and they are also physically violent towards others in class. Even if you apologise to them, it seems they have 'blacked out' because they would just beat you up until they are satisfied" (Sabelo: Learner).

According to the KII participants, learners would take these drugs during break time and were then unable to focus on class work afterwards because they were badly affected by these drugs.

"There are times, especially after break, when they eat first and then start smoking. I think what stimulates these violent acts are the drugs they smoke, because you can tell

after they come back from their lunch break that you are not dealing with the same person who was here before lunch" (Mr Nzunza: Teacher).

"Initially, it was weed, but then they started using anti-depressants like Xanax, which made them sleep in class and fail. After break you will find that most of the learners in class are affected and sleepy" (Mr Nkosi: Educator).

"There is a learner here who is usually very respectful before break, but the minute he smokes during break he becomes a completely different person. He once poured water on a teacher while he was teaching in class, but no action was taken. His parents stated that he had been to a rehabilitation centre and it didn't work; so, they have given up too. So we as teachers don't even feel safe as no consequences come to these kids. Instead, they are transferred to another school to cause the same havoc on different teachers" (Ms Luthuli: Educator).

The general consensus was that teachers were aware that learners took drugs at school. They confiscated these substances when possible but they did not have any control over the drug situation in their respective schools. However, the researcher was informed that some schools had been able to identify addicted learners and had referred some of them to rehabilitation centres. This information is supported by the following responses:

"I sent one of the learners to the rehabilitation centre because I saw potential in him. Looking at his background, I understood the root cause of the problem. The learner's father is a drug addict due to certain circumstances affecting his life and his mother is an alcoholic as well. So, looking at the state he was in at home, I understood what might have made him into what he is" (Mr Hlophe: Educator).

"Last week six learners were suspended and indications were that they were all addicted to drugs. So, we as a school wrote letters to their parents advising them to take them to Umphakathi Okhathazekileyo Rehabilitation Centre for 21 days, after which they would come back to school. We said we would accommodate them when they came back, but until today only one parent among the six learners came to see us. The five other learners have not been to school till now and we have heard nothing from their parents. Secondly, we have a problem as a Black society. When we are told that our child is addicted to drugs, we don't want to accept it and we turn a blind eye

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or we blame it on the ancestors, though this has nothing to do with drug addiction" (Ms Khumalo: Educator).

In the early stages of the data collection process, one key informant made an important eye-opening contribution. He argued that allowing disruptive learners to remain in school in spite of showing no progress in academic performance presented a platform for selling drugs. He mentioned that schools had relatively old learners who did not even attend classes but were always on the school premises selling cigarettes and dagga. This activity had become a way of generating income for these individuals. The participant commented that:

"They get in through a secret passage that the kids created to circumvent the main gate as the other kids do and they also have major connections with the kids here at school. There are merchants who use these boys to sell drugs inside the school premises. Now, they promise them protection in the sense that, should we teachers have a problem with any of them, they can always call them and inform them and they will deal with us. Now, that boosts their confidence because they know that nothing will happen to them" (Mr Nzuza: Educator).

Most participants in FGD were agreed that conflict arose when an increasing number of individuals started selling drugs at school and competition for consumers then became rife. It was also established that learners gambled at school which caused rivalry and fights. According to Ngidi (2018), gambling is playing any game or placing a bet in order to gain money or something valuable. Gambling involves money and some may feel cheated and fail to accept a loss, which makes violence to erupt. This activity also diminishes learners' concentration in class because they are too focused on playing and winning and they neglect their school work. The participants mentioned that gambling was a problem across all grades, but more so in the lower grades:

"They start gambling during break time. That too causes a lot of fights and tension because no one wants to lose their money. This is mostly the older ones even though the younger grades do play cards too, but you hardly find them fighting over who has won" (Akhona: Learner).

Generally, learner participants did not perceive gambling as addictive as drugs and alcohol. However, it was agreed that it was a matter of great concern that learners, especially those in the lower grades, had started participating in gambling. They admitted that, just like any other addiction, it would not be easy to simply stop and walk away. It was revealed that learners would play card games for a couple of rounds each day without realising that it could lead to addiction. Few adults and adolescents were aware of the risks associated with excessive gambling, which is evidenced by a gradual loss of control over gambling behaviour (Nhambura, 2019). Unfortunately, the researcher was told that these card games were not restricted to the school premises, but that learners continued playing after schooling and on weekends. Gambling in townships is not a new phenomenon as people have been gambling on street corners or outside local tuck shops for decades. Gambling is quite popular in the South African society, and many teenagers try out different gambling activities such as poker, throwing the dice, scratch cards, sports betting, and others (Smit, 2010). Most of the information about gambling at the schools was provided by the learners, and the teachers did not seem to be aware of the extent of the problem of gambling in their schools, or they were not taking it as seriously as drug and alcohol abuse. In schools where the selling and abuse of drugs are prevalent, carrying weapons and gangsterism follow naturally. It is alarming when learners engage in gambling because violent fights that erupt as a result of disagreements may lead to fatality and grievous bodily harm.

The four schools were all situated in geographical locations where alcohol was easily accessible at 'shebeens' which were located within walking distance from the schools. According to Smit (2010), a 'shebeen' is a name commonly used for an unlicensed establishment that sells alcohol and is typically regarded as disreputable. In townships, alcohol is sold to children despite their age. Worse still, there are 'shebeens' that sell alcohol to learners in school uniform. Burton (2008) stated that the easy accessibility of alcohol and drugs in communities places the lives of school-going children at risk. This study corroborates earlier findings that indicate a strong connection between high levels of alcohol consumption, the use and abuse of drugs, and increasing levels of aggression and violent crime in schools. Smith (2010) warns that the accessibility of prescription medicines to youngsters in South African townships and suburban areas impacts negatively on education in general and on what happens in schools in particular.

5.4.1.2 Socio-economic issues

South African youths live in communities where they learn that violent behaviour is rewarded and where violence is perceived as a solution to their problems thus making them feel powerful and worthy (Ward, 2007). Unfortunately, the neighbourhoods where the study was conducted had an undeniable impact on the violence and delinquency that characterised the schools. Drug abuse, regardless of the expense, is a nationwide problem that affects most communities in South Africa, especially disadvantaged communities. It becomes rather difficult to try and solve the problem of drugs in schools because a school is part of the broader community. Arguably, there are a number of socio-economic issues that contribute to children taking drugs. This notion is supported by the following response:

> *"I think the whole country has an issue of drug abuse that needs to be dealt with. Maybe if the whole country can come together to try and fix the problem, there would be a change. What we should also look at is that this issue is also relates poverty. Most of these learners here at school sell drugs because they are trying to survive. These socio-economic factors force them to sell drugs while they are with other learners. I think they have bad role models or they look up to the wrong people. I say these things because some of the people around them, and even within their families, see a business opportunity in schools. Learners are easily persuaded and they are a good market, so they may be asked to sell such drugs in school to raise income to support their families. This all goes down to the high unemployment rate and shows how poverty pushes people to the dark side"* (Mr Mlambo: Educator).

All the key informant participants believed that what happened in the community had a great influence on learners' behaviour. This finding is supported by the Bio-ecological Systems Theory as it posits that a person and the environment are independent units that dynamically interact and influence one another (Stead & Watson, 2006). The study revealed that some learners were members of gangs and that these gangs were part of bigger groupings outside the school. Incidences of gangster activities spilling over into schools, or vice versa, were rife.

De Wet (2007) observes that the presence of gangs in schools and in their vicinity facilitates the relatively easy acquisition of illegal firearms and other deadly weapons. Moreover, the easy accessibility of drugs and alcohol for the youth, in conjunction with weapons and drugs, leads

to school violence. Denying drug peddlers access to schools poses a danger to both learners and staff members. Their omnipresence in the lives of learners thus sends the wrong message to learners and makes them to accept violence and crime as natural phenomena in schools. The UNESCO (2007) asserts that when students are part of gangs or they live in communities where gangs and drugs are part of the community's culture, this will directly lead to drugs, weapons, and gang-related violence in the schools. It was mentioned that some learners came from family backgrounds where liquor and other drugs were sold illegally as the only means of putting food on the table. Drugs affect schools but drug use is a community problem, and learners get these drugs from the community. According to Volkmann et al. (2013), drug trafficking is a form of external violence. It originates outside the school and then gang members within the school facilitate drug peddling, targeting willing learners. The participants mentioned that, in order to tackle the drug issue in schools, it should first be addressed at community level. This is illustrated by the following response:

"The police station itself supplies them with drugs. Some people who are part of the community supply them with drugs and, what troubles us is that they use learners inside our school to sell them. When a learner is caught with drugs and we call the police, they come and confiscate the drugs, but nothing happens to the learner as they all work together. We have people who supply them with Xanax and they mix it with cool drink to make it more intoxicating. They even take this drug at school. So we work with a lot of excited learners and this leads them to steal from one another. There was an incident when a learner stole from his aunt's bank account and used her money without her knowledge. When I caught him, I had to let her aunt know of his behaviour because he was a drug addict and a thief" (Mr Hlophe: Educator).

Not all learners come from good backgrounds. Some learners are exposed to violence throughout their lives as their parents are abusive towards each other and fathers tend to abuse their families. This affects children's behaviour at school and they become deviant and sneaky. Some learners are exposed to vices beyond their age and this affects them psychologically. The circumstances that they are exposed to may force them to be deviant and violent at school. This notion is supported by the following responses from the interview sessions:

"The problem with our learners is that some of them are bitter. They have deep anger. There are those who are chronically arrogant and there are those who have had anger

issues from birth. We have dealt with most of them accordingly: those who deserved expulsion were expelled last year. We also have those who tell us their background history. When they commit an offence, they expect us to sympathise with them just because of their background stories. As a corrective measure, we also call our ex-learners to come and motivate them and it makes a change, because some of these learners who were offenders were not class representatives" (Mr Ngcobo: Educator).

"Most of these learners come from a very tough background. They are very cheeky and always ready to fight. Mostly, it is up to us teachers to know how to respond to them. I draw a clear line so that they know their boundaries. No manners whatsoever and they don't listen. They believe the only way to prove your worth or yourself right is to fight" (Mr Zulu: Educator).

"They way they are brought up and the environment they stay in affect their behaviour. If you take a look at this place, you will find that it is not a suitable place for children to live in. The moment you step outside, the first thing you hear is strong language; not only that, but there is a lot of alcohol and drug influence. For example, some of these kids are raised by single moms who are unemployed and end up being involved with different men to feed their families; so, for a child to see different male figures coming in and out of their homes leaves an advverse mark" (Mr Nzuza: Educator).

5.4.1.3 Community-based violence

The levels of crime and violence in the communities in which schools are situated have an irrevocable effect on learners' behaviour at school. The violence that occurs outside the school environment, such as gang violence, political conflicts, police brutality, and marital violence, replicates itself in the school environment (UNESCO, 2007). According to the South African National Violence Study (2012), South African societies are the world's most violent (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). As a result, a violent culture emerges in the community and spreads to the school. Thus, it is not surprising that the availability of drugs and the dealers who peddle them are known in the community. High levels of drugs and a high percentage of adults involved in crime further increase the exposure of youths to these vices and encourage them to engage in violent activities (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010). It becomes difficult for schools to deal with these problems if they are societal issues that cannot be stemmed. This research revealed

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that, in many instances, learners arrived at school already under the influence of drugs because they bought them on their way to school. Dlungwane (2017) argues that the escalation of informal alcohol outlets and drug sellers on the streets contributes to the social conditioning of learners and adolescents who deem it acceptable and even admirable to partner with their delinquent role models. Learners frequently witness incidences of crime and violence on their way to school and they become accustomed to these vices. One of the educators bemoaned the prevalence of crime and violence in the area and admitted that it was not a place to raise children. This view is supported by the following narratives:

> "*Yes, I've seen some violence among learners, especially when they fought over alcohol during weekends. They usually ended up finishing the fight at school. As we speak, there is a learner who is now mentally unstable because he was attacked by learners and outsiders after school*" (Njabulo: Learner).

> "*Last year there was a huge fight between the boys in our school and some boys in the community and there was a pepper spray outbreak*" (Muzi: Learner).

> "*The research I did for my dissertation discovered that the problem lies in the community. This community has mostly single parents and some of these kids live on their own and that has a negative impact on their behaviour. This community is not educationally driven; so, these learners are not motivated and they don't know anything about the importance of education. They don't know much about respect and discipline. So when they enter the school premises it's hard to change their mindset from what they're usually accustomed to*" (Mrs Zulu: Educator).

According to the South African Department of Safety and Security (2007), a community that is widely affected by poverty and unemployment is highly associated with conflicts between community members. Confrontations are the order of the day, especially in black townships and informal settlements. The places also witness high crime rates. According to Jenson and Fraser (2011), children growing up in poor communities witness frequent acts of violence and are victims of violence. The exposure to violence reinforces the message of violence amongst the children. Amos (2013) studied African communities and states that each home has its own rules and customs regarding the upbringing of the children who live in it. Therefore, learners' home life and background play a significant role in their lives. The behaviour of children at

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school is often a reflection of the teachings of their parents and other role models at home and in the community. Violent behaviour is learnt and emanates from the home environment or community and filters through to the school. This cycle of violence is indicative of what the Social Learning Theory postulates, which is that there is a strong link between observed violence and enactments of aggression and violence by learners at school. The following responses illustrate this point:

"*The community has great influence on what occurs on the school premises. This environment has no sort of order. There is no respect amongst people here. Neither adults nor learners respect one another. It really goes back to how these children are raised, but most of them don't even live with their parents.*" (Mr Khoza: Educator)

"*You will find that most of our students are drug abusers. It seems the community knows exactly what's going on inside the school. They seem to be using these children to accomplish their own goals and they use learners to sell and distribute these drugs at school and outside. Drug-abuse seems a trend; nowadays most learners are addicted to some kind of substance*" (Mrs Gama: Educator).

"*I've never seen or heard of them [the police] being supportive. They do come through at times. The police department only avails itself when we call them, but they never do random searches. Even with the case of the teacher we talked about earlier, they never did a follow-up on the incident because we had never briefed them about it. They showed up once or twice after the case and that was final. We feel that the main reason our school is like this is because of the community which doesn't support us much with anything. Parents couldn't care less about their kids*" (Ms Nxele: Educator).

Ward, Artz and Berg (2012) argue that primary social groups such as family and friendship networks affect a learner's social behaviour. According to Burton and Leoschut (2012), the social ills prevalent in communities are known to infuse the school environment. Burton (2008) argues that the easy availability of alcohol and drugs in communities puts the lives of school-aged children at risk of violence. It is in these communities that alcohol and drugs are easily available to under-age children. It is an undeniable fact that the easy availability of these commodities places those who live in these communities at high risk of violent encounters. The high schools in which the study was conducted were located in urban areas, townships, and rural areas with predominantly Black African people residing there. Each race is driven by

its culture, customs, and beliefs that form the foundation of the manner in which its children are raised. Bowen (2006) links schools to communities, arguing that schools are affected by society as a whole and, in turn, schools have a direct impact on children's academic achievements. Amos (2013) endorses this view, asserting that a learner's home life and background play a significant role in his/her life.

According to Dlungwane (2017:90), the behaviour of children at school "...is often a reflection of the teachings of their parents and other role models at home and in the community". According to the Culture of Violence Theory, violence and aggression are maintained and reinforced in society if nothing is done to eradicate it. Violence in neighbourhoods and communities is precipitated by access to weapons such as guns and sharp objects (Mncube & Harber, 2013; Burton & Leoschut, 2012; Hutzell & Payne, 2012). Young people spend much of their time at school and schools exist within the broader context of the community. The school population is thus affected by the activities, culture, and norms that the community upholds, and hence the violence in the community will also affect schools' atmosphere and culture (Wilson & Hoge, 2013; Hutzell & Payne, 2012).

