

An Exploratory Study on How Democratic School Management Practices Affect the Dynamics of Violence in Schools

Petro van der Merwe*

Department of Psychology, University of South Africa, PO Box 392, Unisa, 0003, South Africa

Abstract: The goal of teachers, schools and support staff is the optimal development of learners. This goal depends on effective school management, which in turn depends on an adequate curriculum and supporting teaching and learning environments. This paper is focused through a literature review on the dynamics of violence in South African schools and the need for democratic school management. The necessity of emotional intelligence teaching in the classroom and learner-centred teaching is shown. This study also investigated the coordinated and integrated management of positive learner behaviour, whole school development and management of a culture of positive behaviour. The establishment of a safe school depends on the management's interaction with the larger social and organisational context in which they find themselves. The study concludes that there is a correlation between Emotional Intelligence teaching methods and learners' behaviour. The use of Emotional Intelligence in the classroom can be regarded as the corrective aspect of discipline, thus, preventing inappropriate behaviour of learners. Recommendations and guidelines for the use of effective adjusted and alternative teaching methods to support school management in the use of emotional skills in the school context are provided.

Keywords: Dysfunctional behaviour, Learners/Teachers, Classroom/classroom practices, School/School management, School violence, Emotional intelligence, Social-emotional interventions, Social behaviour, Interpersonal ability.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I do not enter the debate with new data on the causes of violence in South African schools. Instead, I want to reflect briefly on how a combination of individual, school, community and cultural factors can lead to school violence. While aggressive and violent (antisocial) behaviour can be associated with problems at school, pro-social behaviour (for example empathy and socially responsible behaviour) can be linked to achievement at school, peer acceptance and a peaceful school environment. A school-based socio-emotional intervention programme used as a strategy against violence is rooted in the fact that education can change awareness, that knowledge and teaching methods can promote pro-social behaviour, and that it can empower learners. The primary qualitative study on which this paper is based therefore endeavoured to determine which elements a socioemotional intervention programme ought to include to prevent violence and crime in schools. Although there is a growing concern about discipline, it is noteworthy that not all schools are experiencing disciplinary problems. And the question that needs to be answered is: why do schools have different levels of discipline despite the fact that their learners come from similar social backgrounds? Finding the answer to this question is a purpose of this

study. This study intended to investigate teachers' emotional intelligence and its effects on discipline strategies in the classroom for the purpose of increasing emotional and academic performance of learners. It is conjectured that teachers who have perceived themselves as being less emotionally intelligent might also perceive themselves as having low classroom discipline strategies and vice versa. The point of departure is that teaching emotional intelligence (EI) in the classroom can be of great value as an intervention against violence in schools. This study further aimed to determine whether emotional skills can be mastered in the complex atmosphere of a school.

1.1. The School Plays an Important Role in Community Psychology

Carrying knives, guns and other weapons has become part of daily school life in South Africa (Unisa Research Report 2007). The scourge of violence in South African schools is cause for concern; daily reports appear in the written and electronic media about high levels of violence, physical and sexual abuse, and gang-related activities in our schools (Mncube and Harber 2013). The Citizen (2012) reported that a 18-year-old boy was stabbed once in the neck and died outside the school gates of Vorentoe High School in Auckland Park, Johannesburg, allegedly in a fight over a ball. The school plays a central role in a child's socialisation, therefore it is critical that schools provide a safe environment where learning and growth

*Address correspondence to this author at the Department of Psychology, University of South Africa, PO Box 392, Unisa, 0003, South Africa; Tel: +27 12 429 2118; E-mail: vdmerp1@unisa.ac.za

can take place. The reality, however, is that violence and crime are an increasingly explicit part of our society, and that it erodes the school environment and undermines the educational process.

Although external socio-political and economic factors contribute to school violence, the way in which a school is organised and the extent to which its community is involved also contributed to the instability and internal conflict. In other words, school management and the culture of the school can create opportunities for violence and crime to flourish (Center for the Prevention of School Violence 2002).

It is every child's right to receive adequate education, because through education children can obtain knowledge and learn survival skills, so that they can eventually contribute to the development of their own communities (United Nation's Children's Fund and National Children's Rights Committee 1993; Amnesty International 2008). As an educational institution, the school therefore plays an important role in Community Psychology, as well as in Social Public Health Psychology. I believe that the integration of a public health and a social psychological approach is the basis for a safe school.

2. HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF VIOLENCE

The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002:5) defined violence as "behaviour by people against people liable to cause physical or psychological harm." It is also the understanding of this study that the basis of violence is social rather than genetic or biological, and therefore there are ways and means of reducing human violence.

The high level of violence in South Africa could be attributed to the violent legacy of apartheid, which involved not only gross economic and political inequality but also social dislocation caused by the physical removal of entire communities, violent repression by the apartheid state unavoidably resulting in violent resistance to it, the widespread availability of guns, and the perpetuation of patriarchal values and behaviours (Mncube and Harber 2013).

An affluent Afrikaans high school in the era of apartheid took part in this study. At present, about 98% of the learners come from disadvantaged groups. The structure of the teaching staff, however, remained unchanged, and the majority of the teachers were appointed in the years of apartheid.

