Developing a youth empowerment model for peaceful schools: a case study

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy: Public Administration-Peace Studies in the Faculty of Management Sciences

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ABSTRACT

School-based violence is of major concern internationally and in the South African schooling system, particularly in secondary schools. According to various studies and media reports, school-based violence is escalating in South African secondary schools at an alarming rate. Causes of violence stem from outside as well as within the school environment which leads to an unsafe environment that is not conducive to learning and teaching. In addition, it has a negative impact on the physical, social, cognitive and emotional well-being of learners and teachers. To compound matters, family and community environment also play a role in escalating school violence. To address the issue of reducing school- based violence, there is a need to develop interventions that are evidence-based and developmental in nature. For this study, an initial questionnaire was distributed to grade ten learners and teachers to obtain baseline data. Thereafter, three focus groups discussions were held with learners. It was found that violence was a regular occurrence at the school with bullying, fighting and teasing being the most prevalent types. In addition, corporal punishment was found to be widely practiced by teachers. Peer pressure, substance abuse, gangsterism and family factors were cited as the main causes of violence at the school. Using an action research approach, fourteen learners who participated in the focus group discussion volunteered to be part of the action group to develop and implement a programme focussed on addressing these issues. The youth empowerment project, that resulted in a violence awareness campaign, demonstrated that even in an under resourced school, empowerment can be used as a useful strategy to address the issue of school violence. Using youth in such programmes can increase their motivation to collectively influence changes within their school. A preliminary evaluation of the impact of the youth empowerment programme, indicated that it did make the learners at the school aware of the issues that they are faced with daily.

Key words: action research, school violence, youth empowerment

DECLARATION

Developing a youth empowerment model for peaceful schools: a case study

I declare that the thesis herewith submitted for the PhD: Public Management-Peace Studies at the Durban University of Technology has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other University worldwide.

Fathima Dewan

I hereby approve the final submission of the following thesis

Dr. S.B Kaye

Professor G.T. Harris

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my daughters Asmaa and Hana and to my family who have shown unconditional love, support and understanding throughout this difficult personal journey. They inspire me every day to be the best that I can be. My blessings and love are with you always.

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Lastly I would like to acknowledge the learners, teachers and management of Wiggins Secondary school in Cato Manor. In particular a great thank you goes out to my "Future Leaders of Change" group. Without them this study would not be possible.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVP	Alternatives to Violence Project
CJCP	Centre of Justice and Crime Prevention
CMDA	Cato Manor Development Association
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DBE	Department of Basic Education
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
NIDS	National Income Dynamics Survey
NSSF	National School Safety Framework
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAPS	South African Police Services
SGB	School Governing Body
SSCC	Safe Schools Call Centre
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
TE	Teen Empowerment
TYPE	Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment Pyramid
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WCED	Western Cape Department of Education
WHO	World Health Organization
YES	Youth Empowerment Solutions
YE	Youth Empowerment
YPAR	Youth Participatory Action Research

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Violence in schools is of major concern across the world. It is visible in media reports almost on a weekly basis. It has repercussions for the well-being of young people, their families and communities. The victimisation, perpetration, and witnessing of school violence may condition young people to accept and justify the use of violence to resolve conflict with others. This could have an adverse effect on future developmental outcomes for young people.

Literature has cited an array of causes of school violence, namely, bullying, fighting, sexual harassment, stealing, gangsterism, and substance abuse (Maternowska and Fry, 2018). A longitudinal study carried out over a span of twenty years with two thousand children throughout Gauteng province found that only 1% of children were not exposed to any type of violence. Two-thirds were exposed to community violence, a third to school violence, and more than half to violence at home. Violence exposure increased to 86% by adolescence (Richter *et al.*, 2018). This statistic is quite alarming, and despite various interventions in place to address school-based violence, there is still a great need for targeted interventions at school to address these issues.

Leoschut and Kafaar (2017) aver that schools are a useful starting point for intervention as they have a great influence on the development of children who spend most of their day there and they are where violence is directly experienced. The UNICEF report on *Drivers of Violence Affecting Children* (Maternowska and Fry, 2018) also concurred that schools are an important context that can develop targeted interventions. Unger *et al.* (2019) found that the better the school climate and culture, the lower the levels of violence experienced at school. They also propose that in order to create safer schools and a better school climate, schools should involve learners in decision making around school policies as well as the design of strategies to address school violence. To this effect, empowerment was used as a strategy in this study to address school-based violence.

The study was an action research project undertaken Wiggins Secondary school in the Cato Manor area. It was intended to empower learners to plan and implement a violence-awareness campaign targeted at addressing the violence experienced at the school. Data was collected

through questionnaires and focus group discussions. Some learners from the focus groups then volunteered to be part of the action research project. Data from the questionnaire and focus groups were analysed using thematic analysis. This is detailed in subsequent chapters.

1.2 The History of Cato Manor

The school chosen for this study, Wiggins Secondary, is in Cato Manor. Cato Manor, from its geographic location, has had a long history of political instability, segregation, discrimination, and violence, the impact of which is still being experienced today. It is thus important to place the setting for this study in context, as Cato Manor is an important area for the study of violence and inequality.

Cato Manor is located seven kilometres from central Durban and has a population of approximately ninety-three thousand people within two thousand hectares of land (eThekwini Municipality, 2011). Being very close to the city centre makes it accessible for people for employment and education opportunities. Rapid urbanisation of Durban occurred in the 1930s and 1940s due to the government providing housing for the white communities residing around Durban. This led to a demand for labour for these housing developments. An influx of African migrant workers into Durban seeking employment led to them occupying land in Cato Manor (Gray and Maharaj, 2017).

Naidoo (2018), a museum officer at the Durban local history museum, documents the history of Cato Manor in her article entitled *Provenances of knowledge and preservation of referred sources*. Cato Manor was originally a land reserved for Indian ownership under the Asiatic Land Tenure Act (1946) which sought to confine Indians to certain designated areas. Indians bought the land from white farmers after their period of indentured labour ended and used it for market gardening. Under the Urban Area Act 25 of 1945, Africans employed in central Durban were allowed to occupy land in urban areas. This led to the emergence of a vast number of informal settlements in the Cato Manor area. Indian landowners leased out shacks to African dwellers.

However, the conditions within these informal settlements were appalling with poor sanitation and no access to basic amenities. Overcrowding and exposure to diseases became a major problem. Due to these appalling conditions, Cato Manor became rife with poverty and residents were forced to live in unhygienic and dangerous conditions. In 1944, the local government issued notices to the Indian landowners to provide better services to the informal settlement dwellers. However, instead of improving services, the Indian landowners evicted

the African dwellers. This created racial tensions between the two groups. A racial incident involving the assault of an African youth by an Indian shopkeeper in the Durban central business district culminated in the 1949 riots. The hardest-hit area was Cato Manor with many lives being lost on both sides and hundreds of people being left homeless.

Due to the implementation of the Group Areas Act (1950), the Indian and African residents were forcefully removed to low-income housing developments in KwaMashu, Umlazi, Chatsworth, and Phoenix. Many African residents moved back to the rural areas. The land was vacant for many years after this. With the onset of democracy, Indians and Africans returned to live in the area in a low-cost housing development. Informal settlements increased again. The Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA) was formed in 1993 with the aim to redevelop the area and improve infrastructure. In 1994, the area was recognised as a special presidential project in the urban renewal category of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). It therefore received large amounts of money from the RDP budget. The CMDA was operational from 1993 until 2003 and during that time also received money from the European Union. With funding received, infrastructures such as roads, parks, sports fields, schools, libraries, community halls, and clinics were built. Housing was also a key mandate for the area. However, despite the efforts to provide housing, there is still a shortage of it. Due to this, informal settlements form a large part of the area (Gray and Maharaj, 2017).

Gray and Maharaj's (2017: 1) study at Cato Manor in 2017 focused on poverty, inequality, and violence. They state that "forced evictions, housing shortages, conflict over land, municipal corruption, police brutality, poor service delivery, repression, xenophobia, poverty and inequality have sparked many acts of violence in Cato Manor". Structural violence is evident in the area due to its poor economic status. Unemployment and poverty are rife. Drugs, gender-based violence, domestic violence, taxi violence, crime, and protests over service delivery are major problems. The issue of violence is increased by the growing drug problem. Drugs are targeted at the youth which has caused them to drop out of school. The most common drug used is whoonga. Drugs have also led to an increase of crime in the area as addicts burglarise homes and sell the stolen possessions to feed their habit. Xenophobic attacks are linked to the influx of immigrants to the area. Residents feel that the foreigners are taking up the employment opportunities that would otherwise benefit the local people. This, they state, has caused an increase in unemployment and is spiralling local people into further poverty.

Mottiar (2014), conducted a study on social protests in three areas in Durban, namely, Cato Manor, Merebank, and Wentworth. It was found that protest action was more popular in Cato

Manor than in the other two areas and was referred to as a protest hotspot. Reasons for protest action revolved around service delivery i.e. better access to water and electricity and the shortage of quality housing. Participants in the study indicated that protests are utilised because residents feel that their pleas are not being heard at the local government level. They therefore use protest as a means of "invented means of participation" due to being excluded from formal reporting structures as corruption by ward councillors has led to the discontent of residents. Participants felt that within a democracy, it was their right to protest. This mind set of the right to protest action is linked to the area's violent past.

1.3 The South African Context of Violence

Crime surveys and statistics have consistently shown that South Africa is one of the most violent countries in the world. According to Africa Check (2020), an independent fact-checking organization in Africa, the official crime statistics for 2019/2020 showed that incidents of murder increased slightly from 21,022 in 2018/2019 to 21,325 in 2019/2020. The average number of murders committed per day was fifty-eight .Sexual offences increased from 52,420 in 2018/2019 to 53,293 in 2019/2020. The largest number of incidences was that of rape with a figure of 42,289. This means that 116 rapes were occurring each day. In addition, on average, one hundred and forty-two robberies were committed each day and four hundred and fifty three people were assaulted each day.

These high levels of violence have their roots in the country's colonial past and structural oppression implemented through apartheid. This has filtered down into the very essence of the fabric of South African family and community life and is still felt today, nearly three decades after democracy. These high levels of violence are evident in family, school, and community life. There are media reports every day of violent incidents happening in these three contexts.

Violence has a ripple effect. Children are socialised within the family and community context and much of that which they learn within the family and community are then played out in the learning arena. Aggressive tendencies of children from families with high levels of violence, for example, can be seen as early as the preschool years. This behaviour, if unmanaged, often becomes worse in high school. On the other hand, schools are also seen as a key socialising context for children and adolescents. The impact of the child's school experience is felt within the family and community. The serious nature of violence and aggression results in harm at the individual, family, and societal levels. The topic of violence is thus something that is of great significance and needs to be understood in its fullest context. Only then will effective interventions be put in place to address this concerning phenomenon.

1.4 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Violence: Violence is broadly understood as physical or psychological harm inflicted on others. It occurs within the context of families, schools, communities and broader society. It has its roots in socialisation within these contexts as well as ideologies and structures that oppress one group of people over the other. The World Health Organization's report on violence and health (2002: 5) 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'. The assessment report by The Department of Social Development and World Bank on youth violence, policy and programmes (2012:5) defines youth violence as ' The involvement of young people, whether as victims or perpetrators, in incidents involving the threat or use of physical violence in the context on interpersonal, inter-communal or other conflict and crime. This violence may be inflicted with or without a weapon, and may or may not result in physical injuries or death'. The focus of violence for the study will be on school-based violence therefore the definition by the Department of Social Development and World Bank (2012) will be used.

Empowerment: Empowerment is a shift from prevention based interventions to collaborative interventions with community members. It focusses on giving individuals an opportunity to become change agents in their environments by providing opportunities for participation through shared decision making. Participants are involved in exploring issues and finding solutions. One of the early proponents of the concept of empowerment, Rappaport (1981) stated that the ultimate goal of empowerment is for people to gain power over their own lives. Definitions of empowerment theory abound. Augsberger, Gecker and Collins (2018: 1), defined empowerment as "a strengths-based concept that focuses on acquiring the skills, knowledge, and resources to promote positive change at an individual, community, and organizational level'. Pineda-Herrero *et al* (2018: 601), definition of empowerment states that " Empowerment is a process of growth, strengthening, enabling and confidence building in individuals, organizations and communities in order to further positive changes in the context, to gain power, authority, decision making ability and change both individually as well as collectively'. For the purpose of the study, the definition by Pineda-Herrero (2018) will be used.

Positive youth development: Taylor *et al* (2017: 1165), defines positive youth development as "Building young people's positive social competencies, social skills and attitudes through increased positive relationships, social supports and opportunities that strengthen assets and

help youth flourish within their environment". Damon (2004:17), positive youth development perspective emphasises "the manifest potentialities rather than the supposed incapacities of young people-including young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and those with the most troubled histories". In essence, positive youth development focuses on a strengths rather than pathology based view of youth. Positive youth development is linked to the concept of youth empowerment. For the purpose of the study Damon (2004) definition will be used.

Youth empowerment: The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007-2015: 15) defines youth empowerment thus: 'empowering young people means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others. These enabling conditions include a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy and access to knowledge, information and skills, and a positive value system'. In practice, this means giving youth a sense of belonging, shifting power between adults and youth and giving youth opportunities for active participation in decision making. Augsberger, Gecker and Collins (2018: 1) defined empowerment as "a strengths-based concept that focuses on acquiring the skills, knowledge, and resources to promote positive change at an individual, community, and organizational level'.For the purposes of the study youth empowerment was explored in the school context.

Action research: Herr and Anderson (2015), posit that the aim of action research is to develop or transform the researcher, participants and setting and that action research is a socially engaged way of being a researcher. They define action research as 'inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them. Action research is therefore collaborative and democratic in nature. In addition, Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 379), define action research as 'critical research dealing with real life problems involving collaboration, dialogue, mutual learning, producing tangible results.

1.5 Research Problem

Article 29 of the UNCRC (United Nations 2001: 12) and Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and welfare of the Child (African Union 1990: 4), states that:

> Education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential and that education should lead to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance and equality of sexes.

Despite there being various pieces of legislation related to the protection and development of children, the rights of children are still being undermined and their well-being is being threatened. Crime surveys and statistics have consistently shown that South Africa is one of the most violent countries in the world. The statistics are quite alarming and confirm that people live in a violent society and that violence spills over into families, schools, and communities. Aggression and violence have become the norm and have become deeply embedded in the fabric of society in all contexts.

Dube and Hlalele (2018: 78), state that "the social injustices that propel school violence include the unfair treatment of learners and educators, unfair distribution of school resources, insensitivity to gender and discrimination that degrade learners and educators". Alcohol, drugs, weapons, and gangs are key causes of violence perpetrated at school (Report on Violence against Children in South Africa, 2012; Mncube and Harber, 2013). The causes linked to educators include the use of corporal punishment by educators, incompetence, absenteeism, the authority of the educator being undermined, educators being disrespected, educators who are discouraged and unmotivated, a lack of effective classroom discipline, and poor relationships with learners (Burton and Leoshut, 2012; Shiva Kumar *et al.*, 2017; Maternowska and Fry, 2018).

The above-mentioned references indicate that school violence is a major problem in South African schools. It is for this reason that the researcher decided to use empowerment theory to address this issue by doing an action research project with a group of learners. The topic of violence is something that is of great significance to the society at large and needs to be understood in its fullest context. Only then will effective interventions be put in place to address this concerning phenomenon.

1.6 The Purpose of the Study

This study was influenced by positive youth development and youth empowerment theory. In this approach, researchers have explored how to tap into the potential of youth and to look beyond their deficiencies such that they may be viewed as valuable members who contribute towards the progress of society. This is also true for youth who come from the most disadvantaged societies (Christens and Peterson, 2012; Andreou, 2015; Ozer, 2017).

Empowerment is a complex process that involves social action. Through the democratic processes of empowerment, individuals and groups are engaged in meaningful decision making, active participation, and action in order to bring about change in policies, structures,

and values and norms in their social context (Zimmerman, 1995; Zeldin *et al.*, 2016). Within the South African context, one of the values that the National Youth Policy (2015-2020: 9) espouses is youth empowerment. The policy states that:

[I]nterventions should empower young people as assets for national development, raising their confidence so that they can contribute meaningfully to their own development and that of broader society. Young people are instruments and agents of their own development. Young people should be considered as agents of change, not passive recipients of government services.

The overall aim of this research was to develop, implement, and evaluate a programme that utilises important aspects in youth empowerment, such as social action and participation, to reduce school violence. The broad concept of youth empowerment served as a strategy to create awareness about violence within the school setting. The study had the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the forms, extent, causes, and consequences of violence in the secondary school setting
2. To explore the theory and practice of youth empowerment in a school setting
3. To develop and implement a youth empowerment programme that specifically addresses the problem of school-based violence
4. To undertake a preliminary evaluation of the impact of the youth empowerment programme

1.7 Literature Review

Before putting any intervention measures into place, the nature, forms, extent, causes, and consequences of violence in the school setting need to be understood. A key theory to understanding the impact of violence on the development of a young person is the eco-systemic model of development. This model provides insight into the impact of the context on the holistic development of an individual. The ecological model by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1999) is a well-known eco-systemic theory which looks at how factors in the environment hinder or support the development of an individual throughout their lifetime. Du Plessis (2008) formulated the bio-eco-systemic model from Bronfenbrenner's original theory. Both frameworks suggest that one cannot only look at school violence as a problem residing in the individual, but one needs to look at how each system within the ecological model impacts on

the prevalence of school violence. Thus, violence in the home, school, and community have a ripple effect on each other.