Siegel (2003) also argues that criminal activities in schools occur as a result of community delinquency that spills over into schools. The findings from this study endorse the notion that criminal activities in schools occur as a direct result of the criminal tendencies that permeate communities. All the participants revealed that most gang activities that took place at their schools on different occasions originated from gangster behaviour in the community that was emulated by learners. This view is congruent with the argument that gangsterism in schools is a symptom of social and community dysfunction (Steyn & Naicker, 2007). This finding thus underscores the fact that learners emulate images of the community and the family from which they come.

5.4.1.4 Gangsterism

The participants revealed that learners formed gangs at the schools under study. Some learners who joined these gangs missed school on a regular basis because they would leave home and never arrive at school. Instead, they would spend the day with their fellow gang members doing what gangsters do: rob, intimidate, threaten, hurt, and injure. It was reported that older gang members gave the youngsters drugs to sell at school while others allowed theiroutside gang

members to gain easy access to their schools, which rendered educators and other learners vulnerable to threats, intimidation, and violence.

Various studies have confirmed that gangs operate with impunity in some school environments, making these schools places where drugs, thugs and weapons can move as freely through the gates as learners (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014). Some schools are so destabilised by gangs that the curriculum is not delivered according to any regular schedule (Nhambura, 2019). Many gang-related incidences start in the community and spill over into schools, resulting in teachers and learners be injured. Whenever gang-related fights occur, they instil fear among learners and teachers who then become reluctant to attend school. Kelly (2008) and Kemp (2007) acknowledge that gangs have an effect on society, which inevitably leads to fear and vulnerability among law-abiding citizens. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate this point:

"*We have had gang-related fights. We have bullying as well and they are gang initiations. As we speak, there is a child who was so beaten up that he became mentally unstable. He got hurt during a gang initiation process. So, they also happen outside the school but end up affecting the kids at school*" (Mr Hlophe: Educator).

"*We see worse scenarios in our communities; sometimes we witness mob justices and gang wars as well. There are guns and everything and we have witnessed it all*" (Mr Zulu: Educator).

"*They fight over very petty issues actually. One learner told the other that he was ugly, and the conflict broke into a huge group fight. They have recently started forming gangs through their territory. When they start fighting it always ends up badly*" (Mrs Nkabinde: Teacher).

"*Both boys and girls are part of gangs. If you are on duty monitoring late-comers at the gate, at around 8 o'clock you won't see them, but if you give it 30 minutes to an hour, you will see them coming in large numbers as a crew and they behave in the same way. Their dress code is the same; they usually don't have their school ties and their shirts are unbuttoned. Their behaviour is so different and controversial compared to the behaviour we usually see from other learners at school*" (Mr Mlambo: Educator).

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This research finding is supported by the Bio-ecologic Systems Theory which posits that a person and the environment are independent units but that they dynamically interact and influence each other (Stead & Watson, 2006). The study revealed that some of the learners in the schools under study were gang members. There had been incidences in which gang fights spilled over into these schools. The macrosystem is a combination of the micro-system, meso-system and exosystems and a common characteristic is that they are highly influenced by the culture in which an individual life (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). When school-based violence is viewed from a societal level, it appears that broad societal factors help create the climate in which violence is encouraged. According to Mncube and Madikizela Madiya, (2014), gangsterism in schools should be seen as a community problem in South Africa, because schools are a part of the community and therefore reflect the problems that exist in the community.

De Wet (2007) explains that the presence of gangs at school and in adjacent areas facilitates the relatively easy acquisition of illegal firearms and other deadly weapons as well as the accessibility of drugs and alcohol by the youth; this may also lead to school violence. Township schools are exposed to high levels of externally-based crime, especially those acts that are committed and encouraged by gangs. De Wet (2016) asserts that school-based violence and gangsterism are interlinked. She further says that gangsterism accounts for the escalating levels of learner violence inside and outside school premises. This created a vicious cycle, as the more devastated the school environment became, the more prevalent the impact of gangs on the premises became. The gangs are a phenomenon in the schools but mainly they have their roots in the community gangs. The ripple effect of their activities permeates into the schools, spreading violence in the school premises since some of them belong to the street gang groups. The implications of gangsterism in schools include "distress, reduced self-esteem, risk of depression and suicide, reduced school attendance, impaired concentration, fear and diminished ability to learn" (Alaappar, Leu, Lee & Wong, 2017:1).

5.4.1.5 Cultural beliefs and practices – fighting using 'muthi'

Based on the findings, it was clear that some boy learners at these schools used ethnic weapons such as 'izinduku' (walking sticks or 'kieries') which were normally used in a traditional context when men were going to war or engaged in fighting. Many boys at these schools used

vernacular expressions of 'stick fighting' to reinforce their dominance over other boys. They were fond of referring to metaphors of manhood that bolstered their position among their peers. These weapons are known as very dangerous and are often associated with traditional medicine. Ngidi (2013:66) argues that "the implication is that when there is any fight or altercation with such learners, they will not hesitate to use their weapons to inflict pain and injury". In one of the focus group discussions, a participant mentioned how lethal weapons were used in these fights and that one would definitely die if hit with such a weapon. Dlungwane (2017:89) argues that in some cases "...adults (elder brothers) arbitrated these confrontations, which indicates that this cultural practice to resolve a dispute was not only accepted by the boys' elders, but encouraged by the presence of older boys". At one particular school, the boys had adopted a repertoire of Zulu cultural practices and structures to handle conflict, which often involved physical violence and confrontation in which the boys used sticks to assault their opponents.

The study revealed that traditional medicine called 'muthi' was used to enhance boys' success during fights. According to Damba (2011), educators, family, and the community are becoming increasingly concerned about tendencies among children to purchase 'muthi' for use during a fight. This traditional medicine reportedly gives them power over an opponent. However, it has been observed that taking these traditional herbs make the boys become uncontrollable and they seek blood. A participant revealed that a learner who had been a victim of 'muthi'-induced violence never fully recovered after he had been assaulted by boys who stood accused of using this traditional medicine. The participant stated:

> *"They had all sorts of weapons, from golf clubs to spear-shaped sticks. And now they even have handcuffs so that when they catch you, they handcuff you and then they beat you up. They even drink 'uMuthi for strength and other purposes. If they land one punch you don't wake up. They take it in front of us. Even a slap does extreme damage to you if they slap you. Every day after a fight they go to their 'sangoma' [traditional healer] and get more. And you will spot them because they are always looking for a fight"* (Vuyo: Learner).

The use of 'muthi' and the belief among learners that certain types of 'muthi' are powerful in conflicts and fights exacerbate school-based violence. Learners know about the use of 'muthi' through teachings associated with fighting and war. The use of 'muthi' has been passed down

from older generations to the current generation through stories and practices by elders and 'sangomas'. Young men obtain 'muthi' from adults in their communities who are aware of the dangers of using it. The following excerpts from the interview sessions illustrate this point:

"....It affects us in such a way that we as teachers are even scared of intervening because we might be caught in the crossfire. There was a fight where we couldn't even help an injured student, because the learner involved took the injured student before we could get to him and they told us that they would be able to assist him. They can even enter your class without your permission to grab a learner and leave with him. So, they said that there are things that they are going to give the learner that we aren't able to" (Ms Mbambo: Educator).

"Not really, because we don't do it; but it seems to work for others because he doesn't pick on them. There is this 'muthi' that we suspect he is using called 'Ibhande' [belt]. Basically, if someone who uses it hits you, it does a lot of bodily damage. Sometimes you might even get a stroke or have a fit. There was a kid that he hit and he had to leave school and not attend anymore because of the damage that was done" (Mr Zama: Educator).

One of the teachers mentioned that he had experienced an incident when learners wanted to use witchcraft to make him crazy. He stated:

"These kids tend to interfere with your life if you are someone who disciplines them. For instance, there was a time when they went to a 'sangoma' to ask for help. They wanted some 'muthi' to make me crazy. Luckily, for me, one of those days after school on my way home, I came across the same 'sangoma', and he mentioned that a group of kids had come by requesting that he should make me lose my sanity. He had told them that he wouldn't do it, but they could try someone else. That's when I decided that, since I was very strict with discipline, I should just tone it down and keep quiet about certain things" (Mr Nzuza: Educator).

The use of weapons threatens the lives of both teachers and learners as no one can predict when learners will be having them and when they might use them. According to Coetzee (2002), fighting can erupt every day among Zulu boys and there is no timeframe associated with it as

it occurs as the situation arises. However, when the opportunity arises, the boys will then use their sticks to establish their reputation as stick fighters and to prove their masculinity. The fights usually occur between two groups that are often from different geographical locations and most commonly in rural areas. This makes them more intense because no side wants to be mocked as weak. The process by which boys become men (including traditional customs like stick fighting and defending oneself and one's family) often filters to the schooling context (Mngoma, 2013).

Although constructions of masculinity or the impact of adolescent male risk behaviour on society were beyond the scope of this study, boys are generally expected to be daring, virile, and to constantly showcase boldness and strength. This also prevails in incidences of violence that occur in schools. Traditionally, boys are placed under pressure to be masculine and never to back down from fights, and this has resulted in them going to extreme lengths when it comes to fighting. Dlungwane (2017) argues that traditional stereotyping puts enormous pressure on young men and it may pressure them to take part in various risk-taking activities to prove their manhood. In this context, Connell (1995:14) states:

> "The adoption of traditional, patriarchal versions of manhood and the variations in boys' discourses and ways of being often lead to violent confrontations among boys at school, as boys configure their masculinity on the basis of general social, cultural, and institutional patterns of power and meaning. In fact, a lot of the violence by males against males is a form of boundary policing which serves to determine individual positioning within a hierarchical arrangement of masculinity."

This form of 'boundary policing' referred to above seemed to be normalised in the schools under study as the boys desired to 'fix them' [their opponents] through the use of violence.

5.5 Challenges associated with school-based violence

5.5.1 Lack of parental involvement

The findings show that educators felt that parents should play a major role in disciplining their children. According to the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996, a 'parent' is a primary caregiver, biological parent, or someone who is legally in the care of a learner and

including anyone who is in charge of learners' schooling (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). One may argue that parents' involvement in their children's lives is essential for their upbringing. Myeko (2000:12) defines parental involvement as "...the participation of parents in their children's school activities, such as school functions, which [will] promote their children's academic outcomes".

It is important that parents discipline children when they have misbehaved so that the child will distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. However, the research findings reveal that parents supported their children inappropriately by defending them, which means that such learners will never learn the difference between right and wrong. One teacher mentioned that, often when this happened, parents turned the situation around as if the teacher, school, or other learners were in the wrong, rather than considering what their child had done. Learners thus persist in unacceptable behaviour because they know that their parents will defend them. There is a need for parents and schools to work together on developing and implementing intervention strategies, although it should be noted that some parents are not forthcoming when it comes to disciplining their children (Nhambura, 2019). . The educators felt that some parents would not discipline their children because they also engaged in unacceptable behaviour. Families can contribute to adolescents' violent and aggressive behaviour by accepting that the adolescent's display of such behaviour is a problem-solving strategy (Crawage, 2005). The following responses from the interviews illustrate this point:

> *"We sometimes have a problem with parents, especially when we ask for a teacher-parent meeting so that they can see that their kids aren't performing well but they never show up. This affects the behaviour of learners because they know that, whatever they do, their parents don't care.Secondly, you find that most of them are drug abusers."* (Ms Sibiya: Educator)

> *"Because we have cases of parents who don't pay attention to their kids, we have cases of kids who finish school at the age of 21 to 22 years sometimes. And most of them are very brilliant but due to their parents' negligence, they end up spending more years than they should at school. This leads to the kids being exposed to drugs. These drugs are a number one challenge in schools here in our areas. They are supplied everywhere they go. The type of drug they use is very dangerous as well because it makes them act in strange ways"* (Mr Hlophe: Educator).

Most respondents mentioned that they did not see much difference in the behaviour of learners after their parents had visited the school. The teachers believed that calling parents was a professional gesture to inform them of their children's misbehaviour, but they doubted whether it served any purpose. However, they also admitted that not all parents defended their children's wrong doing. They acknowledged that there were parents who were actively involved in their children's lives and strove to resolve whatever issues the teachers raised. One teacher mentioned incidences when parents were called to the school and it helped because the learners changed their behaviour. The assertion is upheld by the House of Commons (2011), which state that Beaumont Leys School and New Woodlands School's success stories on its disciplinary intervention programmes was lingering around the relationship they have with parents and guardians of their learners. Hence parents must actively listen, ask questions, offer support, and be actively involved in the schoolwork of their children as this will encourage their children to excel and be disciplined (Gumbo, 2020).

The point was raised that some parents did not deliberately ignore their children but were compelled by circumstances such as abject poverty, long working hours, and working night shifts to abstain from involvement in their children's schooling. One KII participant mentioned that some of the parents were so poor that they struggled to buy decent clothes and were thus too shy to come to school. These findings underscore the notion that the issues impacting parental involvement are actually deeper than what people think. The following sheds light on this point:

> *"I would say these children come from tough backgrounds, where in some families the child is even the head of the house. Some grow up exposed to domestic violence; some are abused, while others are raised by parents that can't guide them due to many different reasons. There are so many challenges they go through at home and in the community and all these things affect or influence their behaviour. As painful as it is, I often try my best to understand that most children are like this due to their home backgrounds"* (Ms Mbambo: Educator).

A participant in the FDG corroborated this finding and stated that some parents did not live with their children and, for the duration of the day after school, these kids were in the care of other family members. It was also reported that some parents and guardians had no interest in coming to school to resolve disciplinary matters. One may argue that when parents live far

from their children, they may not always be aware of what actually happens in their children's schooling or social lives, or the challenges that their children face. According to Adams and Waghid (2005), low levels of education on the part of parents and a poor economic background contribute to the lack of parental involvement. This finding vindicates the notion that parental involvement is poor in schools in disadvantaged communities (Singh, Mbokodi & Msila, 2004).

The environment in which many parents work makes it difficult for them to take time off to attend to their children's issues at school. This is exacerbated by the fact that some children stay in boarding houses or communes close to school where they have all the freedom to do as they please without the supervision of adults. Such learners exhibit unacceptable behaviour and, by the time the parents find out, it will be already too late to change. The following responses from the interview sessions raised this point:

> *"And another thing is that most of the learners here are not from the area. Most of them are from the Eastern Cape and it's hard for us to have audience with their parents because they live alone in communes. There are also some cases where our girls are seduced by older men with money and we see this on a daily basis in the school, where we find them being dropped off unconscious and drunk or drugged. When you inform their parents about it, though, they don't do much. With girls we have to be extra careful, because they can be 'trafficked' at any time"* (Ms Mbambo: Educator).

> *"Some of the learners here at school are not from this town. They stay in boarding houses around the school. They have the freedom to do as they please in the absence of their parents and tend to experience on a lot of things like drugs and alcohol"* (FGD: Participant 1).

> *"Parents are working and the problem with Black parents is that, if they don't live with their kids, they don't report to the school that they are leaving a certain family member as a guardian for their child. Quite often they leave the child with a grandparent who is too old to commute to school. You find that most of the learners come from single parent households, or there are no parents at all. They have guardians but the guardians say they can only attend parents' meetings, nothing else, because they are busy"* (Mr Ngcobo: Educator).