According to the principal of the mentioned school, the level of unemployment among the learners' parents is very high. Gangsterism, criminal and domestic violence, as well as substance dependence are concerns in the area. I associate the forming of gangs in South African urban societies with poverty and unemployment, as well as the changing patterns in family life and socialising due to urbanisation. Young boys with poor economic prospects caused by the impact of post-apartheid, globalisation and neoliberalisation of the economy are especially more inclined to the lifestyles of gangsters (Dixon and Johns 2001). Hegemonic masculinity is an inevitable result of violence. Although it has been proven that masculine practices have changed in post-apartheid South Africa, the changes were uneven and the ongoing economic inequality can prevent change and promote violence (McGarth and Akooje 2007).

3. BACKGROUND OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

The World Health Organisation (WHO 2002:6) defines violence as, "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation." Looking specifically at the issue of school violence, popular discourse encapsulates all forms of, "intentional harm or discomfort inflicted on learners, including incidents such as schoolyard fights, bullying and drugs abuse" (Burton 2008:19). Violence in the school context can range from mental/psychological to physical forms of violence (Burton 2008; Jefthas and Artz 2007):

- Hazing or initiation
- Assault – physical or sexual
- Robberies
- Rape
- Murder
- Sexual harassment
- Intimidation
- Bullying
- Shootings
- Stabbings
- Gangsterism
- Drug trafficking and related violence

- Theft of property and vandalism
- Racially motivated violence
- Learner protests that turn violent

The violence situation at schools has a snowball effect. Children who would not normally be violent now use violence to defend themselves against violence. They are manipulated to establish and expand the culture of gangs and violence in schools. While in the past schools were safe havens for many children who lived under very difficult circumstances – a place where they could talk to teachers with confidence – schools have now become a place where children are manipulated into committing acts of violence (Community Alliance for Safe Schools 1999). It has become impossible for teachers to give problem-free instruction; they need far more support and in-depth knowledge to manage the situation in the schools – but they are not getting it.

4. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Ultimately, it is the management of the school that is responsible for creating an organisational culture of school ethos which minimises violence. It is essential that the school management accepts full responsibility for dealing with the problem of violence and crime. A school is a place where children are away from their parents for six to eight hours per day. If the school is not safe, learners are exposed to thieves, drug smugglers, rapists, gangs, and other perpetrators of physical and emotional assault. A school-based social-emotional intervention programme as strategy against violence is based on the principle that education can change awareness, that knowledge and teaching methods can promote pro-social behaviour and that it can empower learners (Van der Merwe 2009). The basic assumption of a school-based violence intervention programme is that if violence is acquired, it can be unlearned and learners can choose alternatives that do not include violence (Brackett 2009). Therefore the main aim of an intervention programme is; prevent violence before it take place.

Democratic education is an educational ideal in which democracy is both a goal and a method of instruction. It brings democratic values to education and can include self-determination within a community of equals, as well as such values as justice, respect and trust. Democratic education is often specifically emancipatory, with the learners' voices being equal to the teacher's (Waghid 2014). Democratic teaching is

necessary to create a democratic culture. In addition to learning what a democratic culture is, the learners must know how it applies to the classroom and the school (Western Cape Education Department (WCED) 2007). They must learn that rights must be balanced by responsibility:

- that if I have the right to my say, I also have the responsibility to listen to what others have to say;
- that if I have the right to protection of my belongings, I also have the responsibility not to steal from others;
- that if I have the right to polite and respectful treatment, I also have the responsibility to treat others the same; and
- that if I expect people to be on time, I also have the responsibility to always be on time


Discipline is associated with punishment. Discipline and punishment, however, are not the same. Self-discipline means that acceptable behaviour is revealed because of individual efforts, rather than external control and power. Punishment does not promote self-discipline – it only stops bad behaviour temporarily (Martella, Nelson and Marchand-Martella 2003). Punishment therefore attains a short-term goal, but in reality, it interferes with attaining the long-term goal of self-control. In Table 1, the differences between punishment and discipline can be seen in perspective (Vally 2005:4).

Discipline in school must therefore be characterised by the following:

- It formulates rules positively so that learners know what to do, rather than what not to do.
- It creates the expectation that all learners can and will be successful.
- It concentrates on giving learners concrete rewards and acknowledgment for their behaviour and compliance with the school rules, rather than mainly on misconduct.

For decades, corporal punishment to maintain discipline was used freely in South African schools. The history of apartheid is also the history of the cane. The educational system of the apartheid years was based on an antidemocratic and authoritarian philosophy. Teachers were encouraged to use the cane as a method to maintain discipline, and teachers felt that corporal punishment came in handy to exercise

Table 1: School Discipline

Punishment		Discipline
Emphasises what a child must not do		Emphasises what a child must do
Is a one-time event		Is an ongoing process
Insists on obedience		Sets an example to follow
Undermines independence		Leads to self-control
It is a way in which an adult can enforce power. It is sometimes shifted aggression when the adult is angry with someone or something else and transfers the anger to the child		Helps children to change
Is negative		Is positive
Forces children to behave		Accepts a child's needs to assert him-/herself
Thinks for the child		Encourages a child's ability to think independently
Destroys self-worth		Increases self-worth
Condemns bad behaviour		Promotes self-disciplined behaviour

control over the learners (Morell 2001). Reasons that teachers cited for corporal punishment were:

- non punctuality and arriving late for school;
- homework not done;
- behaviour that causes disruption; and
- not paying attention in class (Vally 2005).