The concept of structural violence (Galtung, 1969) was also considered when trying to understand the reason for school violence. Lee (2019) refers to structural violence as limitations put on certain members of society that inhibits their quality of life. In South Africa, structural violence is seen in the repressive structures of the apartheid era where there was an unequal distribution of resources based on race. Due to this, poverty, which is seen as a form of structural violence, hinders parents from providing for the material needs of their children. In essence, structural violence has led to much of the socio-economic conditions present today as well as the legacy of a violent society.

Strain theory (Agnew, 1992) also suggests that young people are forced into deviant behaviour due to negative emotional states linked to anger that derives from being involved in negative relationships. In terms of school violence, an adolescent may become involved in acts of violence due to achieving goals through illegitimate means such as acquiring possessions through theft, or they can also become a bully themselves if they have been victimised by others, or they can defend themselves when being bullied by others.

Studies in the school context have focused on issues such as harsh disciplinary measures, psychological violence, sexual violence, and gender-based violence. Causes of violence such as substance abuse, weapons, gangs, poverty, and unemployment have also been mentioned (Bhana, 2012; Madikizela-Madiya and Mncube, 2014; Mothibi, Mathopo and Mofikeng, 2017; Richter *et al.*, 2018; Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019). The studies also highlight the consequences of violence as anxiety and depressive disorders, behavioural problems, substance abuse, and other social and health problems (Singh and Steyn, 2014; McMahon *et al.*,2019). The assessment report by the Department of Social Development and World Bank on youth violence, policy and programmes (2012) states that young people in South Africa are at a high risk of violence manifested through crime, maltreatment, corporal punishment, and bullying.

Peer groups have been seen to influence violent tendencies in young people by encouraging them to participate in anti-social, risk-taking behaviour such as bullying, gangsterism, and substance abuse. These behaviours are done to seek approval from the peer group and are achieved through modelling and social reinforcement (Albert and Steinberg 2015).

Literature has also identified the impact of community and family issues on school violence. Young people witness violent acts within their communities as crime and violence are widespread in the communities in which young people live (Pradubmook-Sherer and Sherer, 2014). The Human Sciences Research Council policy brief (2016) found a clear link between school violence and high crime levels of communities. The policy brief also found that low socio-economic status increased the risk of exposure of young people to violence. Poverty increases the chances of an adolescent being involved in delinquency and anti-social peer group criminal activity (Richter *et al.* 2018). Poverty also increases the risk of victimisation (Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014).

In addition, parental behaviour and the family environment are central factors in the development of violent behaviour in young people (World Report on Violence and Health, 2002; Maternowska and Fry, 2018). If the young person is socialised in a family environment that is rife in dysfunction and violence, then this can have a detrimental effect on their holistic development as well as place them at a greater risk for engaging in violent anti-social behaviour in other settings such as the school and community. Young people who are exposed to such violence learn that violence is a norm and that this is how one solves problems and resolves conflict. Steyn and Singh (2018), posit that violence is exacerbated by children who come from broken homes where there is poor discipline, a lack of control by parents, and parents who themselves model aggressive behaviour. The literature mentioned here is discussed in depth in Chapter two.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

Empowerment is a shift from prevention-based interventions to collaborative interventions with participants. One of the early proponents of the concept of empowerment, Rappaport (1981), states that the ultimate goal of empowerment is for people to gain power over their own lives. Martinez *et al* (2016: 409) conceptualised empowerment processes as ' the result of an interaction, negotiated to a greater or lesser degree, between the capabilities of a person, group or community and the options provided by the physical and sociocultural contexts in which they manage their lives'. The themes of mastery, control, self-efficacy, decision making, problem solving, and critical awareness of the socio-political context, ownership, and participation are key aspects to any study related to empowerment. The empowerment lens allows adults to see youth as active in their own development and reflect and act on how to facilitate the process of their development. It allows youth to see themselves as change agents with an active role to play in their school and community. Transformative change is achieved by adults assisting young people to gain independence and enhancing their competency

through their relationships with them (Zeldin *et al.*, 2016; Kay and Tisdall, 2017). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, youth empowerment was used as an intervention strategy to address the issue of school-based violence.

1.9 Research Methodology

The study was located within the interpretivist paradigm. According to de Vos *et al* (2011: 309), interpretivism is the "assumption that reality should be interpreted through the meaning that research participants give to their life world". It is therefore important to consider the subjective realities of people as they make sense of phenomenon they are experiencing. Mixed methodology was employed, which included the collection and analysis of both qualitative (focus group discussions) and quantitative (questionnaires) data. However, the design was largely qualitative in nature as it incorporated the case study and action research methodologies. The researcher believes that the methods employed yielded valid and credible evidence. A case study approach was used for the study because the exploration of the issue of school violence and subsequent development, implementation, and evaluation of the specific youth empowerment programme were located within the Wiggins Secondary school in the Cato Manor area. The purpose was to provide unique, in-depth information in relation to the particular context. The sample size for the study consisted of ten teachers and ninety grade ten learners. The action research process relies on a sense of mutualism between the researcher and those participating in the research. The researcher viewed the participants as experts due to them being immersed in the context. The researcher also built trust, respect, and rapport with them. This enabled the participants to feel safe and confident to offer opinions and solutions.

1.9.1 Population

The secondary school chosen for the case study, Wiggins Secondary, is located in Cato Manor, Durban. The school is in the middle of the densely populated Cato Crest informal settlement, which is one of the poorest urban areas in Durban with a high unemployment rate. Cato Manor is seven kilometres from the inner city of Durban (eThekwini Municipality, 2011). According to a study by Gray and Maharaj (2017), the Cato Manor area is rife with issues of crime, poverty, and inequality. Over the past few years, the area has been affected by service delivery protests, xenophobic violence, gender-based violence, and political intolerance. In addition, drugs are a major problem. There are many informal settlements and RDP houses in the area. Information provided by the deputy principal indicates that the school was established in 2000 as part of the Cato Manor urban renewal project funded by the European

Union. It is a no-fee public school that caters for learners from Grade eight to twelve. The medium of instruction is Zulu and English. It has an all-African learner population of one thousand three hundred and thirty learners. The teacher population consists of forty-three teachers. Of the forty-three teachers, thirty-four are female and nine are male.

1.9.2 Sampling

The study is qualitative in nature and purposive sampling was used. One secondary school in the Cato Manor area was chosen for the study. The questionnaire was completed by ten teaching staff who volunteered to be part of the study. Purposive sampling was used to select ninety Grade ten learners for the study. According to Braun and Clark (2013: 56), the aim of purposive sampling is to "generate insight and in-depth understanding of the topic of interest. It involves selecting data cases on the basis that they will provide information rich data". Braun and Clark (2013: 59), state it succinctly as "ultimately, your sample is a crucial determinant of what you find with your research". The reason that the researcher chose purposive sampling is because the researcher needed a group of learners who would be committed to be part of the action group in developing and implementing the youth empowerment programme, which was the most crucial part of the research. Seventy seven learners completed the questionnaire.

Tool	Sample size
Learner questionnaires	90
Teacher questionnaires	10
Focus groups	3 groups of 8-10 learners

1.9.3 Data Collection

The main data collection methods included a questionnaire (quantitative) and three focus group discussions (qualitative). The questionnaire was used to obtain data from a large sample of students (seventy-seven) and a smaller sample of teachers (ten) in order to understand the nature of violence in the school setting. The use of a questionnaire was deemed to be appropriate for this study as baseline data was first required from a large sample of participants. Once the questionnaire was briefly analysed, three focus group discussions (male, female, mixed) comprising between five and eight learners each were conducted to explore issues raised in the questionnaire in greater detail. Teachers were not included in focus group discussions. The use of focus group discussions was deemed to be appropriate for the study as it allowed the researcher to probe information gathered from the questionnaire

in an in-depth manner. The three small focus groups were then combined into one large action group. The action group (which comprised twelve female and two male learners) developed and implemented a youth empowerment programme to specifically address the issue of violence present in the school. An evaluation was done afterwards.

1.9.4 Piloting the Questionnaire

A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted with twenty Grade ten learners at the chosen school prior to the main survey. These learners were not included in the main sample. The purpose of the pilot test was to determine whether the questions were clear and set at an appropriate level, and whether any pertinent questions might have been left out. The feedback from the pilot implementation was incorporated into the questionnaire before it was disseminated to the larger sample.

1.9.5 Data Analysis

The statistical software STATA was used to analyse the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. The researcher conducted a manual thematic analysis of the open-ended questions found in the questionnaire. According to Braun and Clark (2013: 201):

[A]n analytic sensibility refers to the skill of reading and interpreting data through the particular theoretical lens of your chosen method. It also refers to being able to produce insights into the meanings of the data that go beyond the obvious or surface-level content of the data, to notice patterns or meanings that link to broader psychological, social or theoretical concerns.

The qualitative data from the three focus group discussions were transcribed. The information was categorised according to emerging themes. Qualitative analysis provides a rich, thick description of data collected, referred to as thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2013).

1.9.6 Major Themes

Major themes emanated from the questionnaires, focus group discussions and action research project. The themes that were evident both in the questionnaire and focus group discussions were linked to the types, causes and effects of violence. It was found that fighting, bullying, swearing, teasing and stealing were the most prevalent types of violence. The causes of violence cited by the learners were related to peer pressure, drugs, family factors and gangsterism. Both the questionnaire and focus group discussions highlighted the effects of violence as feelings of fearfulness, poor concentration and truancy which leads to poor school performance and/or dropping out. Teacher perpetrated violence in the form of corporal punishment came out strongly in the focus group discussions even though this was not listed

as a type of violence in the questionnaire. Learners stated in the focus group discussions that improved infrastructure and security, provision of extra-curricular activities, peer support programmes and awareness campaigns are necessary to reduce school-based violence. The major themes in the action research component highlighted the key aspects of using empowerment as a violence intervention programme as being importance of partnership with youth through participation, shared decision making, power sharing and accountability.

1.9.7 Validity and Transferability

According to Braun and Clark (2013), validity is whether a measure accurately captures reality. The context of the data collection of this study (questionnaires, focus groups, and action teams in a school setting) as well as the findings of school-violence-related issues can be related to the real world setting as this phenomenon is something that is problematic at many schools. However, the scope of the study is limited to one secondary school. Students in other schools might not have the same responses or experiences. One therefore needs to be aware not to generalise the findings. It can however be transferred to other settings. According to Herr and Anderson (2015), the process of collaboration and knowledge generated within the research can be transferred to another school setting that is faced with school-based violence. This lends itself to external validity or transferability of the findings. In the case of this study, the same programme will not be developed by learners in another school, however, the processes involved in setting up the action group with the learners can be considered by another school that is also faced with issues of violence.

1.9.8 Limitations and Delimitations

The study focused on only one school in Cato Manor. Other secondary schools in the area that might have had similar violence-related issues were excluded. There was no space at the school to work with the action research group, thus the researcher had to book a room at the local public library for the sessions. From the large number of learners who completed the questionnaire, only fourteen learners volunteered to be part of the action research group. Of these fourteen learners, only two were male students. This made the group dynamic unequal and the researcher felt that the issues from a male perspective were not fully discussed and adopted by the group. Change in the school timetable without prior notice was also problematic. The researcher would sometimes find no learners available for the sessions together and had to reschedule. The sustainability of the programme is a major limitation of the study as the empowerment programme continued for the year after the researcher had left, and momentum ceased after that. It is therefore critical that a designated teacher be involved from the outset to follow through with the programme.

1.9.9 Ethical Considerations

"Ethics are the norms that guide the relationship between the researcher and participants with a view to protect the latter from harm, disrespect or unfair treatment" (Chevalier and Buckler 2013: 171). A gatekeeper's letter from the Department of Basic Education as well as the school principal was sought after ethical clearance for the study was given by the Durban University of Technology Ethics Committee. Learners were asked for assent to participate in the study. The researcher visited the school to do an information session with all the Grade ten learners who were chosen to participate in the study. Parents were also requested to complete an informed consent letter. Participation in the study was voluntary. Anonymity and confidentiality were adhered to in the questionnaire and during the focus group discussions and evaluation. However, the action research team, which planned and implemented the youth empowerment programme, knew that that part of the study would not be confidential as everyone would know who they were. They agreed to this.

1.10 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 1 (overview of the study) presents the background of the study, problem statement, objectives and aim of the study, significance of the present study, the conceptual framework, overview of the methodology, and structure of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 (context) presents background on the history of schooling in South Africa.

Chapter 3 (literature review) presents the theoretical underpinnings of violence and a review and discussion of literature studies (national and international) highlighting the nature, forms, causes, and consequences of violence on teachers and learners.

Chapter 4 (conceptual framework) gives the theoretical underpinnings of empowerment and positive youth development, and national and international youth empowerment interventions.

Chapter 5 (research methodology) presents the research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, method of data collection, method of data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 6 (data analysis) describes and analyses the findings obtained from the questionnaire and focus group discussions.

Chapter 7 (action research project) presents an in-depth explanation of the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the action research project.

Chapter 8 (discussion and findings) discusses the data from the questionnaire, focus groups, and action research project under major themes.

Chapter 9 presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter provided the background, purpose, and objectives of the research. It also highlighted literature related to school violence and the conceptual framework linked to youth empowerment. This chapter also briefly discussed the research design which included data collection and ethical considerations. Limitations and delimitations of the study were also highlighted. The structure of the thesis was outlined. The next chapter reviews national and international literature related to school-based violence.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: SCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

According to a report by Amnesty International (2020), on the state of education in South Africa, education should be seen in terms of being positioned within one of the most unequal countries in the world, according to the social and economic status of its citizens. Before one can explore the issue of school-based violence, it is therefore necessary to understand the context and history of schooling in South Africa.

2.2 The History of Schooling in South Africa

Schooling in South Africa has its roots in the colonial period in the seventeenth century when mission schools were established by the church. There were various Departments of Education for each of the race groups as well as homelands, each with its own set of curricula and standards of education. By the 1970s, the funding for African school children was one tenth its white counterpart. The difference in funding meant a vast difference in the equipment, resources, facilities, and entire school experience of white children and the other race groups. There was also a vast difference in the quality of training for educators and the learner-to-teacher ratio in schools. This impacted on the quality of education and ultimately the pass rate of the various race groups (Amnesty International, 2020). Prew (2013), states that the matric pass rates in ex Model C schools is 90% whereas in township and rural schools it is under 50 to 70%. In addition schools in township and rural areas face greater safety risks.

Badat and Sayed (2014), concur that colonialism and apartheid policies denied African children a right to good, quality education due to its racially based system of segregation, discrimination, and inequality. The post-apartheid provision of education is still dealing with a history of unequal funding and access, which continues to pose a very large challenge for the Department of Education. To address the unequal funding of the apartheid era, the government instituted the ranking of schools into quintiles, with quintile one representing poor schools and quintile five representing the wealthiest ones. The quintile system considers the unemployment and literacy rate of the community in which the school is situated. The quintile system determines the funding allocated to schools as well as instituting a school exemption policy. Data from the National Income Dynamics Survey (NIDS) indicates that forty percent of African children attend a quintile one school and only nine percent attend a quintile five school.

On the other hand, over ninety percent of white children attend a quintile five school. This data clearly indicates that after twenty-five years of democracy, African children are still at the poorly disadvantaged level when it concerns educational opportunities (Roodt, 2018).

However, it seems that this ranking system is flawed because it still does not address the funding gap of poor schools. The amount received by government for learners at no fee schools amounts to less than R1100 per learner per annum as opposed to fees charged at ex Model C schools which amounts to more than R10 000 per annum. The income gap between these two types of schools is growing. As such, the wealthy and ex-Model C schools are still thriving and poorer schools are declining. This is because wealthy parents and the school governing bodies within wealthy schools are able to fill the gap in funding not supplied by the government. As such, these schools still enjoy the benefits of being well equipped, properly maintained, and well managed (van Dyk and White, 2019). Due to this, there still exists a link between learners from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and unequal access to good quality basic secondary and tertiary education. According to Amnesty International (2020: 1), "many schools and the communities they serve continue to live with the consequences of the political and economic decisions made during the apartheid era. The result is that a child's experience of education in South Africa still very much depends on where they are born, how wealthy they are and the colour of their skin".

The report further states that inequality is seen in the statistics derived from the education system where:

> [T]he widest gap [exists] between the test scores of the top twenty percent of schools and the rest. Children in the top two hundred schools achieve more distinctions in maths than children in the next six thousand schools combined. More than three quarters of children aged nine cannot read for meaning. Of one hundred learners that start school, fifty to sixty will make it to matric, forty to fifty will pass matric, and only fourteen will go to university (Amnesty International, 2020: 1).