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The absence of parent-school collaboration was frequently mentioned by educators and learners who believed that it contributed to learners' deviant behaviour. According to the Australian Government (2008), a parent-teacher partnership is crucial in a child's development because of its proven association with improved learning, attendance, and behaviour, irrespective of learners' family backgrounds. Partnerships between families and the school are imperative to provide a trusting relationship among teachers, parents, and learners, with the emphasis on sharing goals or aims that are in the best interest of learners. The findings of the latter study revealed that the educators believed that working in partnership with parents would be beneficial to everyone. The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 vests power in parents as well as communities as it generates a platform where parents can be significant partners in school governance (Duma, 2013). When parents attend meetings and are aware of what is happening in terms of their children's behaviour at school, they can actively work with the school to resolve issues and solve problems.

When parents do not discipline their children, such children become deviant because no one holds them accountable for their actions. Nhambura (2019) noted that some parents are not keen on disciplining their children. These sentiments were shared in the interviews and FGDs, as the following responses illustrate:

> *"When you look at our code of conduct, it is the ideal. If they were to follow it, then things would be perfect. But it is hard to base it on the environment alone, for they say the school is a three-way partnership: student, teacher and parent. But the teachers find themselves alone because the parent is not helping to discipline the child. We really are not getting enough help from the parents"* (Ms Buthelezi: Educator).

> *"Boy, my mum is very cheeky and everyone at school knows not to mess with me or her, because once she enters these premises, nothing restrains her"* (Mphendulo: Learner).

The respondents felt that many learners not only disrespected their teachers, but also did not have respect for their parents either. Educators are faced with an almost insurmountable problem when parents defend their delinquent children. Le Roux and Mokhele (2011) and Edwards (2008) stated that children from severely dysfunctional families face enormous adjustment problems, which may lead to a variety of interpersonal, emotional, and cognitive

deficits and, eventually, to violence. This is supported by the following responses from the interview sessions:

> *"Some of them, yes. But most of these learners behave in the same way as their parents. They are now out of hand and there is nothing their parents can do"* (Mrs Nkabinde: Educator).

> *"Last year I had a class in which two girls had a problem with each other, and they ended up fighting. The next day one of the parents came blazing like fire into my class, swearing at the girl who had fought her child, and even threatened to beat her up. That really scared me, because parents aren't allowed to come to classrooms during class sessions. They usually wait in the office for the teacher, so for them to pass the security guards and the administration staff was really confusing..... I asked her to go and wait for me in the office. I had to leave my class unattended and it was chaotic because it gave the learners a chance to misbehave and make noise"* (Ms Sibiya: Educator).

> *"The society is being ruined, because they have turned the school in to a dumping site. They aren't disciplined at home and the parents even ignore us when we call them to report such cases. This is frustrating as well"* (Mr Biyela: Educator).

Children benefit considerably when parents are actively involved in their education. Parents should not leave everything to teachers but should also play an active role in their children's education instead of just attending parents' meetings. For intervention programmes to be successful, the parents must support schools. The parents will assist in monitoring and supporting the child at home while the teachers will offer help to the learner at school (Nhambura, 2019). Hence, each intervention approach must not leave out the parents or guardians of the learners. The most effective school programmes are the ones that have parental support, with parents backing the school and thus limiting deviant behaviour at home. Monadjem (2003) contend that parental illiteracy is the biggest barrier to parental involvement. Schools that are situated in rural areas seem to be the ones that struggle a lot with parental involvement compared to schools that are in peri-urban and urban areas. A KII participant highlighted that other factors, such a low self-esteem due to illiteracy and poverty, also contribute to parents' lack of involvement in the activities of their children at school. Low-income parents may also feel incompetent when asked to attend non-threatening partnership

meetings, and so teachers should be sensitised to parents' literacy levels (Ikechukwu, 2020). According to Siririka (2007), parents with low levels of education have the desire to help their children but are restricted because they believe they lack the capacity do so. Therefore, schools should create a platform that will empower parents academically by, for instance, offering adult literacy programmes.

According to the ecological systems theory, the most direct influences on learners' behaviour occur within the microsystem, which is composed of individuals or groups of individuals within their immediate settings (the home or school) and with whom children have interactions. Risk factors instigating violent behaviour in schools include bullying, fights, aggression, and verbal abuse and these compromise parent-children relationships, inter-parental cooperation, positive peer relationships, school connectedness, and a conducive school environment. Parent-level factors, such as negative adult influences, lack of parental involvement, and lack of parental support, are associated with violent tendencies in learners (Holt & Espelage, 2007). Children who are persistently exposed to violence in the home are more likely to be aggressive and to bully other learners at school. Eisenbraum (2007) asserts that the most violent institution in the society beside the military and law enforcement agencies is the family. Indeed, given the level of domestic violence in South Africa, the assertion is acceptable. Exposing children to domestic violence has a ripple effect on their behaviour. This is supported by the following responses from the interview sessions:

> *"We don't see much support from them. But also, these learners don't even respect their parents and some of them are tired. We tend to see the same parent in the office, attending to the same matter, month after month, but still the kid doesn't change. Sometimes we ask ourselves why this learner is not expelled or suspended from school"* (Mr. Ntuli: Educator).

> *"I would say yes, because when you raise a child, you have to instill great values in your child and teach them to respect their elders. If I try to reprimand your kid and they don't listen, it says a lot about the way they have been raised"* (Ms Khumalo: Educator).

> *"The last time we had a huge fight, learners were meeting and planning their attacks outside of the school premises, which shows that the parents knew what they were doing and decided to let it be*" (Ms Ntshingila: Educator).

5.5.2 Challenges that impede discipline

Nhambura (2019) refer to discipline as learning, regulated scholarship, guidance, and orderliness. Operationally, the concept 'discipline' refers to an act of instructing learners to adhere to school rules and regulations. Ngidi (2018) states that learners' disciplinary problems in South Africa include the rejection of reasoning, late coming, truancy, neglecting to do homework, noisiness, physical violence, theft, threats, verbal abuse, lack of concentration, criminality, gangsterism, rape, constant violation of a school's code of conduct, and substance abuse.

The current research findings revealed that teachers admitted to finding it difficult to maintain discipline in their classrooms. They admitted that it was difficult to enforce the schools' codes of conduct as learners simply shrugged it off. The study revealed that some learners refused to adhere to rules and regulations and did as they pleased with impunity. They argued that learners were aware that there was little that teachers or the school could do to compel them to comply with school rules. The teacher participants shared their frustrations and a sense of helplessness as they could not support the complainants who felt victimised. This is illustrated by the following narratives:

"We usually use the code of conduct. The principal would talk to them and note their names down in the book at the office, especially if they have been given verbal warnings before, which could lead to a suspension eventually. However, most of them actually enjoy the 'off days" (Mrs Nkabinde: Educator).

"*I don't have the correct disciplinary measures to discipline them. I might detain them after school or suspend a learner, but at the end of the day it's not effective. Since you can't do anything, they don't take you seriously"* (Mr Zulu: Educator).

"The department has truly deserted us in this regard. They don't give us any other way of disciplining these learners, yet they took away many great measures that worked. Sometimes we ask these learners to leave the classroom but that's also against the law" (Mr Ntuli: Educator).

Evidently, the teachers felt that the DBE had failed to give them clear direction as to how the learners should be disciplined. However, small percentage of teachers who did not experience difficulties in maintaining discipline seemed to be using alternative measures that worked. It was particularly teachers who were new in the teaching profession and who had not had the opportunity to use traditional forms of punishment who were open to using alternatives to corporal punishment. The following responses illustrate this point:

> *"If I have a problem with a learner, I confront them and have a chat with them one on one and let them know that I don't like their behaviour and the way they have acted towards me. I explain to them that I am not their babysitter, and I am not here to baby sit them and they tend to listen. So that works for me. I think the approach you use as a teacher helps too, because I don't shout at them in front of everyone, but I go to them and talk to them directly. In that way, all that happens is between us two and no one else is involved and they tend to appreciate that. As an LO teacher I try to change these incidences into learning experiences, and in that way, I can explain what they did wrong and where.* (Ms Khumalo: Educator).

The measures teachers proposed differed from school to school and depended on the offence. Schools are mandated to formulate a code of conduct and thus sanctions for similar misconducts may differ among schools. Some schools are regarded as less lenient than others, which also contributes to the behaviour that the learners display in these schools.   The following responses illustrate this point:

> *"Well, when I started teaching here, this was a really great school. The pass rate was really high as well. The problem started when we lost the old principal, who was very strict and respected by the learners. Afterwards things went haywire. We now find learners in possession of weapons and we confiscate them but they eventually go to the office to ask them back. The same thing happens with mobile phones: we confiscate them and then they bring their parents the very next day to come and take their phones back. Whenever we confiscate weapons, at the end of the day they go back home with them*" (Ms Sibiya: Educator).

> "*The principal is very lenient with these learners. There are no consequences or protection at all"* (Mr Zulu: Educator).

According the findings, suspension seemed to be the most drastic form of punishment when learners did not adhere to school rules. However, both the learners and teachers were in agreement that suspension no longer served its purpose because minimal change, if any, occurred on the learners' return. The teachers mentioned that suspension had become a recurring and ineffective cycle: learners were sent home, came back to school after a couple of days, only to continue their ill-disciplined tendencies. The following responses illustrate this point:

> "*That is the problem. Sometimes you do report the learner and they get suspended but the minute they come back they still have the weapon with them. So there is no progress*" (Ms Ntshingila: Educator).

> "*Suspension is 'bitter-sweet' because here at school the suspension period is one month so that person misses out a month's schoolwork and they need to catch up with the others. Some of them actually enjoy suspension and they see it as a month of vacation. For instance, we have a classmate who was suspended in February, but we see him coming to school every day just to disrupt lessons and leave, which means that he did not notify his parents of the suspension. You can see that he doesn't see anything wrong in what he is doing*" (Sabelo: Learner).

The research findings revealed that misbehaving learners were kept in the school system regardless of their actions that were a danger to other learners and teachers. In South Africa, one of the fundamental human rights is that every child has the right to education, which means that school personnel and parents should make every effort to ensure that children have access to education. In cases were learners needed to be expelled from school to honour the right of other learners to an uninterrupted and safe education, the Department of Basic Education insisted on other forms of punishment, such as transferring the delinquent learner to another school. The following responses illustrate this point:

> "*Yesterday there was a learner in the news who had stabbed another learner who died, but instead of being punished, they just transferred him to another school with a murder case against him. So if it was a teacher involved in this case, you would be in for it. They would rather transfer the pupil. There are very few cases where you hear that the learner was arrested, and even if they are arrested, they are out of jail before you know*

it. But in the case of a teacher, he would be out of the system and without a job" (Mr Nzuza: Educator).

Another point raised by one of teachers was that the punishment for learners who committed a fatal crime would be the same as for learners who had not committed a serious offense. A participant provided a clear illustration of how the punishment did not always fit the crime:

> *"Also, there should be different disciplinary actions taken for different cases committed by learners. They shouldn't face the same suspension sentence because you can't compare someone who slapped a fellow learner and someone who stabbed a fellow learner"* (Mr Nsele: Educator).

Resolving disciplinary issues are fundamental to successful schooling. Good teaching and learning, which is the core business of a school, cannot occur in the absence of good discipline. This notion is supported by Nhambura (2019), who indicated that effective learning is accomplished when learners are disciplined and respectful towards their teachers.Domestic experiences undoubtedly influence children's behaviour, therefore the issue of ill-disciplined learners is closely associated with the discipline they receive in the home. This view is supported by the following response from an interview session:

> *"In my early years of teaching we used corporal punishment and it assisted us. These new laws and rules, though, end up affecting us teachers directly, because we end up spending extra hours after school that we don't get paid for. But we can't blame the department much; in some cases, the blame is on parents, mostly because they can't control their kids. They should be working with us, but when we try to involve them, they ignore us"* (Mrs Gama: Educator).

Based on these research findings, one may argue that the disciplinary measures employed by the schools under study were effective to some extent, as learners who deliberately misbehaved knew they were disobeying school rules, but they were also aware that nothing much would happen to them. Their dismissive attitude would thus also influence other learners as they would be aware of the fact that few consequences would be suffered if school rules were disobeyed. In this context, it is strongly argued that the schools' lack of a mandate to apply effective disciplinary measures needs to be urgently modified in order to address the current situation of school violence. Poor learner behaviour reflects the conditions at home, with

teachers and law-abiding learners at the receiving end of the acts of violence they perpetrate. If parents were to work closely with teachers, they could change deviant learners' behaviour. Kapueja (2014:128) argues that behaviour "...is learned and misbehaviour can be unlearned, whilst positive behaviour must be taught, modelled, practised, and reinforced both in the classroom and at home". Both the school and the home therefore need to play a major role in maintaining order and discipline in schools.

5.5.3 Corporal punishment

The long tradition of school punishment includes corporal punishment, which has been a practice in both secular and religious education and in many societies for centuries (Baron 2005:45). Although the use of corporal punishment is forbidden in schools in South Africa, the research findings revealed that some teachers still used corporal punishment as a form of discipline, and some still believed that it was more effective than current disciplinary measures which they dismissed as ineffective. According to Chase (in Edwards, 2008), a majority of teachers and parents still believe in the usefulness of corporal punishment. The following responses illustrate this point:

> "*Corporal punishment worked, for our generation grew up on it and it moulded us. Now that it is banned, it is very hard to get through to the students, because they know you will not do anything to them*" (Mr Nkosi: Educator).

> "*The students don't do their work because they know that we will not spank them and so they take advantage of it. Taking away corporal punishment has ruined these children*" (Ms Ndlovu: Educator).

Findings obtained from the FGDs revealed that some teachers often used corporal punishment. However, UNESCO (2009) and Gibbs (2012) argue that corporal punishment is counter-productive and an ineffective form of curbing unwanted behaviour. They argue that it breeds children who will become violent. It teaches learners that hitting, pushing, and shoving the other learners is acceptable. Kapueja (2014) argues that it does not teach learners discipline, but rather destroys their good experiences of school because they see it as a violent place. Gibbs (2012) argues that if violence is done by the teacher while administering corporal punishment with teachers being held in high esteem by learners as role models, it will automatically teaches

learners that violence is a method that can be used to solve problems. The learner participants commented that the use of corporal punishment aggravated them in some situations and that it had created a hostile relationship between them and their teachers. The following response from a FGD illustrates this argument:

"I feel like it will be more or less the same, because some of our teachers do use corporal punishment when their work is not completed or not submitted, and it doesn't make a difference. I think it all comes down to what the learner wants; if they want to behave, then they will do it regardless of the form of punishment used. You find that corporal punishment causes learners to be more violent towards teachers because no one wants to get a beating and not stand up for themselves, especially if you didn't do anything wrong, so that is when you find learners hitting teachers back" (Ntokozo: Learner).

According to the educators' understanding, some parents actually did use corporal punishment, but they knew that this practice was no longer allowed. The teachers mentioned that this was a challenge because learners were used to this form of punishment and thus did not take other disciplinary measures seriously. The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 states that (1) "No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner; (2) any person who contravenes subsection 1 is guilty of an offence, and liable to conviction or a sentence which could be imposed for assault" (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). The teachers expressed their grievances about the abolishment of corporal punishment, arguing that the government was quick to react against a teacher who used corporal punishment when a learner had physically abused them, but it did nothing to curb learners' use of violence against teachers. The following responses from the interview sessions illustrate this point:

"When it comes to parents, they are now very aware of their children's rights and, just like the learners, they abuse them too. Some see it as a money-making scheme. We hear of cases where a parent will sue a school when a teacher had an altercation with a learner and might have practised corporal punishment, but what they fail to do is to investigate why the whole thing started. No teacher will just discipline a learner who hasn't provoked them in some way" (Mr Mlambo: Educator).

"I feel like the government took away a lot of the teacher's power. We don't have back-up from them. They only gave us rules like there is no more corporal punishment and they don't provide any alternatives. You as a teacher must think of your own alternatives and some of them they might not agree with. They passed down so many laws, which I feel have suppressed the teachers and the kids know that. If you threaten to punish them or hit them, they tell you. That's not allowed, and I can go sue you" (Mrs Gama: Educator).