Corporal punishment is now illegal in South Africa but is still commonly used and still supported by many parents and teachers despite the fact that numerous studies have shown that corporal punishment in fact encourages aggression, vandalism and antisocial behaviour (South African Human rights Commission (SAHRC) 2006; Vally 2005; Morrell 2001).

I am of the opinion that punishing learners, instead of determining the reason for their poorly disciplined behaviour, is not the solution. A sensible way to encourage self-discipline is to develop strategies in collaboration with the learners to handle these problems. In this manner, insight into the problems with which young people are faced can be attained. Often there is an obvious connection between these problems and social circumstances, which Table 2, will clarify.

The most appropriate punishment for misconduct can be determined against the background of the Bill of Rights (1996).

The Bill of Rights (1996) prescribes that:

- positive discipline must be promoted;
- self-discipline must be developed; and

- exemplary action must be established by regulating behaviour.

Disciplinary measures can be regarded as unreasonable when:

- it is excessive and administered in a careless way;
- it causes physical or psychological pain or harm;
- there is no clear reason for the punitive measure; and
- it is not suitable for the age group.

This Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. The Bill of Rights contains provisions to protect the rights of both learners to learn and teachers to teach in a safe environment free from all forms of violence. These rights are or have the potential of being infringed by the perpetuation of school-based violence or the tangible threat thereof (SAHRC 2006).

A safe school requires a balance between physical security within a caring school atmosphere and an efficient partnership between the school and the community. The whole community must be involved in a co-operative attempt to create a safe, caring environment to guarantee a positive school atmosphere. In view of South Africa's history, it is important for school managements to understand the social framework of the levels of violence, namely factors that cause violence, those that instigate it, and those that simplify it. Within the social framework, the levels of violence are as follows (Briceño-León 2005):

Table 2: Possible Social Reasons for Misbehaviour

General problem	Possible causes
Homework not done	Stressful domestic circumstances. An overcrowded, noisy household. No electricity or other necessary facilities. Some children must take on adult responsibilities, like rearing younger children or generating an income for the household. These circumstances leave limited or no time for homework.
Non-punctuality, late for school	Irregular public transport. The cost of transport is one of the biggest expenses in school-going years and it often prevents learners from attending school. Some older children have to take care of younger children because there is no parent figure or because parents do piece-work and have to leave very early, or are ill. Many children in our country have lost their parents as a result of HIV/Aids. The pressure to care for younger children causes learners to arrive late for school.
Not attentive in class	Problems in concentration can be caused by problems with hearing, sight, language or teaching methods, or can even be as a result of hunger. Disorderly conduct is often also a sign of emotional problems experienced by the child.

- The macrosocial level. On this level, relevant factors include social inequalities as a result of greater welfare as opposed to poverty, the conflict between more schooling (education) and less job opportunities, higher expectations and the impossibility to meet them, changes in family structures, and the loss of the importance of religion in daily life.
- The mesosocial level, where relevant factors include higher population density in poorer areas and urban segregation, a culture of masculinity, and changes in the drug traffic market.
- The microsocial level, where relevant factors include a greater number of privately owned firearms, alcoholism, and the inability to verbalise emotions.

This framework will enable school managements to understand what happens in a specific social reality between the two social dimensions, situation and culture. A better understanding of the sociological framework of violence can also enable school managements to suggest suitable interventions to build relationships between the school, the community and the parents.

It is impossible to improve the school situation without functional departments of education on national as well as provincial level. The National Education Department took some steps to address the high levels of violence in our schools, but so far it has not succeeded in proposing a strategy that can deliver results. Despite large amounts of money and time spent on these attempts, there is a higher scale and level of violence in our schools.

The previous Minister of Education, Nadelı Pandor, proposed a school oath.

We the youth of South Africa, recognising the injustices of our past, honour those who suffered and sacrificed for justice and freedom. We will respect and protect the dignity of each person, and stand up for justice. We sincerely declare that we shall uphold the rights and values of our Constitution and promise to act in accordance with the duties and responsibilities that flow from these rights. (News24 2008:1).

The introduction of such an oath evoked debate from all corners. Political parties, civil rights movements and individuals all opposed this plan. It was alleged that this oath would split the nation and would not promote social solidarity, as was the initial intention (Makhwanazi 2008).

5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1. Research Problem and Research Question

It is clear that a different approach is needed. This research wants to encourage school managements to concentrate on a change from a control-and-punishment approach to an approach of positive behavioural support that will promote an emotionally supported environment in the classroom.

The main research question posed here is: Which factors/elements should be present in a school intervention programme to ensure the effective combating of violence and crime at schools?

Research aims to expand our knowledge by finding answers to questions or solutions to problems. The research question let the sub-questions arise:

- What background knowledge possessed teachers and the school management on a peer mediation approach?
- What is the nature of teachers' training and knowledge and understanding of EI in the classroom?
- How is EI used as intervention in the school?
- Is the necessary support system in place to provide alternative and supplementary teaching methods to equip teachers with skills that promote EI?
- Are there supporting structures in place that promoted violence interventions in the school context?

5.2. Research Design

5.2.1. Social Structure and Learner-Centred Teaching

Learners must also attain social maturity. It is therefore important to identify the following social factors:

- the complexity or level of modernisation of the community in which the learner is growing up;
- the characteristics of the subculture of the learner and the attitudes of the community towards this subculture, and
- the family structure and the influence of the parents.