In addition, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) ranked South Africa 75 out of 76 schools based on its maths and science results. These statistics are notably alarming and paint a bleak picture of the educational landscape of this country. The president has been talking about equipping learners for the fourth industrial revolution, the foundation of which is science and technology. The question is how is this to be achieved if learners lack basic competency in language and numeracy?

Since the onset of democracy, curriculum changes have occurred to discard racist, outdated content and replace it with a curriculum that espouses the values and principles laid down in

the Constitution. As such, the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 were launched. These came with challenges as there was a lack of proper training in this new pedagogy as well as a lack of learning materials. In addition, there was much resistance by educators as they felt that this new curriculum was adopted from Western countries without considering whether it would be suitable for the South African educational context (Schmidt 2017). These have now been replaced by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS).

There are indications that the government has made strides in providing better access to education for all children. However, the quality of education in many schools needs to be redressed such that disadvantaged learners can obtain an equal footing with their counterparts in better-resourced schools such that they may change their life trajectories and set a course in life that does not perpetuate a cycle of poverty and inequality.

2.3 Challenges Experienced

2.3.1 Poverty and Inequality

South Africa has made progress economically since the onset of democracy, however there is still a vast difference between the rich and poor of this country. This is seen in the high levels of unemployment and poverty that exist within South African society and the differences in access to health care, housing, and education. According to the World Bank (April 2020) 55,5% of people in South Africa live in poverty and according to StatsSA, the unemployment rate in South Africa in 2020 was 30,1%.The impact of poverty and inequality is felt in the school context. This is seen in the inadequate quality of education received by children from poor households and the impact that a lack of resources at home has on school attainment, including dropping out of school (Hartnack, 2017).

2.3.2 Violence, Substance Abuse, and Teenage Pregnancy

South African society is violent with high levels of crime and gender-based violence. These spill over into the school environment. Schools are faced with ill-disciplined learners, bullying, substance abuse, gangsterism, weapon carrying, and general disorder.

The use of substances is one of the main reasons for school dropouts and grade repetition. Negative peer pressure, under-performing in school and losing hope in life situations pushes adolescents to drug use (Hartnack, 2017). Prolonged substance abuse can affect brain development and therefore cause delays in learning (Modisaotsile, 2012). Marijuana, okka pipe and crystal meth or tik are the most prevalent types of drugs used (Sedibe and Hendricks,

2020). Peltzer and Pharwana –Mefuya (2018), found in a population based survey that drug use in youth between the ages of 15-24 increased from 4.2% in 2008 to 5.7% in 2012. They found that cannabis and whoonga was widely used among youth.

Teenage pregnancy is a major problem in South Africa and can severely impact the future of a learner due to falling behind in schoolwork or dropping out of school (Mouton, Louw and Strydom, 2013). This is because of the added responsibility that motherhood brings to the life of a young person already grappling with other issues such as poverty, a dysfunctional family system, unsupportive parents, etc. (Modisaotsile, 2012).

The use of corporal punishment is also a serious concern at schools. Failure to discipline learners effectively due to defiance by learners and being unskilled in effective discipline techniques, leads to educators using harsh disciplinary measures against learners. This has a detrimental effect on the dignity and worth of the learner, on the relationship between the learner and educator and effective teaching and learning in the classroom. Corporal punishment increases the behaviour it seeks to control and therefore increases violence at school (Segalo and Rambuda, 2018).

2.3.3 Lack of Parental Involvement

Due to the large educator-to-learner ratio in many classrooms across South Africa, many children fall through the cracks. Parents can be a great asset to the educator and to the achievement of their children, however they are uninvolved in their children's education from not assisting with homework, not attending school meetings, and not managing the disruptive behaviour of their children. It is important for parents to be aware of that which their children are learning in school, the extra-curricular activities in which they are involved, the issues that they are facing at school, and the friends that they keep. The reason for the lack of involvement could merely be a sense of apathy, but in reality many parents are unable to be involved due to inadequate understanding of the content because they themselves are products of a poor quality educational system. Furthermore, parents may be working long hours and may be too tired to assist with homework (Modisaotsile, 2012).In addition, most parents are not involved in assisting educators with the development of morals and values. If these are lacking at home then it is difficult for educators to expect this from the learners at school. This makes the task of teaching more difficult (Segalo and Rambuda, 2018).

2.3.4 Poor Quality of Teaching and Learning

Amnesty International (2020), states that poor quality teaching and learning is as a result of insufficient trained teachers, overcrowded classes with above the norm educator to learner

ratios as well as a shortage of classrooms. They found a ratio of 1:70 in one school. This could possibly be the case in many schools across South Africa. The impact of poor quality learning and teaching on learners is the high drop-out rates Educators they spoke to indicated challenges related to overload of work, lacking the skills to deal with disruptive learners, a focus on covering content rather than focussing on quality teaching methods, continuous changes to the curriculum and insufficient continuing training and development for these curriculum changes. Of major concern is the amount of time spent on actual teaching. The teaching team is lower in schools with larger class ratios and with learners who come from poor backgrounds. The report found that teachers spend more time on managing behaviour of learners than going through actual content. It was found that only sixty six percent of time is spent on teaching. Loss of teaching time impacts on the problem solving and critical thinking skills of learners. This is because disruptive classrooms hinder discussions and demonstrations. As a result, educators resort to transmission mode of teaching rather than active learning (Matsepe, Maluleke and Cross, 2019). These challenges are quite substantial and could lead to stress and demotivation in educators (Motseke, 2019).

Stein (2017), posits that the right of learners to be educated in their choice of language is a tool to break the legacy of apartheid where learners were forced to learn in English and Afrikaans. Learners need to be able to grasp concepts and this is done most effectively through home language instruction. Home language also enables parents to assist their children with homework. Learners and parents then have a choice to choose English due the benefits of tertiary education and future employment. However, Prew (2013), states that poor results in school is linked to children being taught in home language in the foundation phase and then being taught in English from grade four until the end of secondary school. Poor educational outcomes are linked to the fact that children cannot make sense of what is being taught because they do not understand the teacher. Many teachers are ill-equipped to teach in multi-lingual classrooms. He suggests that home language be extended into the primary and secondary schooling or years or that a stronger foundation phase for English is needed at the foundation phase. Poor teaching and learning experiences cause a lack of basic numeracy and language skills which in turn cause a delay in learning in future grades and lead to grade repetition or children dropping out of school (Hartnack, 2017). Roodt (2018), avers that even though the matric pass rate is increasing every year, evidence from universities suggests that the standard of education is dropping as students coming from most secondary schools into universities are ill-prepared and ill-equipped to deal with higher learning.

2.3.5 Poor Infrastructure and Facilities

Research done by Amnesty International between 2017 and 2019 at schools in Gauteng and Eastern Cape found that the Department of Education was not meeting the standards of its own Minimum Norms and Standards for educational facilities. There were many cases of poorly maintained buildings that were posing a danger and health hazard for learners and educators. Lack of furniture and equipment, lack of textbooks, lack of library and computer facilities and overcrowded classes were a major issue as well (Bansilal and Rosenberg, 2016). In addition lack of visible security measures increased the problem of burglaries and vandalism of schools. The biggest concern however was the lack of basic sanitation and access to water, with pit latrines still being used twenty five years into democracy. The report indicates a shocking statement by the Department of Education that it would take the department fourteen years to replace pit latrines across all schools in South Africa. There have been numerous media reports of children who have died by falling into these latrines.

2.3.6 Racism

South Africa's colonial past and measures put into place by apartheid policies have led to structural oppression and racism. In a newspaper article in Spotlight Africa, Qwabe and Potterton (2020), highlight racism in South African schools and state that structural racism and white privilege remain an issue across the world. The student and teacher component in many wealthy upmarket schools remains mainly white learners and educators. Other middle-class schools have few black educators even though black children are in the majority. In addition, the school code of conduct in these schools is not cognisant of the values and culture of non-white learners. The authors state that schools need to consider transformation seriously by embracing diversity. Makoelle (2014), in an article on an analysis of Black African learners' perceptions in previously advantaged white schools, found that despite transformation in the education system with the onset of democracy, not much has truly changed in the education system as there are still ethnic and racial divides present. This corroborates the sentiments of Qwabe and Potterton (2020). It seems that six years later, exclusionary attitudes are still prevalent in these schools.

Naidoo, Pillay and Conley (2018), in their article on the effectiveness of school management in managing racial integration at public schools, have cited the challenges currently being faced by schools which include policies that do not match the Constitution, an absence of policies to deal with the issue of racism within schools, educators who are unable to cope with the racial integration of learners and/or who are unable to manage racial conflict amongst learners, a curriculum that does not accommodate the diverse needs of learners from different

backgrounds, and educators who need to be trained to manage the inter-racial conflict arising between learners and between learners and educators.

They also stated that the poor inter-racial relationships between learners and between learners and educators are of concern in multi-racial schools. Name-calling and labelling related to race are rife in schools and many conflicts occur due to learners who speak in their mother tongue. They found that learners from townships and informal settlements are degraded by learners and educators from the suburbs. It seems that educators are still unaware of the effects of racial discrimination. This is quite concerning as educators are *in loco parentis* in the school context and should therefore act as responsible custodians of teaching children morally correct behaviour. Ultimately, there should be consistency in implementing policies related to race as some schools' code of conduct does not address the issue of racism.

Racism leads to learners losing their sense of dignity and worth. This sense of worthlessness leads them to display violent behaviour as demonstrated by bullying, teasing, fighting, and rebelling against teacher and school management authority.

Thus, merely having policies in place does nothing to change the negative attitude or behaviour of learners and educators. Constructive measures through active learning programmes and opportunities need to be developed and implemented to address this phenomenon. Multicultural education emphasising social justice is necessary if people are to address this issue effectively. Social justice is necessary to create awareness of the historical roots of prejudice, stereotyping, and racism. However, it is important to note that implementing social justice programmes in poorly resourced multicultural schools with high levels of violence and poverty is a challenge (Alexander, 2016).

2.3.7 Single and child-headed households

Both single motherhood and child-headed households are a major concern in South Africa. In both these situations children are lacking male role models and therefore look to their peers for role modelling. This can impact on the increase of violence in schools through negative peer pressure.

Single motherhood results from death, divorce, separation or abandonment. Children from single parent families experience poverty and material deprivation due to inadequate resources and income. Due to long working hours of parents, children have to take on

additional chores and taking care of younger siblings. Lack of parental contact, care and involvement leads to poor educational performance. The lack of resources also impacts on the schooling experience of children. These factors impact on the overall well-being of children (Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado, 2018).

Child-headed households are as a result of death of parents by HIV/AIDS or abandonment. The oldest sibling then has to take on the responsibility of the household. Extended families cannot take on the role of carers due to the creation of nuclear families by labour migration as a legacy of apartheid. Children are thus left without adult support systems. Children from these households suffer from poor living standards and malnutrition. In addition the oldest sibling has to drop out of school and find employment due to lack of adult income in the home. There is limited access to education for the oldest sibling and the other siblings in the household due to insufficient financial resources that support quality schooling (Shava, Gunhidzirai and Shava, 2016).

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored the history of schooling in South Africa which included the challenges experienced by learners, educators, and school management teams. The next chapter will explore in detail theoretical perspectives of violence by focusing on the nature of school-based violence, its forms, causes, as well as the role played by the peer group, school, family, and community.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW: VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT AND SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a review of local and international literature that has guided this study. The review will focus particularly on the broad issue of violence, the nature of adolescent development, and an in-depth analysis of the nature, causes, effects, and consequences of school-based violence. Theories of violence and the impact of other contextual issues such as peer group, family, and community on the prevalence of school-based violence will also be highlighted. For the purposes of this chapter, the words *youth*, *young people*, and *adolescent* have been used interchangeably to represent the age group of 12-18 years.

3.2 The Nature of Adolescent Development

"The term adolescence is derived from the Latin verb adolescere, meaning to grow up or to grow to adulthood" (Gouws, Kruger and Burger, 2008: 2). Adolescence or youth development starts between the ages of eleven and thirteen years and ends between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three years.

Demos and Demos (1969: 632), state that "the concept of adolescence did not exist before the last two decades of the nineteenth century". Children were seen as miniature models of their parents. They shared the same tasks, entertainment, and expectations as their parents. The change in adolescence was as a result of agricultural societies transforming into industrial ones. It was only in the twentieth century that adolescence was clearly understood and distinguished as a separate stage of development. Thus, issues of parental authority, emotional turmoil, and risky behaviour were of concern. It was during this time that the concept of youth culture emerged. As a result of the changes that have occurred in the twentieth century, a young person navigating through this phase is faced with many challenges within themselves, their peer group, school, family, and community. These challenges include behavioural problems, health risks, substance abuse, unprotected sex, pregnancy, as well as physical, sexual, and psychological violence in different contexts (Hawley, 2011).

Furthermore, global figures indicate a surge in the adolescent population especially in the low-income group. More than 1.2 billion adolescents, which is 16% of the world's population, are faced with social challenges nowadays. "Adolescent development involves profound changes in social contexts, social roles and social responsibilities. Adolescents enter puberty earlier and become independent earlier (Dahl *et al.*, 2018: 441).

According to Marcus (2007: 10), "adolescence is a period of great destabilization of individual development with major personality disruption as a result of pubertal upheavals". The key features of adolescent development are related to the search for identity, gaining independence from parents, social emancipation, and a sense of belonging within their peer group. According to Erikson (Louw and Louw, 2014: 342), identity refers to "the individual's awareness of him or herself as an independent unique person with a specific place in society".

"Identity development implies that adolescents need to define who they are, what is important to them and what directions they want to take in life?" (Louw and Louw, 2014: 342). The young person experiences role confusion if they do not attain a stable sense of identity. In addition, they are extremely self-conscious of the impression that others form of them. The adolescent contemplates how others in their social context perceive them and how this perception fits into their sense of self. However, Dahl *et al.* (2018), see adolescence as a pivotal time in development that can be used to enhance the mastery, social learning, and autonomy of young people.

Their social development is centred on relationships with their parents, other adults, siblings, teachers, friends, and peers. In their search for independence and identity, the adolescent foregoes relationships with their parents for a closer relationship with friends and peers. This might result in conflict with parents and other authority figures such as teachers.

At this stage of development, more than in any other stage, friends and peers become a key socialising agent for young people. This influence of friends and peers has either a positive or negative effect on the attitudes and behaviour of the adolescent. In their quest for social emancipation, they are confronted with making their own decisions, conforming to the group, and questioning their values and principles.

In their desire to be accepted within the group, some young people become loud and provocative and therefore take on a negative identity. In addition, youth believe that they are invincible and this leads to high risk-taking behaviour involving, for example, drugs, sex, alcohol, weapon carrying, and anti-social behaviour (Gouws, Kruger and Burger, 2008; Ali,

Swahn and Sterling, 2011). This influence of peers could lead to the adolescent engaging in school-based violence. Thus, the transition between childhood and adulthood is a very tumultuous and confusing time for a young person (Louw and Louw, 2014).

3.3 Legislation protecting Children and Youth

Violence is of major concern across the world. The victimisation, perpetration, and witnessing of violence may condition young people to accept and justify the use of violence to resolve conflict with others. The children of South Africa are protected by various statutes promulgated at a national and international level. These pieces of legislation also strive to enhance the holistic development of children and aim to ensure that they reach their full potential.

These include Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948: 54) which states that "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms". Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), states that "State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity" (United Nations, 1989: 11).

Article 29 of the UNCRC (2001: 12) and Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Union 1990: 4) states that:

> Education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential and that education should lead to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance and equality of sexes.

The South African Schools Act No. 84 (Government Gazette 1996), in its preamble, states that:

> [The school system] will provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance and uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators.

The South African Constitution aims to provide safe environments for children to live and learn free from discrimination, maltreatment, and violence. Yet despite these pieces of legislation, news reports suggest that many children in South Africa do not enjoy their human rights to the fullest extent. They are victims of violence in their families and communities. A news report on 17 September 2020 highlighted an incident where a couple were on trial in the Gauteng High

Court for abusing their minor children so badly that it resulted in the death of their son (news24.com). In addition, the school is tainted with violence and is unable to fulfil the values enshrined in these legislations. The rights of children are undermined, and their well-being is threatened.

3.4 Violence in South African Society

Crime surveys and statistics have consistently shown that South Africa is one of the most violent countries in the world. According to Africa Check (2020), an independent fact-checking organization in Africa, South Africa was rated fifth most dangerous country in the world in 2020. In addition, the organization reported that the official crime statistics for 2019/2020 showed that incidents of murder increased slightly from 21,022 in 2018/2019 to 21,325 in 2019/2020. The average number of murders committed per day was fifty-eight and remained the same as the previous reporting year. Statistics also showed that murder has risen over the past seven years by 35%. Sexual offences increased from 52,420 in 2018/2019 to 53,293 in 2019/2020. The largest number of incidences was that of rape with a figure of 42,289. This means that 116 rapes were occurring each day. In addition, robbery increased slightly from 51,765 in 2018/2019 to 51,824 in 2019/2020. On average, one hundred and forty-two robberies were committed each day. Assault increased from 162,012 in 2018/2019 to 165,494 in 2019/2020. The 2019/2020 statistics indicate that four hundred and fifty three people were assaulted each day.