One teacher mentioned that, if a video circulated on the media of a teacher disciplining a learner physically, the very next day the authorities would be sent to the school, whereas when teachers are harmed by learners, they do not respond as quickly, if at all. The majority of the teachers were in agreement that their employer paid more attention to the rights of learners than to the rights of teachers. The suggestion is that learners are aware that teachers cannot do anything to them; hence, they do as they please. After corporal punishment was outlawed, teachers should use other forms of discipline which is a challenge for many. Apparently, the new measures do not really work with the current breed of learners in schools today. For instance, the alternative of detaining misbehaving learners for a while after school is unrealistic in the current situation of violence in schools and the community. Anything can happen to a teacher when left alone after school or to learners on their way home from school and the teachers are the ones who bear the brunt of the consequences when harmful incidences occur. The following responses illustrate this point:

"Since we can't use corporal punishment, it is a bit hard because now students do not listen to you, so we end up using other forms of punishment like sending them to clean the toilets, which is also not a nice thing to do to learners. It can also get you into trouble with the authorities, because it may cause health issues. We are really unsure which right form of punishment is correct. Corporal punishment, even though it was nowhere near perfect, played a huge role and it worked" (Mrs Gama: Educator).

"The law has banned corporal punishment and it has become difficult to discipline them openly. They know you'll not hit them, so they do as they please and other means and methods are not efficient at all because suspension does not work. The department really needs to come with solutions, because we are really out of ideas for disciplining these children. Detention is not effective as well, because they fight there and also we

don't feel safe remaining behind with these children as some of them even carry weapons" (Ms Mbambo: Educator).

"Ever since corporal punishment was banned, we have tried other methods like extra homework in the hope that they will spend too much time on their books and not on wild things. But it is a huge challenge, and ever since the rod was spared children got spoilt" (Mr Mhlongo: Educator).

According to Kruger and Steinman (2003), a positive school climate is one in which learners are assisted along a number of developmental pathways. Educator-learner relationships should be characterised by caring and a positive school climate, which is impossible to achieve in settings where corporal punishment is involved. Teachers who still enforce corporal punishment tend to be more feared by their students than teachers who do not use corporal punishment. One may argue that enforcing fear will not necessarily ensure that learners will respect the teacher, as some may still challenge the teacher even if corporal punishment were reinstated. It has been demonstrated in the literature that corporal punishment is counter-productive and an ineffective form of curbing unwanted behaviour, but it encourages students to be violent (Gibbs, 2012). It is important that principals and educators understand that administering corporal punishment is unlawful, despite its alleged benefits as a disciplinary measure. Alternative disciplinary measures have to be explored to ensure that both learners' and teachers' rights are honoured. Children have rights as entrenched in the laws of the democratic government of South Africa, and parents should also respect the fact that children have rights. The administration of corporal punishment at home and not in school also poses a challenge for teachers because learners who are used to certain types of punishment become resistant to other forms of punishment. Corporal punishment teaches learners that violence is a method that can be used to solve problems (Gibbs, 2012).

5.5.4 Support services

According to the research findings, the schools under study were in great need of support services due to a variety of socio-economic issues. Learners often face insurmountable challenges, most of which are family matters that influence their behaviour at school. Violence in the community and in the family setting exposes children to various harmful behaviours that have a negative psychological effect on them. According to Ngidi (2018:87), many learners

"...come from broken homes and homes prone to domestic violence and in such cases, learners need a proper role model who can redirect their interest from the one prevalent within their homes and communities". Social services can be of assistance in providing psychological support to traumatised learners, as the following comments attest:

> "*The department doesn't provide us with any support services. They just tell us that we are in control of our classrooms and learners and that if we arrive prepared, then we shouldn't have a problem with learners in our class. They never suggest visiting the school grounds to check if everything is in order. If a learner is a victim, a teacher is dealt with immediately and the sad part is that it never happens vice versa*" (Ms Khumalo: Educator).

> "*We have not been provided with any support services. They don't do anything, nor do they protect us. The support is very limited. Even though the incidences that had occurred here resulted in the closure of the school, there was no support whatsoever for the teachers. While we teach in class, we teach in fear because some of these learners are always armed. During exams the teacher has to invigilate, knowing that a learner might have a gun*" (Mr Zulu: Educator).

> "*The department does not provide us with any support services. Nothing whatsoever; I remember dealing with my own trauma from that incident I told you about earlier where I had to cover the student victim with my own body. There is no set structure to help us deal with such and it affects our families because we are also parents and fathers*" (Mr Mbambo: Educator).

> "*They try to send their people from the department to speak to the students but they never do follow-ups, and so it is useless. They must do it more frequently. We as teachers do not get any form of therapy, but there is a need for counselling because we can't deal with trauma the same way*" (Mr Mhlongo: Educator).

It was quite apparent that both learners and teachers had been exposed to traumatic events at their schools, but little, if anything, had been done to offer psychological interventions to help them cope. It becomes very difficult for both learners and teachers to carry on as normal after they witnessed violent events. The educators admitted that they worked in fear all the time

because the incidences of violence they had witnessed affected their working relations and their psychological equilibrium. Social workers can get to the root of the problems learners experience and that teachers might not necessarily be equipped to address. The following response from an interview session illustrates this point:

> "*The social workers sometimes come, and this other community outreach that I forgot. All the other structures hardly come under normal circumstances, where students are troublesome but, in the case when a student is a victim, they give it their all. I believe such structures should fairly champion all cases*" (Mrs Biyela: Educator).

5.5.5 Security measures

My observations confirmed that all the schools had security guards stationed at the gates. However, their presence did not prevent acts of violence on the school premises. Visible signs had been erected at the gates to indicate prohibitions, but it seemed impossible for the security guards to search for drugs and weapons every day at the gate as more than 1500 students or more entered each of these schools every morning. The security guards seemingly prevented unauthorised entry by people from outside, but breaches in the fences made it easy for delinquents to slip into the schools relatively unnoticed. According to Mgijima (2014), measures to prevent and reduce school-based violence in South Africa such as installing metal detectors, employing security guards, CCTV cameras, and conducting frequent searches are taken to ensure that the safety of schools is guaranteed. However, this is not the case at most schools in South Africa that depend on the subsidy they receive from the government or the school fees parents pay. Holes in the fences were also used by learners to leave school whenever they pleased. Interview responses illustrate this point:

> "*Also, if we could have at least two police officers to patrol right round the school premises it would be helpful, because we only have two guards situated at the gate who aren't even armed. They aren't even safe either, because I've seen in the news about schools where security guards are being harmed and some were even killed. It would be great if the Department of Education and the SAPS could work together. In the seventeen years I've been a teacher, I've never seen anything like what I have seen in these past few years. It seems to be getting worse day by day"* (Ms Sibiya: Educator).

"Every time after school there are such scandals here because the teachers leave too early, and the securities aren't efficient because we smoke with them anyway, and they usually arrive late. When we are late, they just let us in because they know us now, and you could say we are friends.... Some of us come from afar and have to walk; sometimes it's hard to wake up when it's cold. Some students don't have transport to get to school on time" (Sanele: Leaner).

"We don't even feel safe on the premises. We only have one security guard and we recently had a break-in, and projectors were stolen. So during night classes, we are terrified" (Ms Nkosi: Educator).

Andrew Cornew (in Zululand Observer, 8 November, 2013) observes that more and more teachers want to leave the profession as they do not feel safe or protected in their schools. According to the participants, teachers' property was regularly tampered with. For instance, cars had been vandalised, mobile phones and money had been stolen out of handbags, water had been poured over a teacher in the classroom, shelves had been vandalised, and school property had been stolen. Teachers admitted that they did not bring valuables into their classrooms because they might be stolen. The learners also stole calculators, schools bags, and books. Despite having security guards stationed at the gates, learners had made holes in the fence through which they entered and left at will. In the UGu district, during the days of data collection, I observed boys from outside selling cigarettes to learners over the school fence.

Poor and inoperative security systems at the schools, including illegal openings in fences, facilitated uncontrolled access to the schools' premises by outsiders (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2017). The KZN DBE revealed, during KZN parliamentary questioning, that nearly half of all provincial schools had no security personnel and, in the absence of security guards, these schools became even greater soft targets (Erasmus, 2015). It was observed as the researcher travelled thorough these disadvantaged areas that most schools did not have security guards stationed at the gates. The researcher generally noticed an elderly man at the gate whose job it seemed to be to open the gate and register those who entered. Research has indicated that even schools that have security guards are unsafe due to their lack of competency to perform their job (Erasmus, 2015), which compromises the safety of learners and educators on the school premises.

5.5.6 Areas where violence occurs

South Africans have seemingly become prone to violence as violence occurs almost everywhere on school premises. When the participants were asked where violence normally occurred at their schools, they were unanimous that it occurred "everywhere". However, most illegal activities seemed to occur in the toilet areas more so than anywhere else. It was reportedly in the toilets where learners got up to mischief: drugs, cigarettes, and cannabis ('space muffins') were sold or hidden in the faucets. Research indicates that bullies choose to operate in toilets because these areas are unsupervised by teachers and other adults and, therefore, are ideal to use for bullying and victimising others (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2017). The danger that lurks in toilets is reportedly heightened by the use of drugs and weapons. This finding corroborates Ngidi and Moletsane's (2017) comment that toilets are spaces where cigarettes (which are forbidden in schools), cannabis, alcohol, and other drugs are hidden, used, traded, or collected. In the face of these threats to learners' and teachers' safety, one security guard at the gate seems ludicrous as it is impossible for teachers to search these spaces regularly. The teacher participants in the current study revealed that the extent of violence in their schools was now at the point where it happened everywhere, and there were no areas where they felt completely safe. Teachers had been assaulted in classrooms and learners had fought in classrooms or had been dragged outside and beaten. Fights had also erupted in staffrooms, on the playgrounds, and outside the school gates. The following responses illustrate these comments:

> *"It mostly starts in classrooms, but it can happen anywhere. Sometimes you find yourself walking absent-mindedly in the corridors and step on someone's shoe by mistake. When you try to apologise to the person, he just starts slapping you, so you never know where you're safe in this school*" (Zano: Learner).

> "*Most things happen during class sessions. When you find learners bunking class, you will find them smoking or fighting. Sometimes they even fight during the lesson and the teacher ends up running away in fear of getting hurt"* (Mr Ntuli: Educator).

> *"In the morning, they are better behaved but as the day goes by, you can notice the change in them, especially after school, around the toilet areas. If I were to take a walk*

around the toilets, I would probably smell weed [cannabis] or find them drinking" (Mr Nsele: Educator).

"It's mostly outside. We know when we hear a lot of noise outside then there must be a fight, be it verbal or physical. The teacher who handles the matter is usually the designated teacher for those learners. And we try to not give them a chance to hurt each other, so the minute we notice a commotion we go and split them up" (Mrs Ndaba: Educator).

"It happens that learners fight and hurt each other. I witnessed an incident where a learner entered my classroom and beat up another so thoroughly that he had to be rushed to the clinic for medical help. I've also witnessed leaner-on-teacher violence. We sometimes think they are mostly on drugs, because in class a teacher and a learner might have an altercation but the learner ends up raising a hand at the teacher" (Mr Ngobese: Educator).

"They happen in classrooms between teachers and learners. Learners also have their own cases during break times, where they are fighting either physically or verbally. I've never heard of a case that has happened in the toilets though" (Ms Nxele: Educator).

"Mostly outside; it's unusual for it to be in classrooms. Usually, it occurs during breaks" (Mrs Zulu: Educator).

"It happens anywhere. Even though they have their smoking spots or havens, most of the time the fights start and happen in class" (Ms Ndlovu: Educator).

The data revealed that the teachers were gripped with a sense of fear and hopelessness, which was compounded by the fact that they left violent communities in the morning, only to spend their working hours in equally violent conditions. Some of the perpetrators of school-based violence were linked to criminal activities in the communities where some of the teachers and learners lived. Burton and Leoschut (2013:68) state that learners who participate in school violence often spend time in environments where they are exposed to criminal offenders and violent acts. Hence offenders "...are encountered in all spheres in which learners operate, including their homes, their peer groups, as well as in the broader community in which they

live". The study also found evidence that the culture of violence in township communities was linked to the manner in which learners reacted and behaved within their respective school environments. For a school to be a safe environment for learners and teachers, the community also needs to be a safe environment, because schools are part of the community. Burton and Leoschut (2013: 68) observe that "any plans to improve safety and security at schools would inevitably have to extend beyond the school environment itself in order to be successful in the long term".

5.6 Conclusion

This section concludes the first part of the findings that focused on the types, causes and challenges that are faced by learners and teachers in relation to school violence in the four districts in KwaZulu-Natal. There are different types of violence which were identified throughout most of the districts. These forms of violence emanate from the violence that exists in the communities in which schools are situated in. Teachers have mentioned that not being provided with the necessary support services that will help them cope with the traumatic incidences they sometime faced with schools is a major challenge for them. Most teachers mentioned that the lack of parental involvement in their children academic and social lives was also a contributing factor towards violence in schools. It was also identified by the learners that the manner in which teachers treat them in school was the cause of aggression amongst the learners. Learners reported on incidences were teachers had called them names and embarrassed them in front of other learners.

CHAPTER SIX

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE AND SUGGESTIONS TO MITIGATE ITS PREVALENCE IN SCHOOL

6.1 Introduction

Education role players argue that violent attacks on educators occur as a result of increased alcohol and drug abuse among learners (Dlungwane, 2017). Substance abuse is one of the most common, if not the leading, cause of violence among the youth in South Africa. Access to illegal substances is the source of blatant forms of violence directed at authority figures such as educators and principals of schools. A national study on violence in schools established that there was an increase in reports of violent attacks on educators by learners (Burton, 2008). According to a study on teacher responses to school violence in Cape Town, participants reported a number of symptoms of social and psychological distress: shame, guilt, lack of assertiveness, anger, powerlessness, feeling of being blamed by others, and withdrawal from others. Some reported feelings of aggression towards other learners as a result of victimisation, and some reported classical symptoms of 'burn out' (Shields, Nadasen & Hanneke, 2014). Learners who experience or witness incidents of violence have the potential to become depressed and this may affect their ability to learn in a negative manner. Learners lose concentration in class because they are afraid of what perpetrators will do to them during break or after school. Pereznieto, Haper and Coarasa (2010) argue that it is crucial that government and non-government stakeholders, including education authorities, schools, and civil society, promote a non-violent culture in schools.

## 6.2 The impact of school-based violence on educators and learners

6.2.1 Educators

According to the findings of this research, the violence educators experienced resulted in fear. Educators were afraid of confronting aggressive learners and this made them more reluctant to assist in dissolving learners' fights. This feeling of fear was exacerbated by the fact that learners carried weapons to school and were usually under the influence of drugs which caused fights to erupt. According to Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2003:65), educators' fears "...are genuine due to the terrifying conditions in many South African schools. [In fact], many

educators have been stabbed, assaulted, and robbed during school hours". Reportedly many teachers had become demotivated to such an extent that they did not enjoy teaching anymore. Some mentioned that, given the option, they would leave teaching altogether. According to Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2010), school violence causes educators to have negative developmental outcomes, lower academic achievement, less supportive interpersonal relationships, withdraw and engage in negative social behaviour as a coping mechanism and method of social functioning. The extent of violence against educators and its consequences, according to Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2010: 6), has even led to the identification of "battered teacher syndrome", which is characterised by a combination of stress-related symptoms such as anxiety, sleep disruption, depression, headaches, high blood pressure, and eating disorders.