A learner-centred teaching approach will promote the learners' ability to develop a socially acceptable philosophy of life (Bearnon 2001). Learner-centred practices confirm that there are several personal (emotional), intellectual (cognitive) and social variables in the interaction in the classroom setup that influence the learner's learning process (Student-Centered Learning 2014).

Personal (Emotions)

- Environment
- Must develop emotional judgment
- Preferences
- Interests
- Constructive feedback necessary
- Affective motivation

Intellectual (Cognitive)

- Flexibility and preparedness
- Have the ability to manage the learning process on their own
- Capacity and reflection
- Knowledge of content and variation of conceptual notion
- Large range of religions and experiences
- Desire for knowledge
- Cognitive and metacognitive

Social

- Live in a quick-paced world
- Socially centred
- Ideas must be vocalised
- Influenced by peer group
- The need for interpersonal skills
- Context and community

5.2.2. Approach to Intervention Programmes

Veinot (1999:1) defined intervention as follows: "Prevention provides an escape from a negative life course, and helps to develop competency and knowledge that leads to a more desired life course in general."

There is no quick solution to the prevention of violence (School-based Violence Prevention Programs 2002). However, versatility is recommended. The learning area of Life Orientation is an example of an approach to the prevention of violence that integrates the relevant knowledge and skills with the school's normal curriculum.

Emotional Intelligence, or EI, represents the capacity or ability to connect emotions with one's reasoning processes (Goleman 1999). Rather than a universal remedy for all human problems, EI is a set of abilities that can be applied in prosocial or antisocial ways. To simply develop EI skills may not prove fruitful – we need to also implement interventions that address the contextual and motivational factors affecting the use of these skills (Saarnie 1997). The curricula of programmes aimed at increasing EI should be empirically-based.

It seemed that the values of the teaching strategies, school management strategies and violence

intervention strategies came into conflict at the mentioned school. A starting point for the action research was therefore to find ways in which to remove these contradictions.

I as researcher and volunteer counsellor at the school had to bring about a shared vision and ownership of the study among the participants to acquire their full co-operation. The shared vision, concerning the need to improve the learners' misconduct, was accomplished by developing emotional skills.

5.3. Research Methodology

The fact that the research was undertaken at one school only supported the choice of qualitative research as main research method, because qualitative research particularly looks for truths and realities within a smaller context (Bartunek and Louis 1996).

The grounded-theory method was used to develop and inductively derived theory (Corbin and Strauss 2014). This method enabled me to study the

phenomenon (the behaviour of the learners) within its context (the classroom) and facilitated the systematic generation of theoretical principles from, and grounded in, the data regarding the learners' subjective views and feelings about the behaviour of their teacher and the socio-emotional effect on them of such behaviour. These views and feelings were then analysed to gain insight into understanding how a teacher's emotional intelligence profile should assert itself interactively in the classroom with a view to optimising the emotional climate required for teaching and learning.

Four teachers at a high school in Tshwane took part in the action research programme to determine the link between EI teaching strategies in classroom practices and the learners' conduct. Four grade 9 classes were chosen to take part in the study. The Grade 9 classes were chosen for the research as these learners' behavioural problems were insurmountable. The misconduct of the learners and occurrences of violence in these classes often made it impossible for the teachers to manage their classrooms or to teach.