The statistics are quite alarming and confirm that South Africans live in a violent society and that violence spills over into families, schools, and communities. Aggression and violence have become the norm and have become deeply embedded in the fabric of society in all contexts, even in parliament.

The violence and crime seen in South African society today has its roots in colonial history and structural oppression through apartheid (Clark, 2012; Collins, 2013; SACE, 2011; Pahad and Graham, 2012; Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014). This has led to decades of political unrest and instability, the repercussions of which are still being felt today. Risk factors and violence present in South African society are evident in the family, community, and society as a whole (Bezuidenhout and Joubert, 2008). "Violence in South African schools is embedded in the broader violent South African environment, is a phenomenon that has both structural and cultural dimensions and schools as social institutions reflect violence and contribute to its occurrence" (Burton, 2008: 2).

The assessment report by the Department of Social Development and World Bank on youth violence, policy and programmes (2012: 11), cite the factors associated with youth violence in South Africa as:

- The dislocation created by apartheid, which profoundly altered social structures and created parents who lacked the parenting skills required to raise healthy children
- The violent legacy of the political struggle, which entrenched the notion of violence as a legitimate means of achieving change
- The political transition and the associated reshaping of forms of social control and legitimacy
- The rising criminality and violence associated with South Africa's growing population of young people, or its youth bulge
- High levels of poverty and inequality
- High levels of substance abuse
- Violent imagery and messaging in the media and in films and computer games
- The normalisation of violence
- Gender identities and gender insecurities, particularly amongst young men

According to the World Report on Violence against Children (2006), most of the violence that children experience is perpetrated by family members, peers, fellow classmates, and teachers. In addition, Dube and Hlalele (2018: 78), aver that "the social injustices that propel school violence include the unfair treatment of learners and educators, unfair distribution of school resources, insensitivity to gender and discrimination that degrade learners and educators". A longitudinal study carried out over a span of twenty years with two thousand children throughout Gauteng province found that only 1% of children were not exposed to any type of violence. Two-thirds were exposed to community violence and more than half to violence at home. Violence exposure increased to 86% by adolescence (Richter *et al.*, 2018).

3.5 The Theoretical Perspectives of Violence

3.5.1 Violence and Aggression defined

From a social psychology perspective, aggression is defined as "behaviour directed toward the goal of harming another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment" (Baron and Byrne, 2000: 440). The World Health Organization's (2002: 5), report on violence and health 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.

The assessment report by the Department of Social Development and World Bank on youth violence, policy and programmes (2012: 5), provides the following definition:

[Youth violence is] the involvement of young people, whether as victims or perpetrators, in incidents involving the threat or use of physical violence in the context on interpersonal, inter-communal or other conflict and crime. This violence may be inflicted with or without a weapon, and may or may not result in physical injuries or death.

Interpersonal violence occurs between individuals who may or may not be related within the family, community, and institutional settings such as school. "Aggression and violence involve interpersonal confrontations with the goal of harm to another" (Marcus, 2007: 10). Marcus states that aggression and violence can be manifested in two ways. "Reactive aggression is angry, impulsive aggression and proactive aggression is intended to achieve the goal of obtaining something from the opponent" (Marcus, 2007: 10). According to Huesmann (2019), aggression in adolescents is the product of personal traits and environmental factors. Through observational learning, adolescents create social cognitions about the world which they then manifest in behaviour. He states that violence can be viewed as a "contagious disease which can be caught simply through its repeated observation" (Huesmann, 2019: 119).

These definitions denote the serious nature of violence and aggression that results in harm at the individual, family, and societal levels. The topic of violence is thus something that is of great significance to society at large and needs to be understood in its fullest context. Only then will effective interventions be put in place to address this concerning phenomenon.

3.5.2 Theories of Violence

A number of theories explore the concept of violence and aggression at a biological, social, and contextual level. An exploration of these theories is important to understand the root causes of violence.

(a) Eco-Systemic Models of Development

A key theory to understanding the impact of violence on the development of a young person is the eco-systemic model of development. This model provides insight into the impact of the context on the holistic development of an individual. The ecological model by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1999), is a well-known eco-systemic theory that looks at how factors in the

environment hinder or support the development of an individual throughout their lifetime. Du Plessis (2008), formulated the bio-eco-systemic model from Bronfenbrenner's original theory. Both frameworks suggest that one cannot only look at school violence as a problem residing in the individual, but one needs to look at how each system within the ecological model impacts on the prevalence of school violence. The ecological model focuses on the environment, the processes between the systems, and the individual characteristics of the developing person. Bronfenbrenner (1999: 5) posits that:

[T]hroughout the life course, human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving bio-psychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. It is a basic premise that development is a function of forces emanating from multiple settings and from the relations between these settings.

The model has five systems, namely:

- *Microsystems* are settings in which the child has direct contact with significant others such as parents, teachers, friends, peers, etc. This system focuses on the quality of the family and school environment and the relationship with peer groups and friends. The belief systems of significant others within the microsystem influence the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour of the young person. An example is the influence of the peer group to engage in anti-social behaviour.

- The *mesosystem* is the relationship between two or more settings in the microsystem e.g. the home and school environment. The relationship between the two contexts will impact on the development of the child. For example, the lack of parental involvement in the schooling of the child will affect the child's academic achievement.

- The *exosystem* comprises settings in which the child does not directly participate, but in which decisions are taken which affect the child or their parents directly or indirectly. For example, the decision that the school governing body takes to hire security guards to patrol the school will impact on the feeling of safety that the child feels while at school.

- The *macrosystem* involves institutions, belief patterns, ideology, and behaviour operating at the level of society. For example, violence seen as a norm in South African society teaches young people that it is acceptable to behave in a violent manner.

- The *chronosystem* is the cultural and historical period in which the individual lives. An example would be the impact that apartheid has had on the social development of the young person.

The positive features and risk factors present within each of the settings converge to influence the levels of violence in the young person's life. The acts of violence in the home, school, and community have a ripple effect on each other. A model comparable to the eco-systemic one is Sameroff's Transactional Model of Development (1975). According to this model, there is an interplay between the individual and the experiences to which the individual is exposed in their family and social environment. Sameroff calls this equal interplay between the individual and the environment bidirectional effects.

Both eco-systemic models suggest that experiences and the environment are not seen as independent of the individual but something that shapes their development. There is an interplay between the individual and their context. Thus, the experiences of violence within the school, family, and community would impact on the holistic development of the young person.

(b) Galtung's Theory of Violence

Galtung (1969), in his well-known research on violence and peace, made a distinction between physical and psychological violence as well as between personal/direct violence and structural/indirect violence. He stated that physical violence occurs when one inflicts hurt or harm on the other, and psychological violence occurs when one inflicts harm on the mental well-being or soul of the other. Personal or direct violence involves a subject who performs the act of violence and directly harms another person. This type of violence is visible and overt.

Structural/indirect violence, on the other hand, may not involve a subject that directly harms another but rather is "violence that is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances" (Galtung, 1969: 171). Structural violence is known as social injustice. In South Africa, structural violence was seen in the repressive structures of the apartheid era where there was an unequal distribution of resources based on race.

Poverty, which is seen as a form of structural violence, hinders parents from providing for the material needs of their children. According to the Living Conditions Survey (Stats SA 2015), approximately 40% of South Africans are living below the lower bound national poverty line, with rural female-headed households experiencing higher levels of poverty than male-headed households. In addition, the highest poverty rate is among black South Africans. Thus, children in poverty-stricken schools experience an array of social problems that affect their physical, cognitive, and social development. These schools are often in violent gang-ridden communities which further hinders the development of children (Meyer and Chetty, 2017).

He also made a distinction between manifest and latent violence. Much of the violence seen in schools today is manifest as it is clearly observable by the actions and behaviour of learners. According to Galtung (1969: 184), "personal violence tends to breed manifest violence". In essence, structural violence has led to much of the socio-economic conditions present today as well as the legacy of a violent society.

Lee (2019), elaborated on Galtung's theory by stating that structural violence refers to avoidable limitations that people with more power exert over others with lesser power through politics, economic resources, religion and culture. These limitations inhibit people from opportunities that ultimately hinder them from achieving a life of quality.

Similarly, Burton's Human Needs Theory (1997) suggests that human needs require gratification. If there are structures within society that suppress these needs which hinder them from being met, it can lead to conflict and crime. (Burton, 1997 cited in Muro Ruiz, 2002).

(c) Instinct Theories of Aggression

One of the oldest theories of aggression, which was formulated by Sigmund Freud, argues that human beings have inborn tendencies to be violent and are programmed to behave aggressively towards others. In other words, it is by one's basic human nature that one shows aggression towards others. A related view by Konrad Lorenz suggests that human beings possess a fighting instinct that was developed during evolution in order to ensure that the strongest survived and passed their genes onto the next generation (Baron and Byrne, 2000). If one views school violence from the instinct theory perspective, one can thus state that when young people are violent towards others, they are not to blame for their behaviour but are merely playing out their basic nature as a human being and that they are therefore predisposed to being violent.

(d) Bandura's Social Learning Theory of Aggression

According to the social learning view, "man is neither driven by inner forces nor buffeted helplessly by environmental influences. Rather, psychological functioning is best understood in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction between behaviour and its controlling conditions" (Bandura, 1971: 2). The central idea around social learning theory is that the social environment in which a person is raised and socialised has a major role in determining their current and future behaviour. In terms of school violence, the young person has positive relationships with significant others who model and reinforce violent behaviour. New patterns of behaviour are acquired in two ways, namely, through direct experience or vicariously through observation.

The individual observes the behaviour of significant others with whom they regularly associate. This significant other (parent, teacher, sibling, peer, etc.), who is seen as a person of influence, sets an example for the individual. Once the behaviour of the example is observed, it is then imitated in various settings such as the family, school, peer group, etc. Reinforcement of behaviour by others such as parents, teachers, and peers regulates the new behaviour pattern.

A young person is socialised and observes violence in the family, school, or community by significant others such as parents, peers, teachers, and other adults. These violent acts are then imitated in the school setting (Botha, Myburgh and Poggenpoel, 2012). On the other hand, they might observe physical or sexual assault in the school setting by teachers or peers and then imitate such acts in the family or community setting. In view of Bandura's theory, it is likely that the violence that one sees manifested in the school, family, and community setting is as a result of negative socialisation.

Renn (2006 cited in King, 2012), acknowledged the impact of social learning on violent behaviour by stating that quality of love and security by caregivers during infancy impacts on the ability of the individual to regulate their emotions thereby leading to affective violence.

(e) Hirschi's Social Bond/Social Control Theory

As with the Instinct Theory, Hirschi's Social Bond/Social Control theory (1969), also suggests that aggression is an innate part of one's human nature. He argues, however, that most people control these urges to be aggressive. Controlling one's aggressive urges is related to the bonds that one forms with pro-social values, pro-social people, and pro-social institutions. These bonds are social conventions rather than formally enforced laws. There are four inter-

related forms of these bonds, namely, attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. In Hirschi's view:

Attachment refers to the level of psychological affection one has for pro-social others and institutions. *Commitment* refers to the importance of the social relationships that people value which they would not want to risk jeopardizing. *Involvement* relates to the opportunity costs associated with how people spend their time. *Belief* refers to the degree to which one adheres to the values associated with behaviours that conform to the law (Hirschi 1969: 58-59).

According to Hirschi, parents, peers, and school were an important aspect of *attachment*. If young people form close attachments with their parents, pro-social peers and schools, then they are less likely to become involved in deviant behaviour. Young people will be unable to form close attachments with their parents if they have poor relationships with them due to the lack of support or being a victim of violence. If they have deviant peers, then they themselves become involved in deviant behaviour. In a school rife with violence, it becomes very difficult for a learner to feel any form of close attachment. The question is how then does one ensure that by dealing with issues of school violence, the learners do in fact form a close attachment with their school?

In terms of *commitment*, young people will be less likely to be involved in school violence if they fear looking bad and jeopardising their relationships with their parents, peers, teachers, or other significant adults. In terms of *involvement*, young people will be less likely to be involved in school violence if they are engaged in developmentally appropriate, stimulating activities. In terms of *belief*, young people who have not internalised conventional beliefs related to pro-social values and attitudes are more likely to engage in deviant behaviour. Young people who do not value rules, for example, will have a lax attitude towards the rules in school and therefore engage in assaulting and stealing from their classmates.

(f) Agnew's General Strain Theory

Agnew's General Strain theory differs from Bandura's Social Learning theory and Hirschi's Social Control/Social Bond theory because it focuses "explicitly on negative relationships with others: relationships in which others prevent the individual from achieving positively valued goals" (Agnew, 1992: 48-49). According to Agnew, there are three major types of strain, with each strain describing a different type of negative relationship with others. "Other individuals may prevent one from achieving positively valued goals, remove or threaten to remove

positively valued stimuli that one possesses or present or threaten to present one with noxious or negatively valued stimuli" (Agnew, 1992: 50).

Strain theory also suggests that young people are forced into deviant behaviour due to negative emotional states linked to anger that derives from being involved in negative relationships. "This negative affect creates pressure for corrective action and may lead adolescents to make use of illegitimate channels of goal achievement, attack or escape from their source of adversity and/or manage their affect through the use of illicit drugs" (Agnew, 1992: 49). In terms of school violence, an adolescent may become involved in acts of violence due to achieving goals through illegitimate means such as acquiring possessions through theft or bullying other learners to do their homework or allow them to cheat in a test. They could also become a bully themselves if they have been victimised by others or defend themselves when being bullied by others. Thus, young people who have been victimised in school may turn to drugs to relieve some of the negative affect related to the experience of violence at home or in school.

(g) Drive Theory of Aggression

Drive theories posit that "aggression stems from external conditions that arouse the motive to harm or injure others" (Baron and Byrne, 2000: 443). One of the most well-known of the drive theories is the Frustration Aggression Hypothesis (Dollard, 1939). This hypothesis states that an external condition such as frustration can drive a person to behave aggressively and harm another person. Similarly, Galtung's (1969), theory on violence postulates that conflict is the result of frustration which occurs due to goal-states being blocked. He further suggests that the source of frustration is the scarcity of resources. Thus, according to this theory, adolescents involved in school violence could be behaving in such a manner due to the frustration that they feel as a result of family (conflict, lack of support, low economic status, etc.) and/or school problems (academic, peer group, or being victimised).

(h) General Affective Aggression Model

The General Affective Aggression model proposed by Anderson (1997), suggests that "aggression is triggered by a wide range of input variables which influences arousal, affective stages and cognitions" (Baron and Byrne, 2000: 443). The model states that individual and situational variables impact on physiological arousal, arouse hostile feelings (affective state), and influence the individual to think in a hostile manner (cognitions).

According to the model, the individual and situational variables include variables such as frustration, provocation, exposure to aggressive models, high irritability, beliefs about aggression, pro-aggression values, type A behaviour, and hostile attribution bias. Violence by the young person at school can be attributed to feelings of frustration arising out of issues at home or school (Botha, Myburgh and Poggenpoel, 2012), being provoked into acting aggressively by a peer or teacher, and hostile attribution bias which is to perceive hostile intentions in others' actions even when it is not there. A young person with type A behaviour exhibits characteristics such as high irritability, high levels of competitiveness, and hostility, and thus is likely to be more aggressive (Baron and Byrne, 2000).

If they have pro-aggression values and a belief that aggression is acceptable when resolving conflict, which they learn from being socialised in an environment that portrays it as normal (home, school, community, society), then it is likely that they will be aggressive, especially if they have been exposed to modelling of aggressive behaviour by peers, teachers, family members, and adults in the community.

(i) Violent Media and Aggression

According to the Report of the Media Violence Commission (2012: 1), "the media landscape is ever changing with new technologies resulting in greater interactivity on smaller, graphically superior, and computationally more powerful devices". Young people today have twenty-four-hour access to media forms such as digital television, music, the internet, social media, video games, and online gaming. These can be educational and contribute to developing a greater knowledge base, pro-social values, and interaction. However, there are also great risks with this. Media impacts on the thinking, affective state, and behaviour of the person viewing it. The report outlined various studies and meta-analysis that looked at the link between media and heightened aggression in young people. The report found that exposure to violent media increases the aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of young people, not necessarily in the short-term but in the long-term. That which was also interesting was that the effect was consistent regardless of the gender, age, country, or type of media to which the young person was exposed.

According to the Social Learning theory (Bandura 1971), young people observe and then imitate the actions of others. The young person viewing violent content will therefore imitate the actions observed. Media characters who are seen as role models have a higher influence on the young person's behaviour. In addition, if violent images are seen repeatedly, then this becomes part of the stored memory of the individual, becomes more accessible, and is more

likely to influence behaviour. Young people become desensitised to violent content as they see the behaviour displayed as one that is socially justified (Van der Merwe, Dawes and Ward, 2011; Dogutas, 2013).