The literature also highlights the effects of violence in South African schools. Violence disrupts the school environment and makes it difficult for educators to teach effectively (Prinsloo, 2005, 2006; Burton & Leoschult, 2012; 2013). Teachers spend more time enforcing discipline than on teaching to complete the syllabi. Constant fighting also creates an atmosphere that is tense in school, and this affects teaching and learning negatively. Many researchers have shown that the prevalence of school violence increases stress among educators and that this has psychological, physical, and emotional consequences (Hill, 2010; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Saunders, 2007). Figure 6.1 summarises the impact if school-based violence.

Figure 6.1 Impact of school-based violence on educators
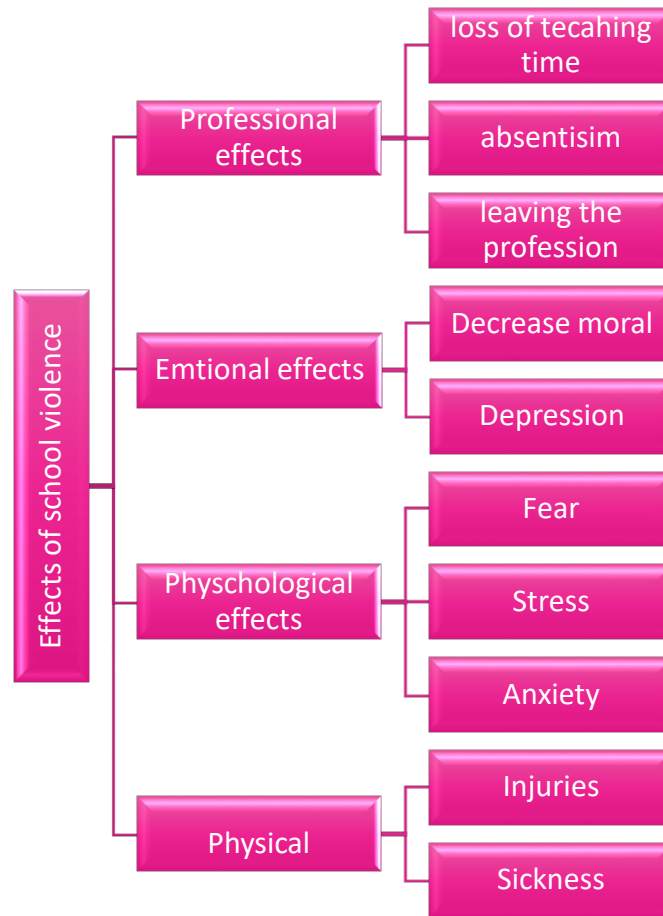
Source: Researcher's illustration

6.2.1.1: Impact on teachers' professionalism

The following excerpts illustrate the impact of violence on teachers' professionalism

"*Professionally, it becomes very hard to teach the learners. You see, it's very hard to teach because a mere learner can challenge you as the teacher. Even if you give children an assignment to do, they don't submit it back at all just to provoke you. In a way, you should act like an adult and don't allow them to provoke you. Personally you can sometimes feel in a certain way towards some of the learners who are here in this school. For example, there was a boy who was troublesome in one of my classes. I asked the learner several times to leave my class and eventually he stood up and said, 'Listen, this is not your place, and if I want I won't leave. I don't know if you have a problem with that or what.' Actually, that affected me personally but I had to control my emotions. I realised that if I would beat the learner it would be against the law and, either way, I wouldn't be safe. To this day, when he sees me, he laughs in my face and*

there is nothing I can do about it, even though it affects me emotionally. It's not only professional insulting, but it's also personal, because it was an action directed at me" (Mr Zulu: Educator).

"I do fear these kids because sometimes they target certain teachers. I tend to be very strict but a few days ago I had a learner who called me out, telling me he would beat me up in a corridor. I had another case where I confiscated an item from a learner but the very next day, the learner said the mother wanted it back or else something bad would happen to me. Since then, I've been living in fear. I also informed the police about it and I reported the matter to the principal when I saw it was getting out of hand. We tried to contact the parents, but they are yet to show up whilst I keep on receiving threats from the alleged parent who we think is a learner. So this does not only affect me personally, but also professionally as my work suffers because I still fear that anything can happen at any time" (Mr Nsele: Educator).

"*It happens that you are professionally compromised as you end up focusing on the issues of violence instead of teaching. Personally, we fear for our lives when we see these kids playing with knives and other weapons; we feel that we aren't safe*" (Mr Khoza: Educator).

"*Teachers do not get the respect and credit they deserve, yet we mould all children's careers while the government does not do enough for us, let alone protect us from such violence. It should at least provide some sort of help. In South Africa, teachers are nothing; they a looked down upon and it doesn't make sense, it actually hurts. You see, very few people still want to be teachers because they see us struggling and it is not pleasing at all"* (Mr Ngcobo: Educator).

The extent of violence against educators and its consequences, according to Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2010: 6), has even led to the identification of "battered teacher syndrome," which is characterised by a combination of stress-related symptoms such as anxiety, sleep disruption, depression, headaches, high blood pressure, and eating disorders. Case (2011) reported that educators who are exposed to school violence might experience physical, emotional, and psychological consequences such as discomfort, low self-esteem, depression, suicide and others get killed by learners. Other possible results include a drop in the number of individuals interested in becoming educators, high levels of educator burnout,

and a large proportion of educators quitting the profession (SACE 2011:31). Some educators are stressed and depressed to a high degree. This is backed up by a study undertaken by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 10) in South African high schools, which found that teachers' morale is extremely low. Educators appear to feel isolated and unsupported by the Department of Education and school management teams (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013: 10).

6.2.1.2 Emotional consequences

Ngidi (2018) confirms that the exposure of educators to school-based violence could lead to physical, emotional, and psychological implications such as distress, reduced self-esteem, risk of depression, and even suicide. Being constantly exposed to violence is bound to have a negative impact on a teacher's emotional wellbeing. There are teachers who have reached a point where they do not want to be in the profession anymore, but they are compelled to stay because they have no other option.

A possible debilitating outcome due to prolonged exposure to stress caused by school violence is a high level of burnout among educators. Also, fewer people are now interested in becoming educators and a high number of educators resign from the profession (South African Council of Educators, 2011). Educators experience a range of debilitating emotional reactions in response to learners' violent behaviours (Steffgen, 2007). This statement is supported by the following responses from the interview sessions:

> "*It decreases your morale and drive as a teacher, because you always fear that anything might happen at the school. We can't even have extra classes because of the fights that have been happening here. The slightest bit of noise one hears leaves one fear-struck because one never knows what's happening these days*" (Mrs Nkabinde: Educator).

> "*It does get to my nerves at times because we deal with different types of learners who have gone through different situations. Some of these learners deal with drugs and the manner they treat you indeed gets to your nerves. It really does affect me deeply. My morale is affected daily*" (Mr Zulu:Educator).

"The whole point of school is for students to better themselves educationally; so such cases defy the whole intention, and discourage teachers from shaping students properly" (Ms Kunene: Educator).

"Sometimes you even feel like quitting and wish you could win the lotto and resign. They do not submit assignments at all. Even those who seem to be perfect just submitted today, after a month. Some even submit when the results are out, which indeed defies the purpose of formative assessment" (Mr Bhengu: Educator).

"It really does affect me personally because they have done a lot to me. I once took leave for two to three weeks because they had created a bad name for me. Everyone around the community hated me, but at the end of the day, I didn't care because all I had done was for the betterment of the learners. Even some of us teachers are a bad influence on these learners when we are after certain positions. They whisper false accusations to these learners and that creates havoc and chaos and the disrespect that we see now"(Mr Khoza: Educator).

6.2.1.3 Psychological and physical consequences

Many scholars argue that school-based violence results in negative developmental outcomes for teachers, low academic achievements for learners, unsupportive interpersonal relationships, and withdrawal and negative social behaviours as coping mechanisms and methods to function socially (Westhuizen & Maree, 2010; Steffgen, 2007). The research findings revealed that many teachers were traumatised in more ways than one by various acts of violence that had occurred in their schools. The participants mentioned that teachers who had been victimised in the workplace had received no kind of psychological intervention from the employer. Direct observation also showed that most teachers had not fully recovered from traumatic experiences but were at the same time expected to resume their duties as if nothing had happened. Many scholars believe that violence against educators and its consequences lead to the 'battered teacher syndrome' which is characterised by a combination of stress-related symptoms such as anxiety, disturbed sleep, depression, headaches, elevated blood pressure, and eating disorders (Van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2010; Steffgen, 2007). This is supported by the following responses from the interview sessions:

"Just to narrate an incident I was involved in last year...A group of learners were fighting during my lesson and one of them took out a weapon. In a short space of time, I was caught in the middle, trying to protect the other kids in class, and my hand was injured for he had a knife. I don't want to dwell on the topic, because it really affected me" (Ms Sibiya: Educator).

"I have experienced many traumatic incidences in my teaching career. There was a case when learners shot each other as they were playing with a gun in class. That was really terrifying. I don't even want to mention how traumatic it was for the teacher who was in this class but they didn't provide any form of support. That was a huge case because it was seen as a homicide but they didn't do anything. It seems that the Department of Education pushes teachers into the deep end without any form of escape plan; they don't really care about the wellbeing of teachers" (Mr Mlambo: Educator).

"Last year we had a lot of fights and we lost a pupil, but they didn't do anything about it. I was one of the teachers who were affected by it and I ended up having nightmares and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) because of it. I don't remember anyone being counselled, even the learners, except the school union which didn't do much" (Mrs Nkabinde: Educator).

As Kolapen (2006) states, a growing number of educators suffer from problems connected to psycho-social depression due to the violent and unsafe atmosphere in classrooms. A Human Science Research Council (HSRC) (2005) survey revealed that a large number of teachers would leave the profession if they could. Other possible results include a drop in the number of individuals interested in becoming educators, high levels of educator burnout, and a large proportion of educators quitting the profession (SACE 2011). Some educators are stressed and depressed to a high degree. Unlike learners, teachers feel they are unable to take action against their perpetrators, which are learners in most cases. The research findings revealed that even though school-based violence physically impacted some teachers, the Department of Education paid little to no attention to their grievances. The researcher's direct observations, personal experiences, and anecdotal evidence have also shown that no clear communication or direction is provided on how teachers should deal with school-based violence. Workshops and intervention strategies seem to avoid this issue like the plague and nobody seems to have the answers. It is the researcher's conviction that there is an unfortunate communication

breakdown between the Department of Education and teachers when it comes to school-based violence, and this undoubtedly exacerbates teachers' frustrations.

6.2.1.4 Resilience

While most of the educator participants expressed feelings of despondency, some mentioned that they were affected by school-based violence only to a limited extent and felt obliged to continue pursuing this profession. This finding emerged from responses such as the following:

> "*I am a teacher because I love being a teacher. At the end of it all, there are learners who listen and actually do their work, which is why I don't let those who don't do their schoolwork destroy the passion I have for teaching. The fact that some learners do their work gives me hope that they will succeed and be better members of the community. That is the actual reason that encourages me to wake up and come to school*" (Ms Sibiya: Educator).

> "*As for me, I'd say I do my job regardless of the circumstances, because if the other teachers can try and push through, then nothing will stop me from doing the same. But what gets us down is the community's lack of support – without which, I can't do much as a teacher*" (Ms Nxele: Educator).

A comparison between teachers' mental health and that of other occupational groups found a higher level of mental fatigue, psychological distress, and burnout among teachers (Kovess-Masfety, Rios-Seidel & Dedeui, 2007). It is argued that this is due to the levels of violence that teachers are exposed to. Thus, the escalation of school violence in South Africa's high schools needs to be addressed before effective teaching and learning will occur. If violence in schools is eradicated, or at least curbed, a safe learning environment will be created for both educators and learners. If teachers feel safe and happy in their working space, they will deliver curriculum content efficiently. This will result in overall improved development and achievement which is the business of schools.

6.3 Learners

Because learners and teachers spend the better part of the day and most of the year at school, it is imperative that the environment in which teaching and learning occur is safe, trusting, and nurturing (Davids, 2017). However, in reality, this is not the case. Teachers and learners live in constant fear due to rampant violence in schools. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) state that victims of peer violence are haunted by the fear of what is going to happen after a lesson period or during break, and this negatively affects their concentration in the classroom. The persistent victimisation that learners are exposed to in violence-ridden schools affects their physical, emotional, and academic development. Victims of school-based violence suffer feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and fear, and these feelings engender a sense of inferiority and guilt and cause loss of self-esteem. They also "...predispose children to depressive and suicidal tendencies" (Singh, 2014:84). When teachers fail to fulfil their responsibility of teaching due to violence, it has a huge impact on the lives and development of learners. Teachers whose daily experiences are interrupted by acts of violence and intimidation obviously spend more time focusing on disciplining learners rather than on teaching, and this wastes invaluable teaching and learning time that is needed to cover the curriculum. This compromises the quality of education that is provided to learners. According to Bester and Du Plessis (2010), learners with poor academic skills become frustrated, lose academic motivation, and eventually resort to antisocial behaviour and violence. Figure 6.2 presents a diagrammatic illustration of the impact of school-based violence on learners:

Figure 6.2: Effects of school-based violence on learners
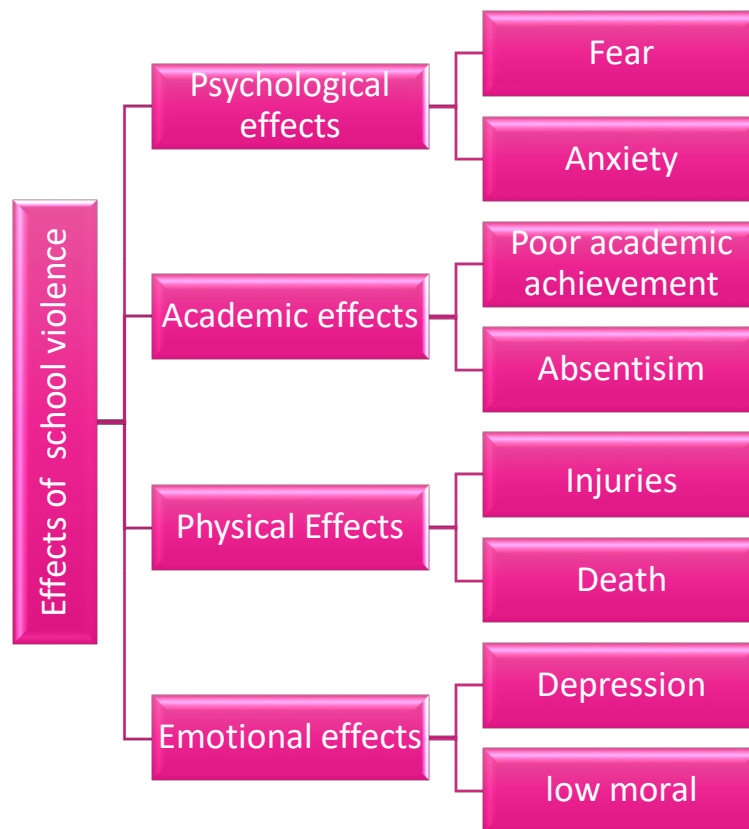
Source: Researcher's illustration

The following responses from the FGDs and interviews illustrate this point:

"It's bad because when they are fighting everything stops, and you can't be the only one left in class, because you might be injured. You would find that the people who start these fights usually pass their exams, whilst us who aren't involved lose focus so much that we end up failing. Thus, it does affect most of us" (Zama: Learner).

"*It doesn't affect you when it is happening because you are focused on watching it, but the aftermath is not good to anyone. What is really disappointing is that once a fight starts, it's the end of the lessons"* (Anele: Leaner).