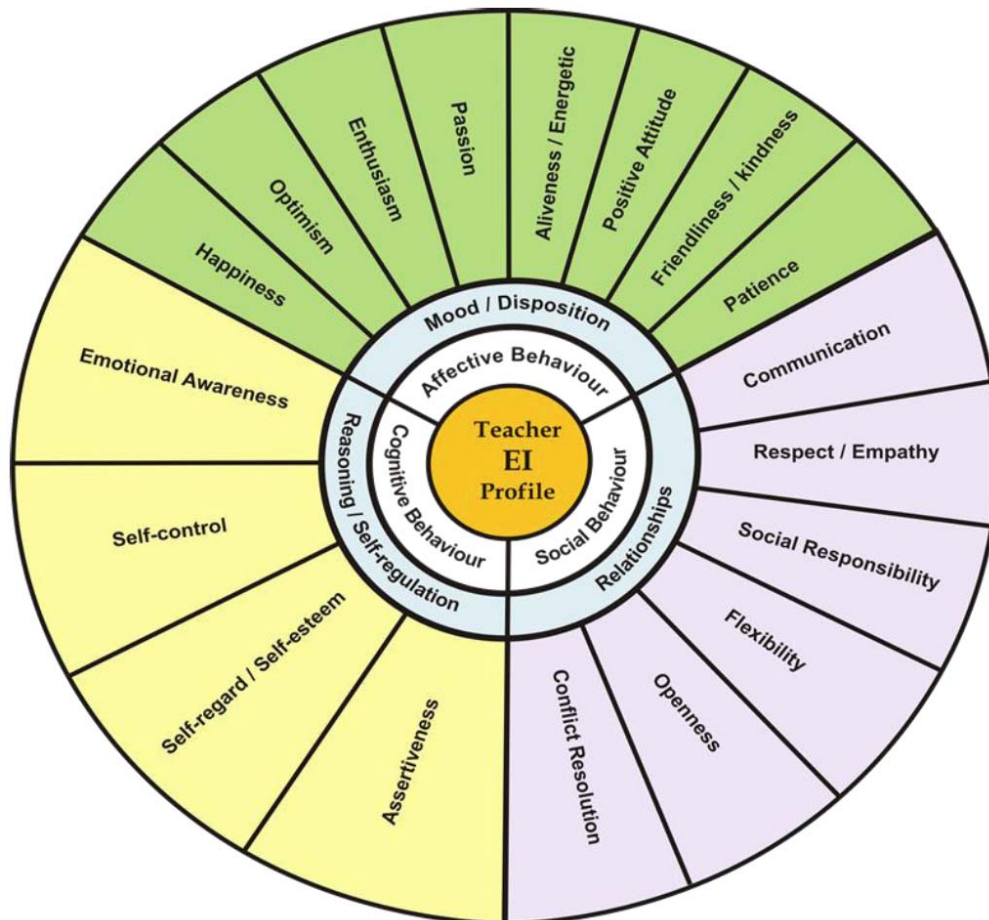


Figure 1: Core teacher behaviour to promote Emotional Intelligence in the classroom.

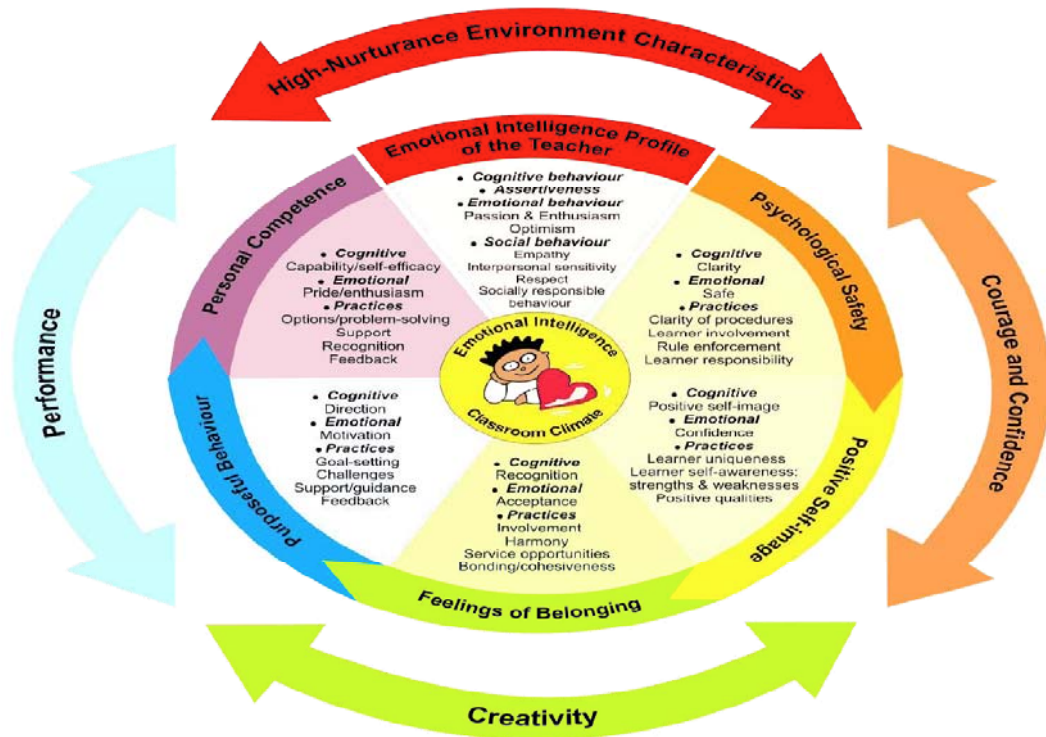


Figure 2: The cycle of emotional creativity in the classroom.

To establish whether EI strategies do indeed influence learners' behaviour, the teachers were asked to employ these strategies deliberately in the classroom for a period of four weeks. The circle on core teacher behaviour and how to utilise EI in the classroom as a teaching opportunity provides guidelines (van der Merwe and Jansen 2015).

Figure 2 reflects the behaviour and conditions of the circular and dynamic process of applying emotional creativity to create high or even no nurturance classroom conditions (van der Merwe and Jansen 2015).

Figure 2 illustrates how teachers, as secondary educators, are limited in the range of levels available to them in their quest to influence the learners' performance in the broader socio-emotional context of their psychological existence.

Observation techniques and semi-structured focus group interviews served as data collection methods for this study. The experiences, perceptions and attitudes of the learners as well as of the teachers regarding EI in the classroom were analysed. Then followed the collection of the data to support or reject the research hypothesis. Repeating key themes in the teachers, learners and school principal's responses were highlighted and compared to my own observation and

field notes. In this way, it becomes possible to connect the action research with the wider issues concerning discipline in the school. The self-reflection part of the action research is the ideal method that teachers can use to improve their classroom practices. In retrospect, the analysis of the teachers' actions (classroom practices and EI development) showed how important a positive school atmosphere is to contribute to discipline in the school.

Permission was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Basic Education to conduct an empirical study at the school. Consent was also obtained in advance of the principal and governing body to conduct research at the schools. Teachers voluntarily participated in the research and could withdraw at any time if they feel like it. A parent or guardian was also required to give consent before a learner could take part in the study. When a learner chose not to take part or did not have a parental consent form, any statement they made was not included in the data. Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at the University of South Africa.

6. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I will deal with the deductions and recommendations regarding each of the following two objectives:

- to ascertain whether there is a connection between learner behaviour and teachers' EI teaching methods, and
- to evaluate the impact of school management practices on learners' conduct.

As I mentioned earlier, the teachers experienced tremendous discipline problems with the learners. The biggest problem was that the teachers did not understand the benefits of EI teaching strategies. They had to receive guidance about alternatives to corporal punishment in order to keep control in the classroom. EI teaching could be seen as the alternative to corporal punishment. The worst problem was that the teachers did not make the punishment fit the offence.

6.1. Teachers' EI Teaching Methods

The study showed evidence that EI may in fact play an important role in the prevention of school violence. Learners' EI rises when teachers use EI strategies in their teaching. My conclusion is therefore that Emotional Intelligence does indeed have a positive effect on learners' classroom behaviour. The teachers agreed that there was a noticeable difference in the learners' behaviour when EI strategies were used.

Teachers said:

- *The use of emotional-intelligence teaching made the learners sit still and pay attention. Discipline also improved in the class with this method.*
- *The learners' behaviour showed remarkable improvement, and I definitely put this down to the emotional-intelligence method I followed.*

I find the remark from one of the teachers that the learners did much better at group work very positive. Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy and Ramsey (2002) found that individuals with high interpersonal and EI scores show a definite preference for co-operative learning and group work.

Positive remarks from learners:

- *If we don't agree with this teacher, we can talk about it.*

One teacher received negative comments from some learners. One learner said to her:

- *Stop this behaviour, you are pathetic.*

This negative, destructive attitude discouraged the teacher from continuing with the use of EI strategies in

the classroom. I believe that the development of EI in these learners would actually have enabled the teacher to break this cycle of negative behaviour. A teacher with positive feelings about him- or herself can create a therapeutic atmosphere that is more powerful than the negative emotional climate created by the learners' behaviour, feelings, ideas or attitudes. In general, the teachers received positive feedback and remarks from the learners.

6.2. School Management Practices

School managements should encourage teachers to invest in action research. Action research relies on the improvement of one's own practices (Johannes 2005). To improve one's own practices involves doing things in a novel way. Action research can minimise the gap between theory and practice.

School managements should offer teachers in-service training sessions and workshops to make them aware of EI teaching methods, and thereby enabling them to use EI efficiently in the classroom.

The school climate and how discipline is administered can also promote or discourage aggressive behaviour among learners. Different factors in the community also affect children, such as the socio-economic status of the school, whether it is a rural or urban community, and the views and attitudes of the community. The community refers to areas in which the child, the family and the school, plus all the other inhabitants are situated.

Culture also plays a role in every child's social relationships. Culture is a shared, learned, symbolic system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shapes and influences perception and behaviour. A certain culture's views regarding the use of violence, sexism and racism are examples of cultural issues that have an influence on interpersonal relationships.

It is clear from the research that school violence is a complex social problem that cannot be ascribed to a single causative factor. It is a form of an aggressive behavioural pattern that develops in the child as a result of life experiences and exposure to several risk factors.

School management should be involved to equip the parents with emotional skills, among other things, with the aim to let them develop into socio-emotional skilled parents.

A combination of individual, school, community and cultural factors can lead to school violence. All of these factors must therefore be taken into consideration when a programme is developed to prevent crime and violence in schools. These factors are not constant, but they are interdependent, and therefore constantly influence each other.

Managing learner behaviour has become a challenge for schools in South Africa. The management of a positive conduct culture is a co-ordinated and integrated approach in which each role player has the explicit task of bringing about positive behaviour.

The role of the parent as primary educator in the development of the learner's character is essential.

The school in the study appeared to operate from the negative assumption that learners will transgress. As participating learners commented:

- *We are stereotyped.*
- *We are underestimated.*
- *Our way of doing things is not acceptable because we are black.*
- *We are threatened by the teachers.*
- *We are told that we wouldn't be able to understand something.*

The school management team unanimously agreed with the research hypothesis that the school had to help the learners to acquire skills that promote Emotional Intelligence, and that this could lead to less violence in the school.

6.3. Recommendations

- In order to enable a school management to implement intervention programmes against violence and crime, the life skills programmes that centre on the development of EI must be promoted in the school. Examples of these programmes are those that focus on the development of adaptability, inter- and intrapersonal skills, how to function efficiently within a group, and skills pertaining to the ability to influence others.
- The school must also provide the space and opportunity for the development of learners' leadership.
- School managements should be involved in equipping the parents with emotional skills, among other things, with the aim to let them develop into socio-emotionally skilled parents. Parent involvement in the school's intervention strategies is ideal, and I believe also necessary for discipline in the school. The parents of most of the learners in South Africa do not by a long