3.6 The Nature of School-Based Violence

The school, like the family, is a very significant agent of socialisation for a young person. On average, a child in secondary school spends a minimum of six hours per day at school. This is where children do not just gain knowledge about subject content but learn about character development as well. According to Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2008: 80), "among the most critical development tasks that have to be performed by adolescents is socialisation, finding their place in society, acquiring interpersonal skills, tolerating personal and cultural differences and developing self-confidence". It would seem that school would be an ideal place for the young person to learn such matters but sadly, many South African and international studies point to the fact that in many schools, the prevalence of violence is alarming. These will be highlighted later.

School-based violence is of national concern in South Africa. School violence is not a new phenomenon across the world but has been reported for the past two decades. For example, studies by Burnett (1998), Maree (2000), Harber (2001), and the World Report on Violence and Health (2002) have pointed to the alarming rate of violence in schools. "Violence seems to be escalating in South African schools, aggravating the existing lack of discipline in schools and impacting extremely negatively on learners" (Maree, 2000: 10).

As with current studies, these studies have also focused on issues such as harsh disciplinary measures, psychological violence, sexual violence, and gender-based violence. Causes of violence such as substance abuse, weapons, gangs, poverty, and unemployment were also mentioned. The studies also point to the consequences of violence as being anxiety and depressive disorders, behavioural problems, substance abuse, and other social and health problems. It seems that the status quo has remained intact. The assessment report by the Department of Social Development and World Bank on youth violence, policy and programmes (2012), states that young people in South Africa are at a high risk of violence manifested through crime, maltreatment, corporal punishment, and bullying. Perpetration of violent acts mostly occurs in schools.

A study by Ngqela and Lewis (2012), in a township school in the Western Cape to understand township adolescents' experience of school violence found a lack of safety in school and in

the classroom due to poor classroom management, educator absenteeism, and gang activity. A report by the African Child Policy Forum (2015), found on the Polity website indicated that children across the African continent experience high levels of violence at school. Figures from the report indicate that 92% of learners in Togo, 86% in Sierra Leone, 73% in Egypt, 71% in Ghana, and 60% in Kenya had been victims of violence perpetrated by teachers and classmates.

A large-scale study carried out by Mncube and Harber (2013), in four secondary schools in each of the six provinces in South Africa to elicit perceptions and experiences of learners, teachers, and parents about school violence found that 55% of the learners were victims of school violence. Furthermore, 28% had experienced violence daily. Gangsterism, weapon carrying, drugs, and bullying were rife in schools. Teachers were psychologically and physically violent towards learners and used corporal punishment.

A national study carried out in 2008 and 2012 by Burton and Leoshut (2012), from the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention has confirmed that school-based violence is a point of concern in South Africa. According to the study in 2008, 22% of secondary school learners had been victims of school-based violence, twelve months before the study. In 2012, 22.2% of secondary school learners had been victims of school-based violence, twelve months before the study. These figures show that within the four years of the two studies, the levels of school violence have remained constant.

The sample for the 2012 study consisted of 5,939 learners, 121 principles, and 239 educators across the nine provinces. More than one fifth of the learners in the study had been exposed to violence at school. Violence thus contaminates the environment, instilling fear in children and creates obstacles to the learning process. Children should be protected in the school environment but instead are subjected to fear and anxiety. School violence is best understood from a situational perspective in terms of the motive for violent behaviour; the presence of others; the use of weapons, drugs, or alcohol; and where the violent act has taken place within the school environment.

3.7 Forms of School-Based Violence

Young people are exposed to interpersonal violence in family, school, and community contexts. These contexts send a pro-violence message to young people. Many of these young people are victims of violence perpetrated by parents, caregivers, and teachers. Violence at school is manifested in many forms. According to the Human Rights Commission (2006: 5),

"bullying, gender based violence, accidental violence, discrimination and violence, sexual violence and harassment, theft of property, physical and psychological violence" were the most common forms of school-based violence.

In their national study, Burton and Leoshut (2012), found that 12.2% of learners had been threatened with violence, 6.3% had been assaulted, 4.7% had been sexually assaulted and raped, and 4.5% had been robbed at school. The rate of assault of secondary school learners was 63 per 1,000, 46 per 1,000 were sexually assaulted, 45 per 1,000 were robbed, and 441 per 1,000 had personal property stolen. The most common form of violence was perpetrated by one learner on another. This was followed by learner-on-educator violence or vice versa.

A study done by Bender and Emslie (2010), in two urban secondary schools, one public and the other private, found that the most prevalent form of violence was physical and verbal bullying as well as theft. In addition, Pillay and Ragpot (2010), reported that physical and verbal bullying, self-defence, gangsterism, and sexual harassment were forms of violence across schools. Mothibi, Mathopo and Mofokeng (2017), also found that gang formation was as a result of school violence, as many learners joined gangs to protect themselves against bullies.

Gender-Based School Violence

Gender violence is one of the major forms of violence in the school setting. The socially accepted view of violence against females and children is carried over from one generation to the next and causes a vicious cycle of continued perpetration. Children and females are seen as weak and vulnerable and males are seen as dominant with power and control. Males see violence as a legitimate way to protect themselves and obtain respect from others. Males are more likely to be victims and perpetrators of physical violence and females are more likely to be victims of sexual violence (Mahlangu, Gevers and De Lannoy, 2014; Shiva Kumar *et al.*, 2017).

Tsabedze, Maepa and Pila-Nemutandani (2018), found that boys engaged in physical aggression and girls in verbal aggression. This was linked to beliefs about masculinity. In addition, a study by Mothibi, Mathopo and Mofokeng (2017), found an upward trend in the sexual harassment of girls in schools. A study by Jewkes *et al.* (2019), found that rape and intimate partner violence is of concern in South Africa and early perpetration starts during high school. Sexual violence impacts on the female learner's ability to complete schooling due to physical and psychological effects. They found that the drivers of rape and intimate partner violence were linked to "patriarchal gender norms, youth masculinities, poor relationship skills

and a culture of acceptance of violence" (Jewkes *et al.*, 2019: 4). In addition, sexual harassment can lead to risky sexual behaviour in girls (Mabetha and De Wet, 2018).

Aggression and violence are seen as socially acceptable for males to display and to resolve disagreements and conflict (Burton and Gustaffson, 2010; Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014; Mahlangu, Gevers and De Lannoy, 2014). Gender-based violence stems from stereotypical roles that are socially imposed where masculinity is traditionally equated with sexual prowess, achievement, success, and superiority. Traditional gender norms mean that males are expected to show off their masculine traits and distress through aggression.

Notole and Kheswa (2017: 134), posit that sexually aggressive behaviour is displayed by males with "low self-efficacy, who are likely to resist peer pressure, lack self-confidence and low assertiveness". They also state that factors associated with sexual aggression include parenting styles, dysfunctional families, poverty, low self-esteem, and culture. Parenting styles are linked to emotionally unsupportive and uninvolved parents which leads adolescents to seek inappropriate guidance from peers. Adolescents from dysfunctional families are more likely to join gangs and deviant peers which is likely to result in aggressive sexual tendencies. Poverty is linked to sexual aggression and as such, communities are rife with negative behaviour. Low self-esteem has been linked to negative thoughts and feelings which have then been demonstrated by overt anti-social behaviour patterns. The impact of culture on male aggressive behaviour cannot be denied as males are socialised into behaving according to certain stereotypes linked to masculinity from a young age. Thus, such behaviour is normalised in the African culture.

According to Bhana (2012: 352), "schools are integrally related to the social contexts and cultures that constitute gender power and expressions of gender violence". In her study of one secondary school in Inanda, Kwa-Zulu Natal, girls reported that they feared their boyfriends due to sexual violence and masculine conduct. Teachers also victimised girls through sexual involvement and rape. Girls also feared sexual violence by men in their neighbourhood and family. These men used their economic, cultural, age, and gender status to disempower girls with a sense of sexual entitlement.

It is reported that more than 30% of girls are sexually assaulted at school (SACE, 2011). According to the Report on Violence against Children in South Africa (2012: 7), "for many young women, the most common place where sexual coercion and harassment are experienced is in school". Burton and Leoshut's study (2012), revealed that 46.9 learners per 1,000 were victims of sexual assault at school. Sexual violence deprives learners of their

sense of dignity and their right to equality. Taole (2016), found that the display of power relations by both male and female teachers promotes the levels of gender violence in schools. Gender violence is demonstrated by female teachers who use verbal derogatory language to demean learners. It is demonstrated by male teachers who employ corporal punishment to discipline learners who are out of line.

The manner in which girls deal with the issues of gender violence in school is related to the way in which gender-related issues and violence are dealt with in the family and community setting. In many ways, there is bias in both these settings towards male dominance. Ultimately, many girls are powerless against the dominant male culture of power and authority. This bias towards the powerful role of masculinity places more risk on boys to engage in gender-based school violence (Ngqela and Lewis, 2012; Pradubmook-Sherer and Sherer, 2014). "Schools breed and perpetuate the gendered inequalities from the communities they serve and reproduce dominant unequal power relations between boys and girls. These gender roles produce a gender hierarchy" (Taole, 2016: 45). Girls are at the receiving end as they are perceived as inferior, defenceless, and fear punishment for reporting incidents of sexual violence (Malongo and Mwale, 2019).

A study by Hamlall and Morrell (2012), found that peer expectations and affirmation of aggressive behaviour served as validation of the aggressor's masculinity in public, avoiding humiliation, and defending oneself, and aggressive actions by others led to conflict most of the time. Furthermore, Hamlall (2014), in his study on the construction of violent masculinities in school, found that the use of harsh discipline measures and aggression by male teachers to maintain control resulted in heightened violent behaviour in boys and a climate of hostility in school. The violent handling of conflict by the teachers modelled violent values of hostility and confrontation which resulted in the boys distorting the view of masculinity. There are far-reaching consequences of gender-based violence for the well-being of female students. These consequences include poor academic performance, dropping out, truancy, low self-esteem, stress, contracting sexually transmitted infections, and teenage pregnancy (Malongo and Mwale, 2019). A submission by the Department of Education (n.d.) to a task group dealing with sexual violence in schools reported that there is a high rate of under-reporting by learners due to fear, stigma, and blame; schools have ineffective systems in place to deal with incidents and many schools downplay incidents for fear of ruining the schools' reputation.

In addition, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) youth experience more violence at school as opposed to their heterosexual counterparts. They are at risk of violence due to gender non-conforming. The UNESCO (2019), report on monitoring school-based violence on

sexual orientation found that LGBT youth felt unsafe, sad, and hopeless. In addition, 42.8% considered committing suicide. Francis (2017), states that as a result of heterosexist school culture and curricula, LGBT adolescents are subjected to prejudice and discrimination by peers, educators, and principals.

3.8 Causes of School-Based Violence

School factors can be distinguished in three ways, namely, the school environment, educators, and the learners.

3.8.1 The School Environment

The school environment factors include learners feeling unsafe, a shortage of educators, inadequate facilities, large educator-to-learner ratios, a disorganised school environment, and a general lack of discipline (Bezuidenhout and Joubert, 2008). A national study by Burton and Leoshut (2012), reported that learners felt the most unsafe in classrooms as this is where most victimisation took place. Reasons cited for this were unsupervised classrooms through educator absenteeism and a lack of classroom behaviour control and monitoring by the educator. This is of major concern as violence here can create apprehension and fear in learners and therefore becomes a barrier to learning and leads to low academic achievement.

Informal and formal gangs that operated within the school grounds or that had been infiltrated from outside also posed a threat to learners (Madikizela-Madiya and Mncube, 2014). In addition, indiscipline, drugs, weapons, easy access of outsiders to the school, over-crowded classrooms, and a lack of recreational facilities were cited as causes of violence (Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013). A study carried out by Johnson, Burke and Gielen (2012), to determine the role of the school environment on violence found that relationship difficulties, gangs, peer pressure, and misbehaviour were linked to school violence. In addition, a study carried out by O'Donnell, Roberts and Schwab-Stone (2011), at four secondary schools in Gambia on school climate and post- traumatic stress found that both males and females reported a negative school climate. There were high levels of the witnessing of violence and victimisation in school and in the community, with females reporting higher levels of post-traumatic stress.

In addition, racism is also of concern at multi-racial schools. Racial attacks lead to learners losing their sense of dignity and worth. This sense of worthlessness leads to them displaying violent behaviour demonstrated by bullying, teasing, fighting and rebelling against teacher and school management authority. The diverse needs of learners from different backgrounds are not considered, which results in racial conflict arising between learners and between learners

and educators. Educators are unable to cope with racial integration of learners and/or are unable to manage racial conflict amongst learners and between learners and educators (Naidoo, Pillay and Conley, 2018).

3.8.2 The Educators

The causes linked to educators include the use of corporal punishment by educators, incompetence, absenteeism, the authority of the educator being disrespected, and educators who are discouraged and unmotivated (Bezuidenhout and Joubert, 2008; Shiva Kumar *et al.*, 2017), a lack of commitment to school, poor school attendance, a lack of effective classroom discipline, and poor relationships with learners (Burton and Leoschut, 2012; Maternowska and Fry, 2018). According to the study by Burton and Leoschut (2012), 52.1% of educators were verbally abused by learners, 12.4% were victims of physical violence, and 3.3% were victims of sexual violence perpetrated by learners. As perpetrators, 28% verbally abused learners, 14% used physical violence, and 2.5% sexually assaulted learners. In addition, Motseke (2019), avers that high levels of stress is experienced by educators due to non-academic problems of learners such as fighting, substance abuse and ill-discipline in class.

The South African Human Rights Commission (2006), has also reported incidents directed at educators by learners that have included physical attacks, acting disrespectfully, swearing and taunting educators, learners disrupting classes, and sexist and racist comments made to the educator. In addition, the Human Science Research Council policy brief (2016), indicates that the violence perpetrated against teachers affects their morale. They feel helpless in light of that which is happening in the classroom. This, in turn, adversely affects the learning environment. On the other hand, many learners are exposed to humiliating forms of psychological, physical, sexual, and gender-based violence by educators (Maternowska and Fry, 2018).

Gevers and Flisher (2012), contend that educators who do not perpetrate violence but who are silent and do not take action against perpetrators, even when knowledge of it is prevalent, are as much to blame as the perpetrators themselves. Male teachers use their age, authority, promise of better grades, and economic status to pressure learners into sexual relationships with them. Girls fear reprisal and punishment from the educator and therefore submit to their demands (Le Roux and Mokhele, 2011; Bhana, 2012).

Corporal punishment, although prohibited since 1996 by law, is still practised widely at schools. Most cases of corporal punishment go unreported and school management fails to discipline educators who use corporal punishment as a discipline technique. Many educators

use corporal punishment as they lack the appropriate skills and techniques to manage behaviour effectively. Some educators even have parental consent to administer corporal punishment (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006; SACE, 2011; Mayisela, 2018). In addition, the beliefs and attitudes that teachers have about violence influences their classroom climate (Makhasane and Chikoko, 2016; Shiva Kumar *et al.*, 2017). Corporal punishment is also linked to teacher stress and the socialisation of male teachers that violence is a norm (Taole, 2016).

Burton and Leoshut's study (2012), found that 48.8% of learners were victims of physical punishment by educators and principals. The study found that the highest prevalence of corporal punishment (73.7%) was in Kwa-Zulu Natal. This had increased from 48.7% reported in the 2008 study. That which was interesting in the study was that nine out of ten principals stated that educators were aware of the ban of corporal punishment, yet despite this, they still used it as a means of discipline rather than alternative methods of discipline.

By employing corporal punishment for wrongdoing, the school system reinforces the notion that violence is the only way to deal with problems. Instead of taking on the important role of teaching young people pro-social behaviour, corporal punishment increases the behaviour that it seeks to control. According to Mncube and Dube (2019), the use of corporal punishment demonstrates a lack of teacher professionalism and democracy. The autocratic handling of learners' behaviour by educators through the use of physical and verbal aggression heightens violence in the classroom context. The use of a power relationship hinders mutual respect and engagement and impacts on learning (Shiva Kumar *et al.*, 2017).

A study carried out by Ghorab and Al-Khaldi (2014), to determine the level of violence against school children and to understand the causes and the impact on anxiety and attitudes towards learning found that children were subjected to high degrees of physical and psychological violence by teachers and that high levels of negative reinforcement were used by teachers as a form of punishment. The attitude of educators in terms of gender and power also influences the manner in which they interact with learners. If educators themselves come from backgrounds of family and community violence, then this is likely to impact on their attitudes and behaviour and the ultimate perpetuation of violence against learners.

Rather than using punitive discipline techniques, Padayachee and Gcelu (2019), suggest that educators use assertive discipline, reinforcement, communication, and rule-setting with associated consequences and restorative methods to instil discipline in classrooms. In addition, Dube and Hlalele (2018), propose that one-on-one dialogue with learners guided by

respect rather than power is a better alternative to corporal punishment. They believe that violence in schools can be reduced if young people are treated with respect and are given a voice.