"*It takes a lot from our teachers and, as a result, we don't get efficient efforts from them. Thus, most things become chaotic and sometimes academic activities come to a standstill. There is usually drama between parents and teachers"* (Londiwe: Learner).

"It does influence the performance, because you find that there might be a teacher who is being troubled by some learners in a certain class and he/she decides not to teach the class anymore. This way, the learners would be at a disadvantage in that subject. Sometimes it's only one mischievous learner, but still at the end of it all the school's performance is affected" (Mr Nsele: Educator).

"As long as we have learners who are troublesome and who don't listen − because, to be honest, every class has a bunch of learners who are disrespectful to teachers − then our schoolwork and performance are affected. Even if we try to concentrate in class, these learners try to disrupt lessons by cracking jokes or making nasty comments and, being only human, we laugh if something is funny. Eventually, this affects us who actually come to school to learn. Therefore, what usually happens is that, as a class, we try in vain to catch up by meeting and revising together" (Akhona: Learner).

"I have a cousin who had to be transferred from the school because she couldn't take the fighting. It disturbed her badly. She was moved to Durban and she is currently staying there. At that time the violence was too much. There were guns everywhere and people would even come to your house and attack you there" (Anele: Learner).

According to Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), the majority of learners who experience or witness high rates of violence may become depressed and this may negatively affect their ability to learn. Witnessing a fellow learner being shot or stabbed by another learner can be very traumatic for both children and adults. Learners are terrified of what might happen if these violent incidents occur during their lunch breaks or after school. Thus children are emotionally affected because walking back home from school becomes a frightening experience for most of them. The research findings revealed that most of the learners had lost concentration because they were afraid of what the perpetrators would do to them during break time or after school. According to Sifo and Masango (2014), physical abuse can be acute and far-reaching. Hence the immediate effect of physical abuse may be a bruise or a cut that can be treated by physicians or health providers, but the long-term effects may be as drastic as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Schools that experience high incidences of violence tend to have lower pass rates in all grades compared to schools that have fewer or no incidences of violence. In violence-ridden schools

such as the ones under study, learners naturally receive less attention and assistance from their teachers than their more law-abiding peers in well-disciplined schools. Due to a high level of indiscipline, teachers no longer have the patience to attend to learners' needs, particularly when classes are over-full. The main purposes for sending children to school are to provide them with an education and help them develop as worthy citizens of society. When learning does not take place, the school does not serve its purpose and this affects learners' future. In schools where there is minimal teaching and learning, learners drop out early and step into societal traps such as selling drugs, committing crime, and embracing prostitution. Addressing school-based violence is a matter of great urgency that the government needs to attend to. Sookha (2006a:2) supports this view and states: "If learner-crime is not brought under control in South Africa, this will have far-reaching consequences".

6.4 Strategies to mitigate school-based violence

6.4.1 Involvement of NGOs, CBOs, and government departments

The South African legislative framework has been designed to address, inter alia, the issue of safety in schools. While these efforts have been able to lower the rate of school-based violence in South Africa, this scourge is yet to be eliminated as a major social ill. Schools are faced with different challenges that cannot only be addressed internally but need external stakeholders who will assist in solving issues of violence within the school context. Ensuring school safety is not the responsibility of only one body, as it requires the combined efforts of learners, educators, parents, the school, the community, and the government (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). Through collaboration, different measures need to be put in place to help tackle the issue of violence in schools. According to Colvin (2009), one-sided intervention will not help a learner change his or her behaviour.

As a case in point, the schools under study started working more closely with government organisations such as the police, social welfare, health services, and traditional leaders to address the issues that had been plaguing them soon after the researcher visited them. They also assured the researcher that they were in the process of developing good relationships with these stakeholders in their attempts to deal with the social ills that had beset them for so long. The schools also extended open invitations to community members and invited them to

contribute to school activities, such as awareness campaigns, to deal with the challenges that affect their learners.

To improve collaboration among schools, parents, communities, and other stakeholders, the Department of Basic Education launched the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign QLTC (Nhambura, 2019). According to Modisane (2014), QLTC was established in 2009 to recognize that children's education is a collective obligation and a social problem. The collaboration strives to give communities complete input into the enhancement of students' education (Department of Education of Basic Education, 2015:2). In provinces including the North-West, Mpumalanga, and the Free State, the Department of Basic Education (2015:5) claims that communities with QLTC frameworks have gained benefits. According to the Department of Basic Education (2015), these provinces have experienced gains in teaching and learning, as well as the maintaining of non-negotiable things in schools, such as late learners, bullying, school violence and other issues. Therefore, the implementation of the QLTC framework by other provinces in South Africa can foster safe schools devoid of school violence.

6.4.2 Involvement of law enforcement agencies

Because violence extended beyond the borders of the schools under study, they were compelled to request the assistance of the SAPS. Thus, when a serious crime, such as the use of hard drugs, carrying guns/weapons, and gang activities, had been committed by learners, outside assistance was sought. The legal framework allows schools to collaborate with law enforcement agencies when life-threatening substances and weapons are found on the premises. It is therefore no longer up to the school to handle such matters alone, as the police are mandated to assist. The assistance of the SAPS is sought with the understanding that its members are well-equipped and trained to handle such cases. The research findings revealed that the police had been summoned to investigate delinquent students in the schools under study on countless occasions. As a result, a variety of techniques and initiatives, such as school-wide preventive, intervention, and emergency response measures, positive school atmosphere, coordination with police department, and community engagement, must be implemented (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). The partnership between the Department of Basic Education and the SAPS supports the objectives and priorities that drive the activities of both departments to reduce crime and violence in schools and communities. School-based violence has become an issue of such concern that government departments are mandated to assist in order to curb this

epidemic. The SAPS is the frontline department that is required to conduct safety programmes at schools with the aim of raising awareness of the devastation that delinquency can cause learners. This partnership between the SAPS and schools is formalised in KZN Circular No.71 (KwaZulu-Natal, 2009).

In the UGu district in particular, the police had been working closely with schools and running awareness campaigns to reduce incidences of violence in schools even prior to this project. The following responses from key informants illustrate this point:

> *"We invite the SAPS personnel to come and have talks with learners and make them aware about the dangers and consequences of being disobedient. For example, when we had a programme on drugs, we had an ex-offender coming to address the learners. They were quite intrigued by it because they think we always make up stories when telling them about the end results of being disobedient. We have a close working relationship with the police in this community, as they assist us with many cases that we often have such as drugs, faction fights, and truancy"* (Mr Mlambo: Educator).

> *"We adopt corrective measures. We contact the nearby police station and the police come and give them a talk about all these issues and their consequences. They also talk about drug abuse and gender-based violence with the learners*" (Mr Mhlongo: Educator).

The researcher's direct observation revealed that the police were supportive. During the data collection period, they visited the school and interacted with the principal and the learners as well the educators. As a result, without the help of other key stakeholders such as social workers, psychologists, nurses, legislators, non-governmental organizations, and SAPS, schools and parents will be unable to address the matter of learner violence on their own.

6.4.3 Social services and rehabilitation centres

The prevalence of violence, drugs and weapons in schools is an indication of a deeper problem that originates in the community and/or in families (Ngidi, 2018). In townships such as the ones where the study was conducted, most learners are exposed to violence from an early age, often even before they enter school. Drug and alcohol abuse is a societal issue that has become

a problem in communities all over South Africa. Drugs are manufactured and sold in the community and are so easily accessible that even children have become addicted to them. According to Ngidi (2017:84), some of these learners "...come from broken homes and homes prone to domestic violence and, in such cases, learners need a proper role model who can redirect their interest from the one prevalent within their homes and communities". Socio-economic issues are the biggest influencers of the problems that prevail on school premises and therefore external stakeholders like the Department of Social Development (DSD) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have also come on board to assist teachers in schools. The DSD has a national drugs master plan that aims to deal with issues of drugs throughout South Africa (2017). This master plan also includes eradicating drugs in schools and communities. A member of the Executive Council for Social Development, Mrs Weziwe Thusi, vowed to join hands with school communities in the campaign to fight the problem of drugs and substance abuse. This means that learners who are addicted to drugs and alcohol may be referred to rehabilitation centres through the assistance of teachers and parents.

6.4.4 Community leaders

The research findings revealed that school management teams in rural schools turn to traditional/community leaders when they require assistance. These leaders still play a vital role in some communities as they are highly respected by the people. When the problem is beyond the scope of the school, they are called in to assist. This happened in two schools were friction had caused fights:

> "*There was a case of a friction fight last year. It only started with two people but it escalated so quickly that the school was divided into two rival groups. They started bringing weapons to school and outsiders started roaming outside the school gates with golf clubs and suchlike. As a result, we had to involve other stakeholders such as traditional leadership and the SGB, because those two organisations play an important role in the community*" (Mr Mlambo: Educator).

> "*Last year we even had to call the Chief and other community leaders to help us solve this violence, but it was pointless because they even fought in the presence of the Chief*" (Ms Mbambo: Educator).

6.4.5 A discipline, safety and security committee

The research findings indicated that all the schools involved in the study had a code of conduct which had been devised to combat violence and ensure discipline among the learners. Section 8 of the South Africa Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) requires that the governing body of a school adopts a code of conduct for learners after consultation with learners, educators, and parents. It is the duty of the principal and parents that learners are made aware of the school code of conduct and the consequences should it not be adhered to. Such a code of conduct is designed along various guidelines to direct learners' behaviour. For instance, violations against educators could be addressed through sanctions. Should any learner be found guilty of contravening the code of conduct, they can be subjected to one of the following punitive measures: (i) be suspended from school for a period of not more than one week, or (ii) receive a recommendation for expulsion, which can only be granted by the Head of Department of the Department of Basic Education. According to Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014), SASA does not define serious misconduct to justify expulsion, the specific disciplinary procedures to be followed, or provisions of due process to ensure that the rights of all parties concerned are not infringed on.

From the data collected it was evident that the participants understood that, in order to increase positive disciplinary rules, the school personnel needed to enforce the code of conduct to ensure that the school functioned symbiotically and efficiently. The code of conduct can be revised by the SGB over the years to address issues that are current. In one of the schools, the SGB had recently changed their code of conduct to meet the current needs of the school. The school had become stricter regarding learners who carried weapons and who were aggressive towards their peers and teachers. Expulsion was the harshest sanction. The school also adopted a system of monitoring learner attendance, and ruled that absenteeism would no longer be tolerated. When they had been absent, learners had to bring a letter from a parent or guardian on their return. Learners would also not be allowed to leave school without permission, which could be granted only by the principal.

Although all the codes of conduct sanctioned suspension and expulsion as disciplinary measures to correct misbehaviour, the respondents argued that this was ineffective to a large extent as learners had not changed their behaviour and those who had been expelled in extreme

cases still often roamed these schools. The following response from the interviews illustrates this finding:

> "*A code of conduct doesn't help. It's just a piece of paper, just a document. The kids we have here are like no other I have encountered in my previous years of teaching in other schools. They have no respect for teachers, adults and anyone in authority*" (Ms Jele: Educator).

Such collaboration is also echoed by Adelman & Taylor (2007) who argues that in the fight against school violence, the school safety committee calls on educators, students, parents, law enforcement agencies, companies, and faith-based organizations to participate. Schools can avoid, intervene, and respond to issues of student safety and security by adopting a comprehensive strategy.

6.5 Conclusion

The study's findings were interpreted based on the categories that each theme encompassed. The findings were compared to the literature gathered in the literature review chapter. The findings are consistent with the study's theories as well as previous findings from other researchers. Schools have a difficult time dealing with student violence. The learning environment is no longer safe for teachers and students due to violence. Even though schools are equipped with learner discipline policies, they are proving to be ineffectual in regulating school violence. The study explored the prevalence of school violence in high schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Most participants revealed that violence was clearly prevalent in their schools and had a negative impact on the learners, as they could not learn properly, and on teachers, as they could not teach effectively in an unsafe environment. Therefore, it was concluded that discipline and good relations between the learners and educators needed to be restored in these schools. In addition, the research findings revealed that the community in which the schools are situated largely contributed to the prevalence of violence. Parents need to play a bigger role in their children's education by counselling and disciplining them rather than shifting these responsibilities onto educators. According to the literature, there is general consensus among scholars that an environment that is rife with violence, chaos and unruly behaviour is not conducive to teaching and learning.

Positive discipline seems to underpin every aspect of successful teaching and learning in a school, but when discipline is negative and humiliating, as it is in the case of corporal punishment, it then needs to be readdressed. Most cases of ill-discipline that are related to violence are linked with crime and violence that exist in the community. For instance, drug abuse is a societal problem and learners purchase these drugs from community members on their way to and from school. It is also the community that breeds well-known drug dealers who target schools as their market area.

Learners and educators were given the opportunity to offer suggestions for ways to address violence in their schools. All the participants attested to the existence of a code of conduct that was used to combat violence and ill-discipline among learners. However, they also agreed that these codes were ineffective due to a lack of law enforcement interventions. The study recommends that community involvement remains the key to tackling school-based violence because this problem, as a social ill emanating from the community, requires a holistic approach with combined efforts of learners, educators, parents, the school, the community, and the government.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION, REFLECTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"Education is the vaccine for violence"

-Edward James Olmos-

7.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study and provides conclusions derived from the findings. It further proffers recommendations for alternative solutions to the menace posed by school-based violence and for further study. The empirical research methodology (Chapter Four) and the data analysis (Chapter Five and Chapter Six) informed the conclusions and recommendations for further research. Overall, it was apparent that the prevalence of violence in these schools required immediate action by all relevant stakeholders such as government departments, principals, teachers, parents, and even learners. Equally evident was the association between school-based violence and the violence being experienced in homes and communities, which is a situation that lends credence to the need to treat violence like an epidemic that needs to be cured as a matter of urgency (Butts et al., 2015).

The following are general conclusions derived from the objectives of the study. The objectives were to:

- identify the nature and extent of school-based violence in the selected high schools in KwaZulu-Natal;
- identify the various contributing factors to school-based violence in the selected high schools in KwaZulu-Natal;
- establish how learners and educators were affected by school-based violence in the study area;
- assess the existing challenges that impeded responses to violence in the selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

The safety of learners and teachers was a matter of grave concern considering the environment in which the schools were located. Educators and learners complained about the non-availability of security personnel in School B, and the futility and dysfunctionality of the

security personnel in School A, even if they were available. Therefore, educators and learners felt insecure on these schools' premises. It was observed that school fences had been breached leaving gaping holes, and this allowed illegal entrance of potential perpetrators of violence into the school.

Figure 7.1: Findings in sequence

Objective	Research question	Theme
1) To identify the nature and extent of school violence that occurred in the selected high schools in KwaZulu-Natal	1. What are the common types of school violence in the selected high schools in KZN?	Nature of Violence in Schools ▪ Carrying of weapons and fighting ▪ Physical and verbal abuse by learners ▪ Gender-based violence ▪ Bullying ▪ Cyber-bullying ▪ Verbal abuse of and by teachers
2) Identify the various causes of school violence in the selected high schools in KZN	2. What are the various causes of school violence in the selected high schools in KwaZulu-Natal?	Various causes of school-based violence ▪ Drug abuse ▪ Gambling ▪ Alcoholism and smoking ▪ Socio-economic issues ▪ Community-based violence ▪ Gangsterism

		▪ Cultural beliefs and practices – fighting strength caused by 'muthi'
3) Assess the responses to school violence in selected high schools in KZN	3. What are the challenges faced by the selected high schools in their response to school-based violence?	Challenges faced by the selected high schools: ▪ Lack of parental involvement ▪ Disciplinary challenges ▪ Corporal punishment ▪ Support services ▪ Security measures
4) Establish whether learners and educators (male and female) were affected differently by school violence in KZN	4. How are learners and educators (male and female) affected by school violence in the selected high schools in KZN?	Effects of school-based violence on educators: ▪ Professional effects ▪ Emotional effects ▪ Psychological effects ▪ Physical effects Effects of school violence on the learners ▪ Psychological effects ▪ Academic effects ▪ Physical effects ▪ Emotional effects

5) Examine the effectiveness of current measures of curbing violence in the selected schools in KZN	5. What are the strategies used to mitigate school violence in the selected schools in KZN?	Strategies used to mitigate school violence: ▪ Involvement of NGOs, CBOs and government departments ▪ Involving the Police ▪ Social services and rehabilitation centres ▪ Discipline, Safety and Security Committee

7.2 The nature and extent of school-based violence in the study sites

The study found that the commonest acts of violence prevalent in the schools were vandalism, theft, gangsterism, gender-based violence, carrying of weapons, fighting, and bullying. In some of these schools (those in Pinetown and UMgungundlovu in particular), the violence had reached such proportions that the schools had to be closed. The fights involving learners resulted in the injury of learners and teachers and, in some cases, they resulted in the death of learners. It emerged that, in some of the schools, violence had become so prevalent that the principal and teachers had to deal with it so frequently that this impinged on teaching and learning time.