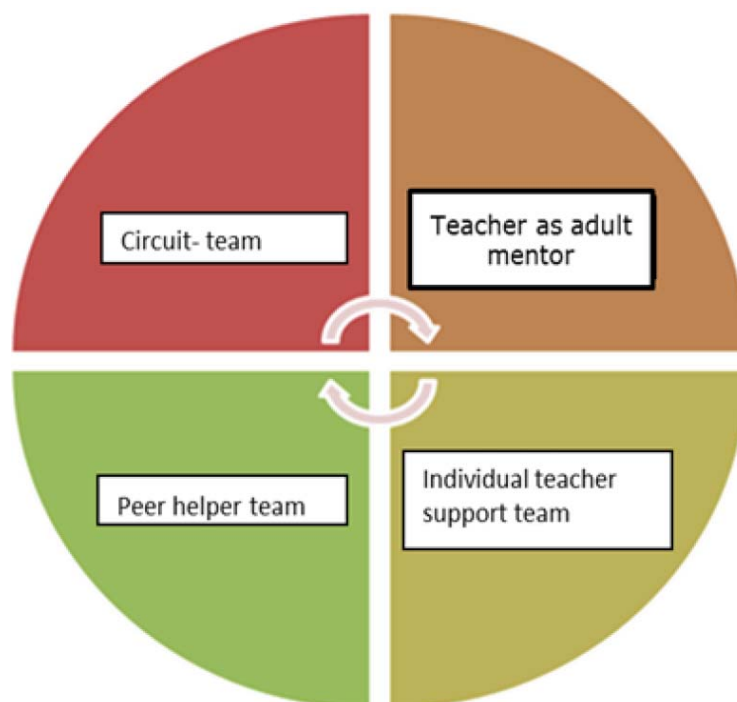


Figure 3: Graphical representation of support structures.

way possess the necessary skills to support their children. In this study, the involvement of the parents and the community was indeed shown to be one of the deficiencies in this particular school.

- Support structures are important aspects of intervention attempts. A committee consisting of parents, teachers and learners needs to be appointed to ensure that the support systems in the school function efficiently. Following the data gathered, I singled out certain support structures that promote violence intervention in the school context. These structures can be graphically represented as follows:

The Circuit-Team

- Multi-functional team responsible for bringing professional support closer to schools.

The Peer Helper Team

- System in which learners receive support from fellow learners.
- Establish a school culture of caring and support.
- Bring learners with needs in contact with relevant aids.
- Create the opportunity to identify problems early.

The Individual Teacher Support Team

The education support staff:

- Assist in the identification and assessment of learners with behaviour strengths and development areas.
- Assist in the drafting of an individual education support plan for each learner who is experiencing behavioural problems and adjust the plan as necessary.
- Assist with the reference of the learner to other relevant service providers where necessary.
- Make counselling accessible for learners.
- Monitor and evaluate the progress of the learner.

The individual education support plan:

- A concerted plan for intervention and support.
- Focus on the learner's strengths when their needs are determined.
- Is managed by the education support staff.
- Relies on regular review.

The Teacher as an Adult Mentor

- Not necessarily a class teacher, but a teacher of learner's choice.
- Regular discussions (weekly) about the learner's progress.
- Active involvement in the learner.

7. CONCLUSION

It became apparent from the research that the success of an intervention programme is determined by two key issues, namely EI at school, and the school management's impact on interventions to prevent violence and crime. From the research it is clear that there is a great need for training in a peer mediation approach, EI-teaching methods and alternative management practices allowing intervention strategies to succeed. The conclusion made from the study is that support structures and peer mediation has not functioned well at the school. Although the principal and governing body at the school do have a support team, there was confusion and misconceptions over this support team. Finally, recommendations were made on various aspects of school violence to address the problem holistically.

Most of the recommendations can be implemented by any school that has the following:

- real commitment,
- a principal who is a good, compassionate manager,
- a governing body that function effectively, and
- enthusiastic teachers, concerned parents and community members to drive the process.

I would like to conclude with the following: Emotional intelligence teaching strategies could be successful in the prevention of disciplinary problems. The use of emotional intelligence could be seen as preventative discipline in the classroom. The values that teachers model through their behaviour create a particular emotional climate or classroom atmosphere that can be sensed by learners. Apart from positive teacher behaviours, the physical conditions of the classroom and the school also appear to have a profound impact on learners' general motivation to learn and perform. Using emotional intelligence is a prerequisite for developing a good relationship with learners, which then can be the basis for producing learners who have:

- More engagement,
- Greater motivation,
- A greater readiness to take risks in their learning,
- A more positive approach,
- A readiness to collaborate,
- More creativity and more tenacity.

Teachers need to recognise and work with the power of emotions in learning by teaching with emotional intelligence.

The recommendations that emanated from this study can be used as a point of departure for further research in other schools.