3.8.3 The Learners

Personality, age, gender, behavioural, and psychological variables determine the extent to which young people engage in violence or are victimised. Individual causes of school-based violence include adolescents with aggressive tendencies (Leoshut and Benora, 2007; Bezuidenhout and Joubert, 2008), adolescents who do not feel like they are coping and who, due to their frustration and dislike of subjects, academically detach themselves from school and their peers and exhibit violent behaviour (Marcus, 2007; Singh and Steyn, 2014). The temperament of the young person can also contribute to violent tendencies. Temperament refers to a particular personality style that predisposes individuals to behave in particular ways and affects how they deal with new experiences and stressors (King, 2012).

Biological factors related to violence could be the result of neurological damage through pregnancy and birth complications when they occur in combination with family problems. Psychological and behavioural characteristics that relate to violence include hyperactivity, attention problems, poor impulse control, risk-taking, poor cognitive development, low intelligence, and involvement in anti-social behaviour (World Report on Violence and Health, 2002; Leoshut and Benora, 2007; Van der Merwe, Dawes and Ward, 2011). In addition, the interpersonal relationships that young people have with their family, friends, and peer group can shape their personality traits which could lead to violent tendencies.

Alcohol, drugs, weapons, and gangs are key causes of violence perpetrated at school (Report on Violence against Children in South Africa, 2012; Mncube and Harber, 2013). The presence of criminal acquaintances, both peers and significant adults, is a strong predictor of future anti-social behaviour. According to Burton and Leoshut (2012), one in seven learners had access to alcohol, one in ten had access to drugs, and nearly one tenth had access to weapons. A study carried out by Pahad and Graham (2012), in Alexandra, Gauteng, found that individual factors related to school violence were age, gender, drugs, and the psychological health of the victim. Younger learners were more susceptible to being victims and boys perpetrated violence more than girls.

According to Bester and du Plessis (2010), the causes of violence are bullying, retaliation against bullying, gangsterism, a lack of consequences for perpetrators of violence, alcohol abuse, gambling, peer approval, sexism, and xenophobia. In addition, a lack of tolerance

towards diversity has resulted in aggression (Botha, Myburgh and Poggenpoel, 2012). School violence is generally gender-based with weapon carrying, bullying, and sexual and physical assault being predominantly male activities, while verbal assault is a female activity. Experiences of being victimised at school are usually not a once-off experience for learners. School violence does not only affect victims but the witnesses as well. Witnessing acts of violence at school causes fear and uncertainty in learners which in turn affects one's ability to concentrate and learn (SACE, 2011; Burton and Leoshut, 2012).

Violence against children in the school setting is the result of violence in their other socialising contexts such as the family and community.

3.8.4 The Role of the Family in School-Based Violence

Parental behaviour and the family environment are central factors in the development of violent behaviour in young people (World Report on Violence and Health, 2002; Maternowska and Fry, 2018). The family environment is a key socialising agent in childhood and adolescence. In the family, the young person learns values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour that serve as a moral compass for the young person.

If the young person is socialised in a family environment that is rife in dysfunction and violence, then this can have a detrimental effect on their holistic development as well as place them at a greater risk for engaging in violent anti-social behaviour in other settings such as the school and community. Young people who are exposed to such violence learn that violence is a norm and this is how one solves problems and resolves conflict (Leoshut and Bonora, 2007; Leoshut and Kafaar 2017). Steyn and Singh (2018), posit that violence is exacerbated by children who come from broken homes where there is poor discipline and a lack of control by parents, and by parents who themselves model aggressive behaviour.

Many adolescents today are being raised in homes with single parents. Children from single-parent families are at a greater risk for violence as compared to those raised in two-parent families (Burton and Leoshut, 2012; Leoshut and Kafaar, 2017). According to their national study, one in three learners was raised in a single-parent family and one in seven was being raised by grandparents. The circumstances that result in single-parent families include a high divorce rate, death of a parent through AIDS or another illness, parents working far away from the family home, incarceration, and out-of-wedlock birth. The absence of one parent might lead to a lack of parental supervision and low socioeconomic status and places young people at a greater risk of engaging in violent behaviour.

Even if there are two parents in the family, factors such as poverty or low socioeconomic status, physical and sexual violence, parental conflict, poor family cohesion, poor attachment between children and parents, poor parental support and involvement, a lack of communication, poor supervision, parents abusing drugs and alcohol, and harsh punishment for misbehaviour can place a young person at risk for engaging in violent aggressive behaviour (Le Roux and Mokhele, 2011; Van der Merwe, Dawes and Ward, 2011; Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014; Leoschut and Kafaar, 2017).

According to Burton (2008), family risk factors include family conflict and violence, caregiver criminality, antisocial siblings, large family size, low maternal age and education, child abuse and intimate partner violence in the home, poor family management practices, permissive parenting, and low levels of family bonding. Many young people have witnessed or been victims of violence in their home even before they enter secondary school. Parents use violence to discipline children and spend little time bonding with children (Burton and Gustafsson, 2012; Maternowska and Fry, 2018).

In the study by Burton and Leoshut (2012), one in ten children had been assaulted at home and more than one tenth had witnessed family members assaulting each other. In addition, 23.7% of learners had siblings who had been in jail and 9.4% had parents and caregivers who had been jailed. The study further revealed that violence at home was closely associated with being a victim of assault, sexual assault, or robbery at school. Being a victim or witnessing violence at home is compounded by violence in other settings such as the school.

Similarly, Bender and Emslie (2010), found that factors contributing to violence were cited as poverty, poor parent-child relationships, the absence of adult role models at home, and the educational level of parents. A large-scale study in secondary schools in six provinces in South Africa to explore gang-related violence in schools found that a lack of parental support, a lack of discipline at home, and learners exercising rights but not responsibilities contributed to school violence (Mncube and Steinmann, 2014). Family factors such as poverty, poor child rearing, a lack of parental involvement, and family violence also contributed to violence at school (Pahad and Graham, 2012; Wolhuter and Van der Walt, 2020).

Parents, other caregivers, and older siblings serve as role models to young people. Children model that which they see. Through the example of parents, caregivers, and older siblings, young people learn how to behave in socially acceptable and unacceptable ways. Thus, with these types of role models in close proximity, there is a greater risk of young people being involved in violence at school (Pahad and Graham, 2012; Wolhuter and Van der Walt, 2020).

Research emphasises that children who become persistent offenders tend to grow up with more negative family and school experiences. These are characterised by being born into a family in relative poverty and inadequate housing and being brought up with inconsistent and uncaring parenting including violence. These factors can lead to adolescents being involved in anti-social behaviour at school and in the community. In addition, parent-to-child violence is associated with a higher risk of victimisation at school (Foster and Brooks-Gunn, 2013).

The social norms, dominant beliefs, values, and overt behaviour that young people encounter in their family, peer group, and community have an impact on the level of interpersonal violence that the young person experiences in the school setting either as a victim or perpetrator.

3.8.5 The Role of Peer Groups in School-Based Violence

Peer groups are important influencers in terms of both the positive and negative behaviour and attitudes of adolescents. Peer influence is achieved through modelling and social reinforcement (Albert and Steinberg, 2015). In a positive sense, they assist adolescents with adopting pro-social behaviour and a sense of belonging. On the other hand, they can influence adolescents to behave in anti-social, risk-taking behaviour such as violence and substance abuse. These behaviours are done to seek approval from the peer group. The decrease in parental relationship and monitoring leads to an increase in peer influence, both positively as well as negatively (Tome *et al*, 2012). Mothibi, Mathopo and Mofokeng (2017), found that peer groups had a role to play in peer victimisation and engaging in violence to impress each other. Similarly, Steyn and Singh (2018), state that peer pressure in the form of seeking power and attention is equally problematic.

Peer interactions are important in the identity development of an adolescent. Louw and Louw (2007: 330) state that:

> Adolescents have an intense desire to belong. Their social development is therefore characterised by an increasing interest and involvement with the peer group. The peer group plays an important role in psycho-social development in terms of the satisfaction of emotional needs and as an important source of information and creates opportunities for socialisation.

Similarly, Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2008: 81), suggest that the adolescent's relationship with peers can be a positive one as it "offers opportunities for learning and experimenting with new roles, discharging emotional tensions, gaining independence from parents, social acceptability and support, becoming involved in close friendships and developing an individual and group identity".

Adolescents use the peer group as their moral compass due to the interactions within the group which becomes a critical determinant in developing a value system. Louw and Louw (2007), state that due to the influence of the peer group and a desire for inclusion, approval, and acceptance, the young person conforms to the behaviour and norms that exist within the group. Conformity provides a sense of security for the adolescent as they gain independence from their parents. Conformity is not necessarily a bad attitude but when the adolescent is forced to conform towards anti-social behaviour, values, principles, and attitudes, this then creates a sense of conflict for the young person in relation to the formation of their identity. This conflict results in a negative identity.

Having delinquent friends increases the risk of the young person engaging in delinquent behaviour at school. Girls are influenced by peer groups and tend to be focused on non-violent relationship-orientated behaviours and therefore are more likely to engage in destructive behaviour such as excluding and spreading rumours about others. Boys, on the other hand, are influenced by peer groups to engage in acts of physical aggression rather than non-violent ones. They seek approval in terms of their masculinity (Hamlall, 2012; Farrel, Thompson and Mehari, 2017). According to the World Report on Violence against Children (2006), there is an increase in the perpetration of violence and victimisation at around the age of fifteen for boys. Attitudes supporting peer violence are associated with the perpetration of violence against peers, especially in high-risk communities (Ali, Swahn and Sterling, 2011).

Young people growing up together in a crime-ridden community where there is unemployment, a lack of education, and a low standard of housing will engage with delinquent friends and peers (World Report on Violence against Children, 2006). "Adolescents who are surrounded by deviant moral values may become deviant because of their environment. Such delinquency has its origins in the values represented by the surrounding subculture" (Gouws, Kruger and Burger, 2008: 131). Due to the influential role of the peer group, peer groups can also play an important role as support mechanisms in schools to identify and support learners who have been victims of school violence as well as be incorporated into the safety initiatives in school.

3.8.6 The Role of the Community on School-Based Violence

In order to gauge the extent of school violence, one needs to look at the community within which the school is located. The factors present within the community can perhaps provide understanding on the external community factors that impact on school violence. Violence and crime in South Africa affect both rich and poor communities alike. However, poorer communities in South Africa are faced with high levels of violence. The Human Sciences

Research Council policy brief (2016), found a clear link between school violence and high crime levels of communities. The policy brief also found that low socio-economic status increased the risk of exposure to violence of young people. Poverty increases the chances of an adolescent being involved in delinquency and anti-social peer group criminal activity (Richter *et al.*, 2018). Poverty also increases the risk of victimisation (Clark, 2012; Foster and Brooks-Gunn, 2013; Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014). In addition, youth who live in violent communities pick up violent behavioural traits early in life due to observational learning (Meyer and Chetty, 2017).

The prevalence of a climate of violence in such communities is linked to economic inequality, social exclusion, marginalisation, unemployment, deprivation, drugs, weapons, alcohol, gang activity, criminal involvement, a lack of housing, a lack of access to recreational activities, urban overcrowding, and community disorganisation (Burton and Gustafsson, 2010; Report on Violence against Children in South Africa, 2012; Collins, 2013; Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014). According to Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2008: 80):

[Other crime risk factors include] socio-economic conditions with reference to a lack of shared decision-making power between sexes and races, illiteracy rate, political violence, a lack of community involvement, the disparity between rich and poor, a conflict of norms, awareness of freedoms and rights but not responsibility, child prostitution and lack of spirituality.

In addition, there seems to be a belief among South African people, regardless of the culture to which they belong, that being involved in crime is acceptable as long as one does not get caught by the authorities. Crime and violence have become normalised, justified, and an acceptable way of how society functions (Burton and Gustaffson, 2010; Collins, 2013; Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014). This belief sets South Africans apart from people from other countries. Violence is the most obvious characteristic of crime in South Africa. "The arrest rates of young offenders are higher in economically deprived and socially disorganised communities" (Bezuidenhout and Joubert, 2008: 63). In addition the culture of service delivery protests which have become a norm is a worrying phenomenon in South Africa. Protests linked to poor service delivery often lead to violence and wanton destruction of property. People see it as their democratic right to protest against poor service delivery as the right to service delivery is laid down in the constitution. However the protests perpetuate violence in an already violent country (Ede and Jili, 2020).

A study carried out by Avdija and Jobi (2014), found that schools that were larger in size and that were located in high crime areas were more likely to experience a higher number of violent

crimes with weapons, vandalism, drugs, alcohol, and theft. Having more security guards increased the risk of violent crime. Rapid urbanisation is placing a strain on resources which in turn creates conditions for increased crime to occur. Urbanisation has led to the influx of people to cities looking for work. As a result, informal settlements are found everywhere due to inadequate housing. The rate of violence within these informal settlements is high.

Young people witness violent acts within their communities. Crime and violence are widespread in the communities in which young people live (Pradubmook-Sherer and Sherer, 2014). According to Burton and Leoshut (2012), the average age that a young person first witnesses community violence is fourteen years of age. In addition, 48.7% of their sample had witnessed community violence. A study done in the United States (US) by Lambert *et al.* (2013), found that by the end of high school, 90% of boys and 80% of girls had witnessed some form of community violence.

Mkhize, Gopal and Colling's (2012), study on the impact of community violence on learners found that 70% of the respondents had reported either direct or indirect exposure to community violence. Similarly, a study by Kaminer *et al.* (2013), found that the experience of witnessing community violence was the most frequently reported type of violence in their study, with 93% of the respondents stating that they had witnessed somebody being beaten. Thus, the high rates of exposure to community violence result in young people who become desensitised to violence and who see it as a normal part of their existence and a socially acceptable way to resolve conflict.

Schools located within violent crime-ridden communities are at a greater risk of fostering school-based violence as they reflect the violent norms and acts to which learners are exposed in the community, which then influences their behaviour. There are limited opportunities for young people to engage in activities that expand their potential and skills. This leads to boredom and risk-taking behaviour. According to Dunbar-Krige, Pillay and Henning (2010: 7), 'because there are so many troubled schools in South Africa that try to operate in extremely troubled communities, the school invariably becomes part of the troubled community's ecology, and if neither the school nor its community can resist the onslaught of disabling social forces, both will succumb to them''.

Steyn and Singh (2018), found that the absence of after-school activities and inadequate resources and facilities resulted in young people being engaged in destructive behaviour in order to evade boredom. According to the statement by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (2010: 3):

[By] failing to recognise and address the impact of violence on poor communities, official policy compounds the hardship which people in these communities face, reinforcing the exclusionary impact of inequality. In so doing, it fails to engage with the local subcultures of criminality and violence which are most entrenched in poor communities and which feed into the overall problem of violence in South Africa.

3.9 The Effects and Consequences of School-Based Violence

There are numerous negative consequences of school-based violence for both the educator and learner. For educators, consequences include negative feelings towards learners, burnout, leaving the profession, stress, depression, detachment, low self-confidence and self-esteem, disempowerment, hopelessness, alcoholism, and substance abuse (Bester and Du Plessis, 2010; SACE, 2011; Singh and Steyn, 2014). In addition, Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), reported that the effects on educators included low morale, difficulty in completing the syllabus, absenteeism, fear, and demotivation. Bester and du Plessis (2010), found that violence against educators was a regular occurrence. This resulted in educators feeling anger, fear, detachment from learners, and disillusionment. In addition, teachers feel frustrated and unsupported by management if there are no consequences for the learner after a violent incident. This results in feelings of blame and feeling unsafe and disempowered (McMahon *et al.*, 2019: 8).

The consequences on the young people are linked to the emotional, social, cognitive, educational, and behavioural development of learners which have an impact even in adulthood. These include absenteeism, a decline in achievement, dropping out of school, reluctance to participate in school activities, isolation from peers, depression, eating problems, sleep disorders, and psychosomatic complaints (Madikizela-Madiya and Mncube, 2014; Ghorab and Al-Khaldi, 2014); chaos, lost time, and unpleasant classroom environments (Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013); post-traumatic stress disorder and mood and anxiety disorders (Report on Violence against Children, 2012; Mkhize, Gopal and Collings, 2012); and impaired concentration, fear, a diminished ability to learn, fear of victimisation, truancy, low self-esteem, depression, withdrawal, and suicide (Le Roux and Mokhele, 2011; Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013; Singh and Steyn, 2014; Mncube and Steinmann, 2014).

According to the World Report on Violence and Health (2002: 15-16), the acute and long-term consequences of violence against children include physical health consequences such as abdominal and thoracic injuries, brain injuries, fractures, lacerations and abrasions, and

disability. Psychological consequences of school violence include alcohol and drug abuse; criminal, violent, and other risk-taking behaviour; depression and anxiety; eating and sleep disorders; feelings of shame and guilt; poor relationships; poor school performance; poor self-esteem; post-traumatic stress disorder; psychosomatic disorders; suicidal behaviour; and self-harm.

Burton and Leoshut's study (2012), found that the consequences of school violence included truancy, absenteeism, dropping out, low academic achievement, poor concentration, anxiety, apprehension, isolation, a lack of interest in school, depression, fatigue, later aggressive behaviour, mistrust towards peers, poor relationships with educators, a poor self-image, poor impulse control, lying, cruelty, fighting, the destruction of property, and a disorderly school environment.