7.3 The Causes of school-based violence

The study established numerous factors contributing to violence in schools. These included drug abuse, gambling, alcoholism and smoking, socio-economic issues, community-based violence, gangsterism, and cultural beliefs and practices such as using 'muthi' to strengthen the fighting spirit and physique. The schools were not functioning separately from the communities in which they were situated as the causes of violence in the schools had spilled over from community-based acts of violence. Drugs and alcohol posed a huge menace to the

communities as they reportedly accounted for a high number of incidences of violence. The study revealed that the problem of drugs at a particular school also manifested in the community in which the school was situated. Drug problems seemingly overwhelmed the selected schools, calling for a number of stakeholders to collaborate in tackling the problem. Some learners sold drugs in the schools on behalf of well-known drug lords residing in the communities. This posed a huge danger to learners and teachers alike. Socio-economic issues such as poverty compelled some of the learners to adopt criminal behaviours in order to survive. For some learners, it was crime that enabled their families to put food on the table as selling drugs in particular was a source of income for them. Community-based violence clearly spilled over into the schools where property was often vandalised and stolen. The study also revealed that some violent incidences, particularly gang-related conflicts, often started in the community and spilled over into the schools.

7.4 The effects of school-based violence on learners and educators

The study found that school-based violence had psychological, emotional, physical, and professional impacts on learners and teachers as the direct victims and witnesses of violence in schools. It was found that educators' professionalism was compromised as violence that interrupted their lessons diminished their professional image and capabilities and distorted their achievement as educators. Many stated that they became disoriented and confused, particularly as clear guidelines on how to treat such incidences were not available or, if alternative measure were applied, they were ineffective. They argued that dealing with violence was time-consuming as the principal and educators often had to abandon lessons in order to attend to such issues. Apparently, a great deal of teaching and learning time was lost, making it difficult for teachers to finish the syllabi. This phenomenon compelled the educators to rush through the syllabi and many thus disregarded the need for learners to understand the concepts or to re-teach difficult areas, which negatively impacted the quality of the education they were able to offer.

Another finding was that teachers' morale was negatively impacted by acts of violence and some even wished to quit the teaching profession. Some educators who had been traumatised by incidents of violence experienced flashbacks, nightmares, and disorientation to such a degree that they had to be hospitalised. Some learners had to repeat grades because of constant disruptions that caused loss focus on their school work. It was also clear that learners and

educators felt vulnerable, traumatised, and unsafe in these violent-ridden school environments. The constant menace posed by school-based violence caused severe stress responsiveness, which often resulted in negative emotional as well as physiological reactions to their everyday work situation.

7.5 Challenges in response to school-based violence

The findings suggest that the community and parents also need to become involved in order to combat violence in schools and the community. It was found that most parents left the responsibility of disciplining their children to teachers. Teachers bemoaned the fact that parents hardly attended meetings, which made it difficult to address issues that involved their children. Ironically, some parents rather defended their children's behaviour when they were taken to task instead of rectifying the delinquent behaviour, and this compromised the educators' role as disciplinarians *in loco parentis*. Another challenge that exacerbated disciplinary disobedience was that learners seemed to be aware that no matter how bad their behaviour might be, they would not get expelled from school. According to the teachers, misbehaving learners were allowed to remain at school and were expelled only rarely under extreme conditions. The schools used suspension as a form of punishment and that seemed to be working to some extent, but it was normally the learners who were disinterested in school who were suspended, and they enjoyed their time of freedom. This measure thus did not improve their behaviour at all. The study also found that the DBE simply transferred delinquents from one school to another, which did not seem to provide sustainable solutions to the problem.

7.6 Recommendations pertaining to the findings of the study

A vital requirement for effective teaching and learning is that the schooling environment is conducive for educational activities. However, this cannot occur in an environment characterised by violence and learner indiscipline. Regardless of extensive research on discipline in schools, many principals and teachers are still grappling with indiscipline and delinquency. It is impossible for educators to facilitate teaching and learning in a disorderly, disruptive, and unsafe environment. Based on the problems that were highlighted by the participants (see Chapter Five and Chapter Six), various recommendations were formulated and are offered in this section.

The findings that are illuminated by the ecosystem theory indicate that school is a vacuum where a number of factors that are both internal and external to the school contribute to school violence. Because of the complex interrelatedness of these issues, a number of role players need to come on board if violence in schools is to be curbed and, ideally, eradicated. The recommendations are aimed at role players in three categories: the DBE, school managers, and relevant government agencies.

7.6.1 Recommendations concerning the DBE

7.6.1.1 Support structures available to educators and learners

Based on the findings, it is proposed the schools under study should seek the support of various professional services to complement the efforts of the teaching professionals and to stem the tide of school violence. A wide range of socio-economic issues contributes to violence in schools, but some are beyond the capacity of teachers and they should therefore collaborate with professionals that specialise in related fields such as social work and psychology. Educational psychologists and social workers are professionally qualified to provide appropriate therapeutic services to teachers and learners at individual, family, and group levels of intervention. Educational psychologists can identify the type of programmes a particular school requires. As a result, social workers, psychologists, and counsellors must be employed by the DBE. These professionals should be stationed in schools, collaborating with teachers. Learners should be able to easily access psychologists, counsellors, and social workers. Learners are confronted with a variety of social concerns, some of which prompt them to act violently. Some of the issues that teachers face with students are beyond their ability to handle. Counsellors, psychologists, and social workers will relieve teachers of the load of responding to students' social concerns. Counsellors, psychologists, and social workers would be able to quickly identify students who pose a danger to other students and teachers. They can provide the required assistance once they have identified such students before they harm or hurt other learners or teachers.

Depending on the needs of the school, conflict resolution programmes that focus on classroom management practices, substance abuse, and anger management may be offered in violence-ridden schools. Such interventions may ease the burden placed on teachers and allow them to focus on teaching while psychologists and social workers deal with learners who are affected

by, or who persistently perpetrate, acts of violence. Baker (1998) concludes that school-based psychologists should facilitate the restoration of schools as caring communities because of their knowledge of children's psychological development, the unique culture of a school, and their role as organisational consultants and mental health advocates for children,. Numerous horrific incidences of violence were referred to in Chapter Five, and these attested to the fact that teachers and learners had not received professional services to help them cope with the victimisation they had witnessed or experienced. These professionals can benefit teachers who suffer the brunt of school-based violence and who need to speak to professionals who can restore them to their normal functioning. It is thus vital that the Department of Basic Education ensure that schools have access to educational psychologists as they are in a position to advise, train, inspect, and monitor problematic learners.

The study found that most learners in these township schools came from broken family backgrounds. Some lived with single parents or grandparents, and others came from child-headed households in these disadvantaged communities in KZN. Due to the sensitive nature of the study, in-depth biographical data were not obtained from the learner participants. However, their teachers, who were involved with these learners on a daily basis, referred to their adverse domestic conditions throughout our conversations. What clearly transpired was that the lack of parental interest and involvement made it difficult for the educators to hold meetings with learners' parents. The educators were concerned that some of these learners did not have a support system or a figure of authority at home. Social workers are capable of identifying such learners and offering them professional help.

7.6.1.2 Training programme on school safety and security

The in-depth interviews with the teachers revealed that none of them had received any training on school safety and security, and they were thus often unsure whether or not they were doing the right thing when enforcing safety and security measures. It is therefore vital that schools' governing bodies, teachers, and principals be trained to address school-based violence in the most effective way possible. The DBE should develop training programmes that specifically focus on miscreants and violent learners. These programmes should involve teachers, principals, and members of the School Governing Body who, in turn, must approach social welfare organisations, the South African Police Services, and psychologists as experts in their field of work to help devise a comprehensive guide to school safety and security.

Moreover, all government departments must create synergies that uphold the interests of the child (Nhambura, 2019). Collaboration among health, social, correctional and educational services must be encouraged. Representatives of each service must constitute part of a multidisciplinary team that works to promote the interests of learners and teachers. Some teachers mentioned that they had received training on bullying, but that it had been a one-day session and did not seem to yield tangible results. The teacher participants who were relatively new to the teaching profession indicated that they had experienced difficulties in dealing with violent learners. Such teachers need to be prepared for and equipped with mechanisms that will help them deal with the issue of violence whenever it erupts.

7.6.1.3 Improving security measures

The findings clearly indicated, as so many studies had done before that the schools were not equipped with proper security measures. For instance, all four had only one security guard manning the main entrance gate while other gates were left unattended. It is thus recommended that schools should have at least two security guards who should alternatively roam the premises and take turns to man the gate. Most schools pay a security company from the school fees that the parents pay as the DBE does not provide funds for security per se. The DBE should thus amend this policy and employ professional security firms to guard schools, as this will undoubtedly improve levels of school violence.

Many learners enter school premises carrying weapons and drugs because no one searches them. If schools do random searches, it may help to prevent the free flow of dangerous and illegal substances and objects. In one of the schools, CCTV cameras were very effective in capturing incidences of violence in the school. This strategy also assisted the principal to keep abreast of what transpired in the school at all times. However, such a system is expensive and often not within the means of township schools. But all schools should at least secure their fences around the perimeter toward off intruders. The researcher, on the premises of these schools, noticed damaged fences that obviously facilitated truancy and illegal entrance. Principals and SGBs should ensure that the fences are repaired regularly so that learners are barred from going in and out at will.

7.6.1.4 Alternatives to corporal punishment

Most educators in this study believed that corporal punishment was the only solution to school-based violence, and they admitted that, for this reason, it was still administered extensively regardless of its abolishment in schools. It was disturbing that some teachers still believed that inflicting physical pain on learners was a panacea that would address and curb indiscipline. As these schools already experienced high levels of violence, it is my view, which is strongly supported by the literature, that schools should adopt alternative measure to instil discipline and curb violence. However, some teachers were either reluctant or too naive to consider alternative ways of dealing with violent and misbehaving learners, as their adherence to the 'spoil the rod and spoil the child' maxim was deeply entrenched in their cultural and religious beliefs. The Department of Basic Education should therefore provide intensive training for principals and teachers regarding alternative disciplinary measures when dealing with problematic children to curb violence. Schools should be encouraged to focus on positive discipline and self-discipline as these expose learners to positive conflict resolution strategies that move away from violence.

7.6.1.5 Extending the period of suspension

The Department of Basic Education should give schools the authority to extend the 7-day suspension period, which is the prescribed sanction for serious offences. The participants argued that learners perceived this period as a 7-day vacation and then came back to continue the same delinquent behaviour as before. The findings thus suggest that alternative measures, such as doing community service during the suspension period, are better than sitting at home for a week. In the researcher's experience, projects such as painting walls, mending broken furniture, and doing gardening are not only constructive, by also leave learners with a sense of achievement and accomplishment. Being exposed to the realities 'out there' will provide opportunities for delinquent learners to understand the error of their ways, and this may help to change and modify their behaviour. This change can also be achieved if schools worked closely with NGOs for placement in areas where learners can do community work. The official process prescribed by the Department of Education for learner expulsion is arduous and long and should be reviewed. Transferring delinquents to another school is also short-sighted as it does not solve the problem.

7.6.1.6 Modifying the curriculum

It emerged from the findings that learners need to be more intensively sensitised to issues such as violence, aggression, bullying, and substance abuse that are covered in the Life Orientation syllabus in all the grades. This subject focuses on social, personal, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical growth and development in children. Delivering this curriculum should thus focus on violence so that learners will be sensitised to its causes, effects, how to avoid it, and conflict resolution strategies. This will result in a shift towards a positive attitude in learners which, in turn, will result in more socially acceptable behaviours among learners and the reduction of violence in schools. The researcher thus recommends that curriculum planners in the DBE amend the Life Orientation curriculum to include topics such as 'how to deal with emotions in an acceptable way and at an early age'. The amendment of the Life Orientation curriculum should address issues that learners are currently facing as this may help them deal with violence and aggression. The normalisation of violence and aggression in schools has numbed learners' sensitivity towards and respect for their fellow human beings, and they thus need to know about the consequences of their violent and aggressive behaviours. Only then will they learn to be responsible for their actions and eventually appreciate the fact that rights come with responsibilities. The Department of Basic Education needs to ensure that it re-instils the values of *Ubuntu*, as it is these values that define us as worthy human beings.

7.6.2 Recommendations to address school leadership

7.6.2.1 Involvement of parents

The importance of parental involvement cannot be over-emphasised. The study established that very few parents, if any, were actively involved in the education of their children. There is an urgent need for parents to adopt a positive attitude and take proactive initiatives to support their children's education. Parents often shift the responsibility of disciplining their children onto educators, who cannot do much as their hands are tied when they receive no support. Some parents are aware of their children's behaviour even though they don't reside with them but with guardians. These parents should show interest in the wellbeing of their children by staying in contact with the school to check on the behaviour of their child/ren and how they are progressing in their school work. Upon the registration of their children, parents should be compelled to sign an agreement in which they pledge to be actively involved in all aspects of

their children's education. Upon enrolment, schools should also ensure that they capture all the relevant personal details of learners, parents, and guardians so that a comprehensive database of learners' contact details can be compiled. Schools must develop and implement awareness programmes and formulate innovative ways of increasing parental involvement in their annual plans on topics such as 'how to be active parent' or 'being an involved parent'. The South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) attempts to forge a partnership between parents and teachers in order to increase the level of parental involvement in the lives of their children at school, but evidence is clear that this goal of the Act has not been achieved in many schools.

The findings further indicated that many parents and community members were role models of violence and exposed children to violence at home and in the community. Therefore, parents should moderate their aggressions and model peaceful and harmonious behaviours that children may emulate. The social learning theory avers that behaviour is acquired, maintained, and modified, and therefore parents and community members should epitomise peaceful and positive conflict resolution mechanisms. School programmes that are aimed at addressing school-based violence should also involve parents and community members as they are the people whose behaviour children model. The dissemination of the information on school violence to parents and community members can assist in inculcating model and correct behaviour and prevent the sources of school-based violence –i.e., homes and the community – from compromising children's behaviour. One of the schools under study had launched the initiative of inviting members of the community and parents to be part of school-based activities. The programme focused on drugs awareness as many learners had a drug problem. Such an initiative should be adopted by all township schools in order to assist parents and community members to keep abreast of the developments regarding school violence.

7.6.2.2 Partnership with learners

A focus group respondent revealed that the opinions of learners were not included in decision making on school matters even though they affected them. Learners should therefore also form part of these meetings as they need a better understanding of school violence and what actually contributes to aggressive acts of violence in schools. Schools should consider the input of learners on vital school matters that affect them directly. This will help learners appreciate and better understand why vital managerial decisions are taken at school. Working in partnership

with learners under certain conditions will inform them of the causes of violence in schools and they will disseminate this information to parents and other community members.