REFERENCES

- Amnesty International. 2008. *Safe schools: every girl's right*. London: Amnesty International Publications.
- Bartunek, Jean M. and Meryl R. Louis. 1996. *Insider/Outsider team research (Qualitative Research Methods Series 40)*. CA: Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.
- Bearnon, Glenda W. 2001. Supporting and Motivating Adolescent Thinking and Learning. Retrieved February 12, 2016 from http://www.phschool.com/eteach/professionalm_developmen/t/adolescent_thinking_learning
- Bill of rights. 1996. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) Chapter 2. Retrieved February 8, 2016 from https://www.google.co.za/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=mK-LVfT6LeKo8wfbMj6wBQ&gws_rd=ssl#q=bill+rights+south+african+constitution+1996
- Brackett, Marc A. 2009. Emotionally Intelligent Schools. Retrieved March 16, 2016 <http://www.ei-schools.com/eischools/myweb.php?hls=10061>
- Briceño-León, Roberto. 2005. Urban violence and public health in Latin America: A sociological explanatory framework. *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, 21(6):1-22. Retrieved February 12, 2016 http://www.scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0102-311X2005000600002.
- Burton, Patrick. 2008. Merchants, skollies and stone. Experience of school violence in South Africa. *Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention*, Monograph Series, 4.
- Center for the Prevention of School Violence (CPSV). 2002. Just What is "School Violence" ? (News Brief). North Carolina: Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Retrieved February 28, 2016 www.cpsv.org
- Community Alliance for Safe Schools (CASS). 1999. *Protect your School from Violence and Crime*. Durban: Independent Project Trust (IPT).
- Corbin, Juliet and Strauss Anselm. 2014. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (4th edition). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Deeter-Schmelz, Dawn R., Karen R. Kennedy and Rosemary P. Ramsey. 2002. Enriching our understanding of student team effectiveness. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 24:114-124. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0273475302242004>
- Dixon, Bill and Lisa-Marie Johns. 2001. Gangs, Pagad and the State: Vigilantism and Revenge Violence in the Western Cape, Violence and Transition Series 2. Cape Town: Centre for Studies in Violence and Reconciliation.
- Goleman, Daniel. 1999. *Working with emotional intelligence*. Great Britain: Bloomsbury.
- Jeffhas, Diane and Lillian Artz. (2007). Youth violence: A gendered perspective. p. 37 in *Someone Stole My Smile: An Exploration into the Causes of Youth Violence in South Africa*, edited by P. Burton. Cape Town: CJCP Monograph 3.
- Johannes, Edgar A. 2005. Using collaborative action research to improve classroom discipline: An action research study at a secondary school in the Boland. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Western Cape, Cape Town.
- Makhwanazi, Siyabonga. 2008. We won't impose school oath. Cape Times, 22 February, p 1. Retrieved March 16, 2016 http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=13&art_id=vn2008022204470269.
- Martella, Ronald C., James R. Nelson and Nancy E. Marchand-Martella. 2003. *Managing Disruptive Behaviour in the Schools*. USA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- McGrath, Simon and Salim Akoojee 2007. Education and skills for development in South Africa: reflections on the accelerated and shared growth initiative for South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development* 27(4):421-434. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2006.07.009>
- Mncube, Vusi S. and Clive Harber. 2013. *The Dynamics of Violence in South African Schools (Report 2012)*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Morrell, Robert. 2001. Corporal punishment in South African schools: a neglected explanation for its persistence. *South African Journal of Education* 21(4):292-299.
- News24. 2008. School oath: Yes or No? News24, February 12, p 1. Retrieved March 16, 2016 http://www.news24.com/News24v2/Components/Generic/News24v2_Print_PopUp.
- Saarni, Carolyn. 1997. Emotional competence and self-regulation in childhood. Pp. 35-66 in *Emotional development and emotional intelligence*, edited by P. Salovey and D.J. Sluyter. New York: Basic Books.
- School-based violence prevention programs. 2002. Prevention Programming. (A Resource Manual). Retrieved April 9, 2016 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/resolve/violenceprevention/English/prevprog.htm>
- South African Human rights Commission (SAHRC). 2006. Report of the Public Hearing on School-based Violence. Retrieved April 10, 2016 www.sahrc.org.za/home/21/files/Reports/SBV%20Report_Intro.pdf
- Student-Centered Learning. 2014. The glossary of education reform. Retrieved April 7, 2016 <http://edglossary.org/hidden-curriculum>
- The Citizen. 2012. Pupil killed in fight over ball. The Citizen, 02 March, p. 1. Retrieved March 02, 2016 http://www.citizen.co.za/citizen/content/en/citizen/local_news?oid=262377&sn=Detail&pid=146826&Pupil-killed-in-fight-over-ball
- Unisa Research Report. 2007. An exploration of certain psychosocial dimensions of peer victimisation in public schools Pp. 45-46. Research Report 2007. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) and National Children's Rights Committee (NCRC) 1993. *Women and children in South Africa A situation analysis*. Johannesburg: UNICEF and NCRC.
- Corbin, Juliet and Strauss Anselm. 2014. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (4th edition). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Vally, Salim. 2005. *Corporal Punishment and Bullying: The rights of Learners*. (Education rights project, Book 11). Johannesburg: Wits Education Policy Unit.
- Van der Merwe, Petro. & Cecelia Jansen. 2015. *Through the Eyes of a Learner: My Teacher's Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Nova Publishers.
- Van der Merwe, Petro. 2009. *Implementation of a School-based Socio-emotional programme as strategy against crime and*

- violence*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Veinot, Tiffany. 1999. Violence prevention programming: A summary of recent evaluation research. Toronto, ON: Education Wife Assault, 1.
- Waghid, Yusef. 2014. *Pedagogy Out of Bounds: Untamed Variations of Democratic Education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-616-5>
- Western Cape Education Department. 2007. *Learner Discipline and School Management*. A practical guide to understand student behaviour and management within the school context. Western Cape: Education Department.
- World Health Organization. 2002. *World report on violence and health*. Geneva: WHO.

Received on 12-04-2016

Accepted on 26-04-2016

Published on 25-05-2016

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6000/1929-4409.2016.05.08>

© 2016 Petro van der Merwe; Licensee Lifescience Global.

This is an open access article licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>) which permits unrestricted, non-commercial use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the work is properly cited.