A study in five rural secondary schools in Empangeni district, Kwa-Zulu Natal, found that the psychological effects of violence included the low self-esteem of learners when bullied and intimidated by learners, and the low morale of teachers when bullied or intimidated by learners. These resulted in feelings of fear, anger, bitterness, insecurity, anxiety, humiliation, and hopelessness for both learners and teachers who were victims of violence. Stress, depression, absenteeism, low productivity, and suicide were also the consequences of victimisation (Singh and Steyn, 2014).

Children who are victims or witnesses of violence become future perpetrators of violent behaviour in their adult life (Mahlangu, Gevers and De Lannoy, 2014; Mncube and Steinmann, 2014). There is a strong correlation between current victimisation, exposure to violence, and future offending (Burton, 2008; Collins, 2013). This has serious implications for the economic growth and productivity of the country, medical care, psycho-social support, the perpetuation of violence, and violent attitudes into adulthood (SRSG on violence against children 2011: 6) as well as the safety and well-being of society as a whole (Burton and Leoshut 2012).

3.10 Conclusion

The literature clearly demonstrates that violence for many young people is a normal part of their lives and is present in their homes, schools, and communities. It is a social norm that exists within the very structures of society. The message that young people receive from their family and community is that violence is an acceptable medium to resolve conflicts. Young people internalise this and it becomes an inherent part of their childhood and adolescent

experience. These violent tendencies are then modelled in the school environment and meted out on their teachers and fellow learners.

Prior violence is a predictor of future violence. As such, exposure to family and community violence places the adolescent at a greater risk of being victimised or perpetrating violence at school, with the reason being that the young people imitate the violent and aggressive behaviour of significant others in their environment. Violent victimisation influences the attitude and tolerance towards violence. The consequences of school-based violence have far-reaching effects that impact on the holistic development of young people. One of the points of concern is that only school violence incidents are dealt with, without looking at the root cause of the behaviour which might reside in the family or community. The next chapter will discuss the conceptual framework linked to empowerment.

CHAPTER 4

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, EMPOWERMENT THEORY, AND SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a discussion of the theoretical framework guiding this study, namely, positive youth development and empowerment. In addition, a review will be done of international and national school-based interventions targeted at reducing school violence and creating a safer school environment for learners and teachers.

4.2 Positive Youth Development

A few decades ago, the approach towards youth focused on pathology, deficits, and risks. In the past decade, the shift has been to view youth from a strengths-based, resilience perspective called positive youth development (Scales, 1996). In this approach, researchers have explored how to tap into the potential of youth and to look beyond their deficiencies such that they may be viewed as valuable members who contribute towards the progress of society. This is also true for youth who come from the most disadvantaged societies (Christens and Peterson, 2012; Andreou, 2015; Ozer, 2017).

Taylor *et al.* (2017: 1165), define positive youth development as "Building young people's positive social competencies, social skills and attitudes through increased positive relationships, social supports and opportunities that strengthen assets and help youth flourish within their environment". Gadaire, Henrich and Finn-Stevenson (2016: 767), propose that social competencies are social expectations surrounding emotional regulation, cooperative interaction with peers and adults, as well as self- control. If young people are not exposed to such opportunities, or if the opportunities to which they are exposed are negative, this will create a malady of developmental problems.

Taylor *et al.* (2017), in their review of twenty-five positive youth development programme evaluations, found that such interventions were successful in improving interpersonal skills, relationship building, and commitment to schooling. It further reduced substance abuse and

risk-taking behaviour. Positive youth development interventions thus improve positive developmental outcomes and protect against negative developmental outcomes.

4.3 Empowerment

4.3.1 Empowerment defined

Empowerment is a shift from prevention-based interventions to collaborative interventions with community members. One of the early proponents of the concept of empowerment, Rappaport (1981), states that the ultimate goal of empowerment is for people to gain power over their own lives. Definitions of empowerment theory are abundant. Martinez *et al.* (2017: 409), conceptualise empowerment processes as "the result of an interaction, negotiated to a greater or lesser degree, between the capabilities of a person, group or community and the options provided by the physical and sociocultural contexts in which they manage their lives". In addition, Augsberger, Gecker and Collins (2018: 1), define empowerment as "a strengths-based concept that focuses on acquiring the skills, knowledge, and resources to promote positive change at an individual, community, and organizational level".

Pineda-Herrero *et al.* (2018: 601), provide an in-depth definition of empowerment and state that:

> Empowerment is a process of growth, strengthening, enabling and confidence building in individuals, organizations and communities in order to further positive changes in the context, to gain power, authority, decision making ability and change both individually as well as collectively.

Loizou and Charalambous (2017), postulate that empowerment pedagogy centres on giving children a voice in the social problems that affect them. In practice, this means giving children a sense of belonging, shifting power between adults and children, and active participation in decision making.

The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007-2015: 15), defines youth empowerment as follows:

> [E]mpowering young people means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others. These enabling conditions include a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy and access to knowledge, information and skills, and a positive value system.

Within the South African context, one of the values that the National Youth Policy (2015-2020: 9) espouses is youth empowerment. The policy states that:

> Interventions should empower young people as assets for national development, raising their confidence so that they can contribute meaningfully to their own development and that of broader society. Young people are instruments and agents of their own development. Young people should be considered as agents of change, not passive recipients of government services.

Empowerment is a complex process that involves social action. Through the democratic processes of empowerment, individuals and groups are engaged in meaningful decision making, active participation, and action in order to bring about change in policies, structures, and values and norms in their social context (Zimmerman, 1995; Pearrow and Pollack, 2009; Scales, Benson and Roehlkepartain, 2011; Zeldin *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, Jennings *et al.* (2006: 32), posit that "empowerment is a multi-level construct consisting of practical approaches and applications, social action processes, and individual and collective outcomes". The effectiveness of empowerment is that it is not just theoretically grounded but applied practically as well. Empowerment is also inextricably linked to the idea of social justice and cultural competence, especially for marginalised youth in urban settings (Fuentes, Goncy and Sutherland, 2015).

Power is an important construct of empowerment theory. Prilleltensky (2010: 242), conceptualises power within empowerment "as having the opportunity to (a) access valued resources that satisfy basic human needs, (b) exercise self-determination and democratic participation, and (c) experience self-efficacy and develop skills that are conducive to social inclusion". Power is not necessarily an inherent quality with which children and youth are born but rather is something that is attained from experiences and opportunities in the environment. That which one can thus determine from these definitions and conceptualisations is that the key themes that encompass empowerment are centred on social action, interpersonal development, autonomy, shared power, and confidence.

4.3.2 Empowerment and Youth

Much of the literature on empowerment is linked to Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). Much like positive youth development, youth participatory action research provides a unique platform for young people to acquire skills, knowledge, critical thinking, self-confidence, leadership, autonomy, identity, belonging, and teamwork (Ozer, 2017). Through a youth empowerment process and participatory action research, children and youth are given a voice during the research process whether it is identifying the problem or providing the solution. This is an empowering process for youth and leads to a positive contribution towards their healthy

development and a sense of inclusion and well-being. In addition, empowerment lends itself to co-operative learning. Co-operative learning, which is based on the social learning theory, states that learning occurs in a social context where there is a mutual sharing of ideas (Bandura, 1971). Prati *et al.* (2020), maintain that there is a good link between YPAR and civic engagement within schools. It provides youth with an opportunity to develop leadership skills, critical consciousness, and connectedness with schools.

Rodrigues and Brown (2009 cited in Anyon *et al.*, 2018: 11), conceptualise YPAR as being guided by three key principles:

- Inquiry-based – topics of investigation are grounded in young people's life experiences and concerns.
- Participatory – young people share power with adults in making decisions about their project and how to move it forward.
- Transformative – the purpose of YPAR is to improve the lives of marginalised youth and their communities.

Cahill *et al.* (2011), postulate that through participatory action research and a critical youth studies perspective, youth and adults negotiate and exchange ideas on framing the problems and developing strategies to address the identified problems. They further maintain that youth should not merely be seen as a source of data collection but rather as serious agents of change in the particular context in which they live or attend school. Teachers should also be part of the project from the planning phase such that support can be garnered and sustainability can be ensured.

Ozer and Douglas (2013), conducted a five-year study in which projects were implemented and evaluated at five high schools in the United States. The topics for the projects included a range of issues, for example, cyber-bullying, sexual health, safety and hygiene in the school bathroom, and improving inter-ethnic friendships. The teachers who acted as facilitators assisted the young people to choose relevant topics from discussions held with groups of young people. Actions were then decided upon to address the chosen topics. The study found that youth participating in the projects increased their socio-political skills and motivation to collectively influence changes within their school.

The themes of mastery, control, self-efficacy, decision making, problem solving, and critical awareness of the socio-political context, ownership, and participation are key aspects to any

study related to empowerment. Unger *et al.* (2019), aver that the needs for the personal wellness of children and youth is related to mastery, control, self-efficacy, voice, and choice. These are achieved through a process of shared decision making, collective vision, accountability for actions, and partnership with young people. However, one needs to bear in mind that the nature of the empowerment process is based on contextual factors (Zimmerman, 1995). Thus, the adult facilitating the project with youth should not only focus on the key components of empowerment but also be cognisant that the actual processes and outcomes would be dependent on the specific setting in which the project is implemented. Empowerment has both a value orientation and theoretical component. "The value orientation of working in the community promotes goals, aims and strategies for implementing change. The theoretical component acknowledges that many social problems exist because of larger structural inequalities" (Zimmerman, 2000 cited in Russel *et al.*, 2009: 893).

When people come together to think critically about social issues impacting on their lived experience, this creates a level of critical consciousness that spurs them into effecting change in that lived experience and context. The empowerment lens allows adults to see youth as active in their own development and reflect and act on how to facilitate the process of their development. It allows youth to see themselves as change agents with an active role to play in their school and community. Transformative change is achieved by adults assisting young people to gain independence and enhancing their competency through their relationships with them (Zeldin *et al.*, 2016; Kay and Tisdall, 2017).

Programmes and policies that seek to promote the healthy development of youth should include direct opportunities for them to make meaningful contributions to their context. Adults and youth bring their own perspectives, experiences, and relationships into the partnership (Ile and Boadu, 2018). In addition, Kay and Tisdall (2017: 68), notes that "by perceiving participants as potential experts and creators of knowledge, co-production can provide young people with a place in decision-making".

Martinez *et al.* (2017), in their systematic analysis of youth empowerment over a period of fifteen years, found that the common dimensions of youth empowerment encompass the personal growth and well-being of participants, interpersonal interactions of young people and adults sharing power, and an educational dimension related to acquiring knowledge and developing competency; is transformative in nature with young people bringing about social change; and is emancipative, where young people are in control of processes.

Scales, Benson and Roehlkepartain (2011), in their notable study on the role of sparks, relationships, and empowerment found that youth who showed skill or passion for something that gave them a sense of joy or purpose and who were given a chance to participate in opportunities related to their 'spark', developed a sense of empowerment. They described 'spark' as "a passion for a self-identified interest, skill, or capacity that metaphorically lights a fire in an adolescent's life, providing energy, joy, purpose, and direction" (Scales, Benson and Roehlkepartain, 2011: 264). This 'spark' in turn strengthened their pro-social behaviour such as empathy, generosity, and civic mindedness. Thus, if a young person shows passion for making a difference to their school or community, creating a supportive environment for the young person to make a difference encourages them to feel empowered. Nurturing the 'sparks' of young people is important for their academic, psychological, socio-emotional, and behavioural thriving.

Muturi *et al.* (2018: 242), conducted a study examining the role of youth empowerment in preventing adolescence obesity in low-income communities. Their findings indicate that "youth empowerment significantly influences adolescents' self-efficacy, perceptions for healthy food choice, healthy eating, and attitudes towards physical activity and overall motivation for health". In addition, they indicated that if young people are involved in decision making about their health, they are more likely to be motivated to adopt healthier lifestyle choices. A study by Augsberger, Gecker and Collins (2018: 1,) on youth empowerment in the context of a participatory budgeting project found that youth who participated in the project expressed feelings of "purpose, competence and the ability to engage fellow youth in the budgeting process".

In a school setting, empowerment is achieved by giving learners skills and knowledge to think critically about issues within the school setting such that creative and doable strategies can be developed to address the issues. This leads to change. It allows learners to address issues that are important to them by being directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects. A supportive environment in the school setting is important in developing empowered learners. It also assists the researcher to understand the perspectives of the learners. However, this supportive environment can be difficult to achieve in the South African context because of poorly resourced schools and the inability of schools to provide learners with physical, social, and emotional safety. The use of corporal punishment by teachers, violence that is rife in schools, a lack of facilities and resources, large teacher-to-student ratios, crime, and poverty hinder the involvement of learners in becoming change agents.

4.3.3 Psychological Empowerment

Zimmerman (1995), proposes that empowerment occurs at the psychological level. Psychological empowerment means that empowerment occurs at the individual level and is linked to beliefs about competence, control, and self-efficacy. The nomological network for psychological empowerment is comprised of intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioural components. The intrapersonal component relates to how an individual thinks about their competence and ability to make changes; in other words, it is the individual's perceived control of their ability to make changes and contribute to solutions. The interactional component is related to how the individual makes sense of contextual factors, norms, and values that impact on issues. Finally, the behavioural component is how the individual eventually takes action towards change. The behavioural component relates to the active engagement and action that one takes to bring about the envisaged change to the policy, values, or structure of the setting. The focus on psychological empowerment has been a common focus for studies on empowerment. Thus, programmes should consolidate the intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioural components in order to develop the abilities of young people (Eisman *et al.*, 2016).

Christens (2012: 121), expands on the relational aspect of psychological empowerment where relationships are seen as a distinct component. The relational aspect deals specifically with interpersonal processes that shape the socio-political environment and thus brings about transformative change to relationships within settings. He posits that "collaborative competence i.e. the set of abilities and propensities necessary for the formation of interpersonal relationships that can forge group membership and solidarity" is an important aspect of the relational component. The relational aspect of psychological empowerment is thus a key component to the success of empowering young people.

Other aspects of relational empowerment include bridging social divisions with others who are different; facilitating the empowerment of others through providing opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities, identifying their strengths and providing support; mobilising others to participate in the project; and passing on legacy by collaborating with others to ensure sustainability. The relational aspect is important such that collectively, the group can achieve desired outcomes, bring about change, and ensure sustainability of projects. He sees psychological empowerment as represented in the conceptual model in Figure 4.1.

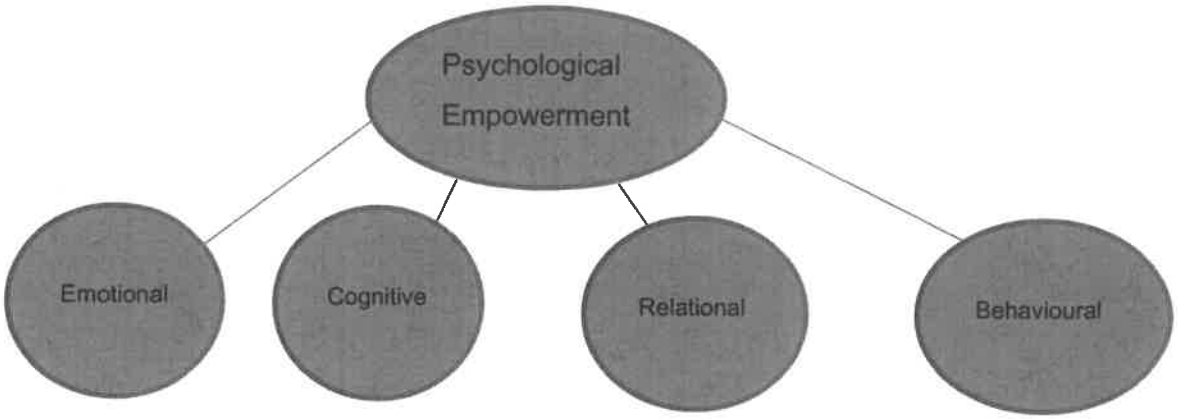

Figure 4.1: Psychological empowerment (Source: Christens, 2012).

This aspect of empowerment can only be achieved in South African schools if the relationships that teachers have with students are strengthened to include respect, care, shared power, discipline instead of punishment, and cooperation between learners and teachers.

4.4 Theoretical Frameworks of Empowerment

Empowerment theories provide a useful conceptual framework to focus on the capacity of youth to engage in community change efforts. "Empowerment models are characterized by a bottom-up strategy for change and a wide contextual framework. In these models, participant orientation is essential and the school environment and social conditions are considered to be important" (Hagquist and Starrin, 1997: 228).

4.4.1 Transactional Partnering Process

Cargo *et al.* (2003), developed a theoretical framework of empowerment called a *Transactional Partnering Process.* The framework was developed as a result of youth involvement in a neighbourhood action group centred on community health promotion. Youth were involved in sharing their opinions and ideas about improving the health and quality of life of youth within the community. Through the project, they were able to determine identified needs and implemented action plans to address those needs. The process involved adults

creating an enabling and safe environment where youth were mentored and supported to carry out actions, while at the same time experiencing a sense of belonging, participation, respect, care, and encouragement from the adults in the setting. The adults upheld beliefs and expectations about the level of responsibility, competence, and abilities of young people to take appropriate decisions and to facilitate the planning and implementation of the project. The care, respect, and encouragement shown to youth impel growth in relation to character building. This in turn leads to positive development in the youth's community. In so doing, they transferred their power to the youth. Providing feedback through suggestions and advice on alternatives and possible obstacles was also an important part of the process.