7.6.2.3 Monitoring the transfer of learners between schools

If learners who persistently misbehave are monitored, it will reduce the number of 'unofficial transfers or expulsions' of problematic learners. This will also afford principals the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the background of problematic learners enrolled in their schools. The findings indicated that misbehaving learners were often transferred from one school to another, but this merely perpetuated delinquency and did not curb school-based violence, which was a matter of grave concern among the participating teachers. The Department of Basic of Education should thus develop alternative strategies to deal with problematic learners as transferring them between schools does not solve the problem.

The study also uncovered that misbehaving learners were often older than the rest of the learners in their grades as they had experienced difficulties and could not be promoted without failing at least two or three time in their schooling career. Learners who are not academically gifted struggle in the normal schooling system and they resort to deviant behaviour. If these learners are sent to an FET institution for skills training, they will have better future prospects than if they remain at school. Schools should identify these learners and make their parents aware of such options and how they could go about helping their children.

7.6.2.4 Sport and recreation

According to the findings, and based on my personal observations, sport and recreation were limited to non-existent in the schools that participated in the study. The literature identifies both effective educational and recreational programmes as essential factors that may alleviate bullying, gangsterism, crime, and violence. The researcher therefore proposes that schools introduce and sustain healthy sporting activities so that learners may spend their spare time constructively. Participating in sport teaches discipline, perseverance, and a healthy lifestyle, and learners who take up a sport usually abstain from drug and alcohol abuse and they avoid becoming involved in gangs. Sports are designed to create a conducive environment in which youths can acquire respectful behaviours that are socially acceptable and encouraged. During these sporting sessions, teachers-cum-coaches are able to inculcate in learners social norms and

moral codes of conduct that are acceptable on the sports field and in society. The social learning theory maintains that children learn how to interpret the world by observing and imitating adult behaviours. According to Bandura (2012:20), "if a model is producing a behaviour that is appropriate, responsible, and positive overall, the observer will mimic that positive good behaviour". Coaches could thus exhibit positive behavioural patterns that children could observe and emulate. Schools should also offer an array of extra-mural activities in which non-athletic learners can partake, such as debating, chess, and drama.

7.6.2.5 Positive learner-teacher relationships

Positive learner-teacher relationships should be encouraged through mentorship programmes. Positive teacher-to-teacher relationships should also be forged to ensure that staff members collaborate when rules are implemented. Sound disciplinary measures should be consistent for all learners and favouritism should be eradicated. Schools need to be an environment where educators, learners, and parents are empowered to intervene in issues regarding discipline. School management teams should also act swiftly to address grievances about unacceptable behaviour by learners as well teachers to ensure that the issue of violence will not spiral out of control.

7.6.3 Recommendations pertaining to government agencies

7.6.3.1 Involvement of stakeholders

The study found that, in order to deal with school-based violence, various stakeholders should collaborate when tackling this problem. The ecosystem theory maintains that different systems contribute to violence in schools and therefore, in order to deal with the problem, a multiple stakeholder approach should be adopted. The school, parents, community members, and the government should determine how best to intervene in order to solve disciplinary problems. The inclusion of numerous points of view from various groups of people could help the schools get on the right track when it comes to dealing with student violence. This strategy sends a strong message to the public that school safety is a shared concern (Furlong, Felix, Sharkey & Larson, 2005:14). KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education, emphasised the importance of collaboration among many stakeholders by reiterating that putting state of the art security in schools will not address school violence, but parents and community stakeholders must join in

and take responsibility for developing in their children a sense of good and wrong (Nhambura, 2019). The school forms part of the larger community and thus various government departments and NGOs should integrate their efforts to reduce violence and crime in communities. Studies have shown that the rate of school-based violence is very high in communities with high rates of violence compared to communities where crime rates are low. The findings confirmed the economic impact of School Violence study by Pereznieto et al. (2010) which found that violence in schools often results from various socio-economic issues that originate in the community. Children then emulate this culture of violence in their behaviour at school. Combating violence in the community is thus synonymous with combating school-based violence.

Children are the responsibility of everyone in the community. An African proverb states 'It takes a village to raise a child', and therefore teachers, parents, communities, and various government departments need to take collaborative responsibility for children's behaviour. Stakeholders must be motivated to find a common solution to the problem of school-based violence. Collaboration between the Department of Health, the Department of Social Development, the Department of Correctional Services, the Department of Basic Education, and the SAPS must be encouraged. Community leaders and a Community Policing Forum member must also be part of safety committees at schools. The researcher further proposes that schools institutionalise a multidisciplinary committee or team comprising representatives from each of these departments. These people will need to work together to serve the best interests of teachers and learners. In one of the schools in the Zululand District, a programme had been launched in which the researcher also participated. Part of the programme involved different stakeholders, community leaders, and parents who addressed the learners and teachers on various topics associated with safety and well-being.

7.6.3.2 Substance abuse programmes

The study corroborates earlier findings on studies conducted on Delinquent Behaviour, Drugs and Alcohol by Akers (1984) and the National Schools Violence Study by SACE (2011), that substance abuse and physical confrontation are the most common causes of school-based violence. It is therefore recommended that all schools adopt substance abuse prevention programmes that are designed to identify the causes of violence and devise violence prevention strategies. Incorporating these programmes into the school annual calendar can assist in dealing

with the high level of drug and alcohol abuse many schools are currently facing. Agencies such as the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA) should actively support such programmes. Law enforcement agencies should also be part of these programmes as the abuse of drugs is a societal problem. Substance abuse in schools should be addressed holistically and partnerships should be developed involving various stakeholders. Law enforcement should ensure that prepetrators face serious consequences, particularly those who sell liquor to children under the legal age of 18 years.

7.7 Reflections

Conducting this research was a rewarding learning experience that enriched my research skills and understanding of the topic under investigation. Before commencing the field work, the researcher visited the principals of the sampled schools. They appeared excited about the study but, in the case of one school in particular, when the researcher arrived on the scheduled day for my meeting with the teachers and learners, the principal seemed taken aback. Things appeared disorganised and teachers were unavailable after school. New appointments were made, but they again did not materialise. This posed a serious challenge because reaching this particular school was a mammoth task as transport was not readily available. For instance, on the last day, the researcher was stranded because there were no taxis back to Durban. It was a very frightening experience because where the researcher resided there were no meter taxis and the only option the researcher had was to hitch a ride back to Durban. The researcher had not anticipated that such a dangerous situation would ensue. It was particularly frightening because the researcher was stranded in a location where women had often been raped and even killed. The researcher learned to always enquire about transport issues before travelling to unfamiliar areas.

The researcher resolved to use her own vehicle rather than to rely on unreliable public transport in future. After her disappointments at the first school, the researcher visited the second school which was in a different district. Here, she faced huge obstacles as well. The researcher met with the teachers and explained the reasons for undertaking the study, and they unanimously indicated that they would not participate in any such study. It seemed that the researcher would be unable to recruit any teacher participants. Before leaving the school, the principal mentioned that it would be difficult to recruit teachers who were perpetrators of school violence themselves. The researcher's first encounters were therefore emotionally draining and

demotivating experiences. However, she persevered and eventually recruited teachers who were willing to participate and from then on the interviews ran smoothly.

7.8 Limitations of the study and recommendations for Future Research

- This study, like any other study, had certain limitations that have to be acknowledged. One of the shortcomings was that the study was confined to teachers and learners in only four schools in only four districts in KZN. The scope was thus relatively limited and the findings may not be gerenalised to the entire school population in KZN or South Africa.

- At one of schools that where incidences of violence were notoriously rife, the teachers declined to take part in the study despite the fact that the principal had given his permission. The researcher had to identify and visit an alternative study site, which was time-consuming. The researcher also first had to establish good and trusting relations with the study participants before actually commencing the interviews.

- The study was limited to learners, teachers, and principals. As school-based violence is a societal problem, including parents and community members in the study would perhaps have yielded richer and more reliable data. However, the scope of this study had to be limited as the results were obtained from rural and peri-urban schools in violence-ridden settings, and the researcher could not compromise her own safety.

- The recommendations are founded on the data that exposed various types of friction in schools. So severe had this friction been at times, that it had resulted in a number of schools in these areas being closed from time to time. It was thus a pity that the study had to exclude the views of community leaders and chiefs as they would have contributed thick data based on their knowledge of conflicts in these areas.

7.9 Conclusion

The study provided sufficient evidence to corroborate earlier findings that crime and violence in on the rise in South African schools. Although statistical data were not provided to support this statement, the rich, authentic views of teachers and learners from violence-ridden schools in township areas in four different districts in KZN attested to the fact that learners' behaviours had often escalated to intolerable levels of violence and criminality in these schools. The study

further corroborates findings pointing to a relationship between community violence and school-based violence in high schools. Schools are a vital sub-sector of the larger community and external forces thus impact the functioning of schools to a large degree. Socio-economic issues that impact communities such as the abuse of alcohol, drugs, and other substances are also key factors that instigate and exacerbate school-based violence in high schools. Based on the findings, it is imperative that various stakeholders and agencies work together to curb school-based violence. School leadership teams need to be equipped with the relevant skills to manage and reduce school violence. While some participants maintained that the disciplinary measures available to schools were ineffective and that many teachers still believed in the use of corporal punishment, the study ironically revealed that corporal punishment contributed to learner aggression. It is an undeniable challenge that teachers need to devise alternatives to corporal punishment.

The research questions and objectives were adequately addressed as the findings succeeded in identifying the nature, extent, and causes of school-based violence in the investigated schools.

This thesis is concluded with the wise words of Martin Luther King:

> *"Violence never brings permanent peace, it solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones. Violence is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win in his understanding. It seeks to annihilate rather than convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys communities and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue... Violence ends up defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers."*
>
> **-Martin Luther King-**

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Letter of Consent

30 January 2018
0312602460

Dear Parent Guardian

REQUEST FOR PERMISION: PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

I am Londeka Ngubane, a PhD candidate of the University of KwaZulu-Natal within the Criminology and Forensic Studies Cluster. I am currently conducting a research study titled: *School Violence in Selected Schools in KwaZulu-Natal*

Your child's school was purposively selected to be one of the schools to participate in the study and your child was also selected to be one of the learners to participate, I therefore

request your permission to allow your child to take part in the study. Permission to access the school was granted by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (see attached letter). Participation in the study is purely voluntary and the information will not be passed on to any other person. You are assured uttermost confidentiality. The research activities will be undertaken after school hours and will only take 30 minutes. The information is for academic purposes only, designed to enhance our knowledge and understanding of discipline in schools. If you agree or disagree to that your child participates in this study, please complete the attached slip.

Should you require further clarity you can contact my supervisor Dr. S Mkhize on this number 031260 2460 or email him: mkhizes1@ukzn.ac.za

Yours sincerely

………………………………………

Nomakhosi Sibisi

RETURN CONSENT SLIP

I………………………….parent of…………………………..does/does not give
permission to the above request.

……………………………………………………………………………….

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

I…………………………………………………… (full names of participant) hereby confirm
that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I
consent to participating in the research project and for the interview to be recorded by an
audio equipment. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time,
should I so desire.

Signature of Participant…………………….. Date………………..

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS

School Violence in Selected High Schools in KwaZulu-Natal

- Recommended pseudo name?
- Age?
- Gender?
- Grade

Focus group guide for learners

1. What forms/types of school violence occur in your school?
2. What are the possible drivers of violence?
3. How are you affected by school violence?
4. How have you responded to school violence?
5. Have you ever been exposed to violence either at home or in the community?
6. In what way does school based violence affect your school performance?
7. How do you cope with school based violence?
8. How effective are school rules in protecting you as learners from violence?
9. In which places does violence normally occur in your school?
10. What do you think can be done to reduce school violence in schools?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

School Violence in Selected High Schools in KwaZulu-Natal

- Recommended pseudo name?
- Age?
- Gender?
- Years of experience as an educator?

Interview questions for teachers

1. Which are the different violence perpetrated against teachers by learners?
2. What are the consequences of violence perpetrated against teachers by learners?
3. How does school violence affect you as an educator?
4. How did you respond to incidence(s) of school violence?
5. What challenges do you face in disciplining?
6. What are the long term consequences in-school violence in school?
7. Where does this violence normally occur in the school setting?
8. What support structures are available for educators and learners to deal with the trauma induced by school violence?
9. How can school based violence be addressed?

APPENDIX D: UMHLAHLANDLELA WEQEMBU OGXILE KUBAFUNDI

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

Udlame ezikoleni ezikhethekile esigungweni saKwaZulu-Natal

- Iminyaka ?
- Ubulili?
- Amabanga?

Umhlahlandlela weqembu ogxile kubafundi

1. Iziphi izinhlobo zodlame olwenzeka esikoleni sakho?
2. Iziphi izimbangela zalolu udlame?
3. Ngabe lolu udlame lwasezikoleni lukuphazamisa kanjani?
4. Ubhekane kanjani nodlame lwasezikoleni?
5. Ngabe usake wabhekana nodlame ekhaya noma emphakathini?
6. Ngabe udlame lwasezikoleni luwaphazamisa kanjani amazinga okwenza kahle?
7. Ubhekana kanjani nodlame lwasezikoleni?
8. Lingakanani iqhaza elidlalwa imigomo yesikole ukuvikela abafandi kudlame?
9. Lubhidlange kuphi nendawo esikoleni udlame ?
10. Ucabanga ukuthi ikuphi okungenziwa ukunciphisa udlame lwabafundi ezikoleni?

APPENDIX E: IMIBUZO NGXOXO YOTHISHA

Udlame ezikoleni ezikhethekile esigungweni saKwaZulu-Natal

- Iminyaka?
- Ubulili?
- Ububanzi besipiliyoni sothisha?

Imibuzo ngxoxo yothisha

1. Iziphi izinhlobo zodlale olwenziwa abafundi kothisha?
2. Imiphi imiphumela yodlame olwenziwa abafundi kothisha?
3. Ngabe lukuhlukumeza kanjani lolu udlame njengoba uwuthisha?
4. Ubhekane kanjani nezigameko zalolu udlame lwasesikoleni
5. Iziphi izingqinamba obhekana nazo uma uqondisa igwegwe?
6. Imiphi imiphumela esinesikhathi ikhona odlameni lwabafundi ezikoleni?
7. Ikuphi lapho lolu udlame lwenzeka khona kakhulu ezikoleni?
8. Iziphi izinhlaka ezikhona ezisiza othisha nabafundi ukuze babhekane nomkhokha walolu udlame ?
9. Kungalwisanwa kanjani nodlame lwasezikoleni?

APPENDIX F: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

03 May 2019

Ms Nomakhosi N Sibisi 212521280
School of Applied Human Sciences – Criminology and Forensic Studies
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Sibisi

Reference number: HSS/0903/017D

Full Committee Reviewed - Change in project title

I wish to confirm that your application in connection with the above has now been granted full approval.

- **Old:** The effects of school violence on learners and educators in selected High Schools in KwaZulu-Natal.
- **New:** School violence in selected High Schools in KwaZulu-Natal.
- **Change in title**

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

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 1 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes ██████ essful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithf ██████

....
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr S Mkhize
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr M Mthembu
cc School Administrator: Ms A Ntuli

APPENDIX G: GATE KEEPERS LETTER

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
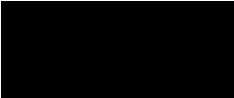
Ms NN Sibisi
PO Box 141818
Madadeni
2951

Dear Ms Sibisi

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 April 2019 to 01 October 2021.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma 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. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

(PLEASE SEE LIST OF SCHOOLS/ INSTITUTIONS ATTACHED)

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 05 April 2019