Larson and Angus (2011), maintain that youth learn strategic thinking in this way. The process ultimately allowed young people to meet the goals and objectives of the project as a collective while enhancing their feelings of confidence, competence, leadership, and consciousness of contextual issues. This framework seems to be the pinnacle in encapsulating the key processes of youth empowerment.

4.4.2 Adolescent Empowerment Cycle

Chinman and Linney's (1998), *Adolescent Empowerment Cycle* describes empowerment as an important construct of adolescent development as it allows young people to develop their identity by taking on meaningful roles, developing skills, bonding, and actively participating with peers and others within a social setting. It also involves youth experiencing positive recognition and reinforcement for their efforts in contributing positively to a group. This leads to greater self-esteem, self-efficacy, a sense of control, and ultimately, positive empowerment. Other key features of the cycle are an experienced adult facilitating the process, the opportunity to work in a group for the sake of peer approval, and reflection on experiences while engaged in the project.

4.4.3 Critical Youth Empowerment

Jennings *et al.*'s (2006), *Critical Youth Empowerment* model discusses six dimensions of youth empowerment at the individual and group levels to effect change in the youth's setting. These are:

- A welcoming and safe environment where youth feel supported, cared for, and respected whilst at the same time enjoying themselves. They feel comfortable to share their creativity, thoughts, and ideas because adults encourage and trust them to take responsibility and fulfil roles related to achieving the goals set.

- There are opportunities to actively engage and make a meaningful contribution towards bringing about change. In the process, youth learn about leadership, communication, planning, and organising (Larson and Angus, 2011). They are also given an opportunity to take on new roles and responsibilities.
- There is equitable sharing of power between adults and youth. The adults provide support, guidance, feedback, keep youth on task, and exert authority but without dominating the process (Kohfeldt *et al.*, 2009; Larson and Angus, 2011).
- Youth are required to think critically during the process. This is achieved through reflection and reflective action.
- There is participation in socio-political processes by understanding the issues that govern the given context so as to effect change in the values, practices, or structures therein (Ozer *et al.*, 2013).
- Empowerment that happens at both individual and community levels provides the best outcomes.

4.4.4 Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment

Wong, Zimmerman and Parker's *Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment Pyramid* (TYPE) (2010), outline five types of participation related to adults and youth involvement in projects, namely, vessel, symbolic, pluralistic, independent, and autonomous. Critical consciousness of contextual issues and the impact thereof are key to their typology. Figure 4.2 depicts the TYPE pyramid. In the pyramid, varying levels of participation by youth and control by adults can be seen. On the one hand, there are youth who have active participation and total control. It would seem inappropriate to give youth total control of the process and/or actions as they require support and guidance from adults. Limited adult involvement might result in the youth missing out on important learning opportunities. On the other hand, there are youth who have a diminished sense of active participation and adults who have the most or total control. This is not ideal as it defeats the whole purpose of empowering youth i.e. youth achieving a sense of control, mastery, and self-efficacy through participative decision making.

Thus, it seems that the *pluralistic* participation type is the best form of youth empowerment as youth are active participants in the process and there is shared control between youth and adults. The adults and youth can decide on who will make which decisions and to what extent each will be responsible for the planning and implementation of the project. The authors state that this shared control results in a co-learning process that is empowering for both the adults and youth.

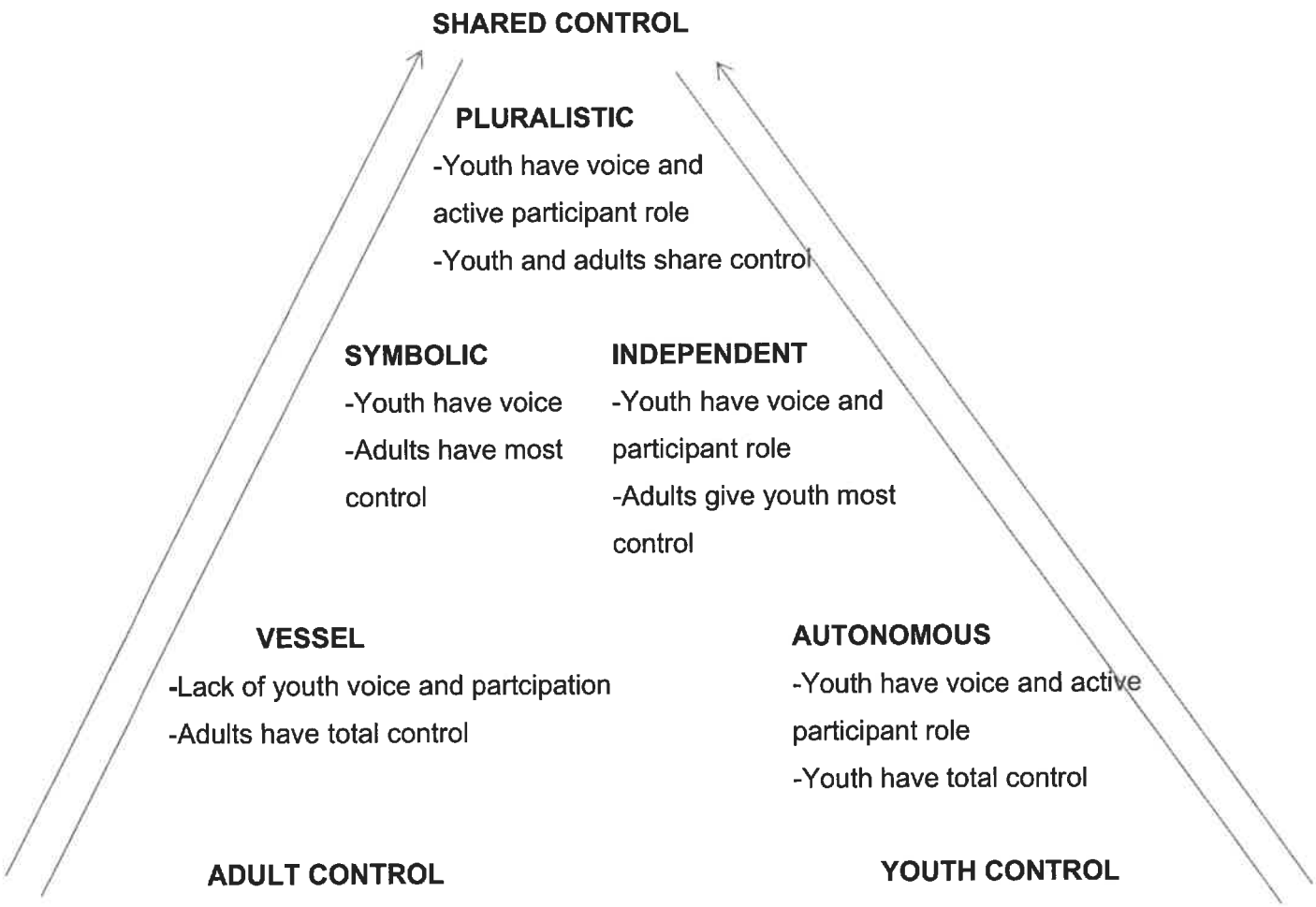

Figure 4.2: Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment Pyramid (TYPE) (Source: Wong, Zimmerman and Parker, 2010).

4.4.5 Elements of Adult-Youth Partnerships

According to Checkoway (2011: 340):

> [Y]outh participation is important, because when young people participate, it draws upon their expertise, enables them to exercise their rights as citizens, and contributes to a more democratic society. It also promotes their personal development, and provides them with substantive knowledge and practical skills.

He puts forward the following propositions about youth participation which are key to empowerment (Checkoway, 2011: 340-345):

- Is a right protected by the Convention on the Rights of the Child?
- Is it a process of involving young people in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives?

- Refers to the active engagement and real influence of young people, not to their passive presence or token roles in adult agencies
- Assumes that young people are competent citizens, rather than passive recipients of services
- Participation has various objectives, outcomes, and assessment criteria.
- Young people have limitless issues, including issues about school and education.
- Lower income people participate less than higher income people in formal policies, but instead participate in ways that are appropriate to their present situation.
- It is facilitated by youth leaders and adult allies.
- There are obstacles to youth participation and also opportunities for strengthening their involvement in the future.

Prilleltensky (2010: 247), posits that in order to achieve a partnership with children and youth, adults will have to (a) create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, (b) reduce barriers to participation, (c) value the experiential knowledge of children, (d) build collective ownership of the process and outcomes, and (e) reinforce children and youth for their participation in the process. Zeldin *et al.* (2016), describe youth-adult partnerships as shared work between adults and youth who together, democratically and collectively, dialogue about, plan, implement, and reflect on projects that are being undertaken. The partnership allows for shared meaning making of the identified issues and the most appropriate strategies to address the issues. Key aspects of the youth-adult partnership include youth being involved in authentic decision making in issues affecting them and where adults and youth are seen as co-learners who share ideas and expertise. These processes support the development of both the youth and the adults and see them both as agents of change.

Christens and Kirshner (2011), identify common elements of working collaboratively with youth. These elements firstly include relationship development to build trust and understand the perspective of youth about issues that affect them and secondly, social action towards promoting social justice through participatory research and evaluation. These lead to the development of psychological empowerment, and civic and socio-political development. Morrel *et al.* (2018), elaborate on features of the programme environment that facilitate the process of empowerment. They found that task demands, roles, ownership, structure, high expectations, and accountability best facilitated the process. Youth understood that working in groups and the various roles that they held also required a level of personal responsibility. Ownership resulted in youth experiencing agency over their work where they were given control to select and implement activities. Group identity and social relationships in terms of

positive peer norms, values, and behaviours are also reinforced as youth work together as a team. High expectations related to achieving goals and structure by way of meeting deadlines and adhering to rules allowed youth to stay on task. They also found that adults who acted as facilitators gave youth freedom to explore, discover, and experiment on their projects by using the empowerment process. It instilled in the youth a sense of purpose, hope, and self-discovery.

4.5 Empowerment in a School Setting

Leoschut and Kafaar (2017), aver that schools are a useful starting point for interventions as they have a great influence on the development of children who spend most of their day there and they are where violence is directly experienced. The UNICEF report entitled *Drivers of Violence Affecting Children* (Maternowska and Fry, 2018) also concurred that schools are an important context which can develop targeted interventions. Unger *et al.* (2019), found that the better the school climate and culture, the lower the levels of violence experienced at school. They also propose that in order to create safer schools and a better school climate, schools should involve learners in decision making regarding school policies as well as the design of strategies to address school violence. Considering the high levels of violence perpetrated by learners and teachers in South African schools, this might be difficult to achieve. However, a change in strategising around school violence needs to occur. As such, schools need to consider using learners themselves as change agents in tackling this growing phenomenon.

The Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children (2012: 24), in his report on Tackling Violence in School: A Global Perspective, states that "the most effective approaches to countering violence are tailored to the specific situation and circumstances of particular schools". The report also mentions that schools are part of the communities in which they are located and thus programmes to address school violence must take this relationship into account. In the case of this study, the school as a sociocultural context is where the empowerment project is embedded. The report further states that:

[E]ffectively addressing violence in schools cannot be done without the meaningful involvement of children themselves. Indeed, children have the capacity to become agents of change, to campaign and raise awareness of the issue, organize themselves and others, protect and support each other, and identify and support victims of violence among their peers (The Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children, 2012: 13).

Schools can be reformed from within by focusing on peer-to-peer social relationships (Shiva Kumar *et al.*, 2017). Thus, partnering with children is a key element in reducing school violence. Teachers can take action to address issues of violence in school by becoming agents of social change (Cappy, 2016). In addition, Ramey and Rose-Krasnor (2012: 86) state that:

[Involving youth in activities provides opportunities for them to] work on real-world goals, exert control over projects and learn skills that may engage their energy and attention. Structured activities, specifically, predict greater thriving because they often involve supportive relationships and nurture the development of talents, interests, caring and a sense of purpose.

It allows youth to develop pro-social behaviour through meaningful engagement in activities that develop skills and responsibility. The researcher found that involving the learners in her empowerment project gave them an opportunity to demonstrate these skills.

Russel *et al.* (2009), in their study of youth empowerment and high school gay-straight alliances, propose three inter-related dimensions of empowerment, namely, personal, relational, and having and using knowledge. The study found that at the personal level, empowerment led to the young people feeling good about themselves, having a voice which was related to being heard and respected, and experiencing a sense of control and agency; and at the knowledge level, having and using knowledge about the issue and how it impacted on the environment was seen as a resource and was identified as being empowering. At the relational level, social cohesion and a sense of togetherness as well as empowering others in achieving social change was linked to a sense of empowerment. The process of empowering others (peer-to-peer empowerment) was seen as empowering. This is important seeing that peer relationships are a key developmental milestone in the adolescent phase. Thus, South African schools need to harness peer-to-peer empowerment in order to address the issue of school violence.

Blanchett-Cohen and Brunson (2014), explored youth empowerment from an ecological perspective. They stated that one needs to consider individual, group, and setting level practices that encourage youth empowerment, to better understand the role that adults need to take on to foster youth empowerment. Individual level practices included building relationships with youth based on empathetic listening and respect as well as supporting and motivating youth, thereby increasing their self-confidence. Group-level practices included providing support and structure to the project process by facilitating rather than leading and involving youth in decision making and problem solving. It is important for the adult as the

facilitator to resolve conflicts that arise within the group as well as offer information and alternatives to the group when they cannot find a solution. Practices related to the setting included making youth feel safe and welcomed, providing structure, and setting clear boundaries and expectations. The boundaries and expectations related to the role of the adults and the youth so as to guard the adults from taking away control from the youth. During the researcher's empowerment project with the learners, boundaries and expectations were set at the beginning by both the learners and researcher. Issues such as respect for each other, participation, and support during the planning and implementation phases were addressed. From the outset, the learners were clear that the researcher was there to guide them and not to control the process or outcome.

Neal (2014), describes the importance of settings being empowering and suggests that one takes into account the intra-setting empowerment of individuals i.e. how can a classroom be an empowering setting or, in the case of this study, how can a setting be empowering for a group of learners involved in an empowerment programme? Anyon *et al.* (2018), piloted a YPAR program to determine the extent to which young people were given a voice in planning and implementing activities and how supportive adults were of them in a community-based after-school programme. Findings from their study suggest that YPAR provides meaningful leadership opportunities to young people from low-income groups. The findings from this study suggest that the learners in the empowerment project were supported in planning and implementing the school violence campaign.

However, Meyer and Chetty (2017), state that currently in South Africa, the voices of academics, school authorities, and the government are above the voices of young people in developing strategies to deal with school violence. The focus should be on peace and emphasise personal transformation. Thus, the researcher needs to be aware of the systems (policies, organisational context, and procedures) that operate within the sociocultural context as this will impact on the empowerment process being undertaken with the youth. An example of this is school policy related to dealing with incidents of violence and an organisational context that creates a positive or negative classroom climate. Thus, one needs to consider how the setting shapes the process of empowerment and how the process changes the setting. Sometimes tensions and constraints can arise due to the differences between that which the learners want and the expectation, practices, and preferences of teachers or school management. Learners are involved in identifying issues and setting action steps to achieve goals but when it concerns implementation, then these obstacles may impede the progress of the project or the project itself. Ozer *et al.* (2013), ascribes such constraints as bounded empowerment.

In the current school system, authority rests with the teachers and management. Youth are not seen as co-constructors of knowledge but rather as passive recipients of knowledge with a diminished sense of control over classroom and school affairs. They are not involved in decision making and participate to a minimal extent in school affairs. In addition, the challenges of learner-learner violence, corporal punishment, over- crowded classrooms make it difficult to achieve the core values of empowerment. Despite various interventions, school violence is escalating.

Moloi (2019), suggests that learners and educators can become social agents of change by collaborating on addressing issues of inequality evident in the curriculum. She further states that "the focus is on dialogical action that fosters talking with rather than talking at learners in our efforts at curriculum transformation in schools" (Moloi, 2019: 4). She asserts that emancipatory pedagogy, which involves social interaction, collaboration, democracy, and self-actualisation, is required in creating dialogue and action in transforming the curriculum (Moloi, 2019: 6). In essence, this is that which youth empowerment concerns. The author frames youth empowerment in the context of the curriculum but these ideas can be included when addressing the issue of school-based violence as well.

The issue of authority is an important one because excessive control by teachers diminishes empowerment. If teachers are to share control with youth, as suggested by Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010), then empowerment is possible. However, with the current educational situation in South Africa, using the empowerment process will be challenging as it contradicts how young people are generally treated and perceived. Thus, a change in mindset is required by both teachers and learners. Decreasing control and increasing empowerment have the potential to decrease school-based violence.

4.6 Programme Development, Implementation, and Evaluation

Empowerment usually takes the form of organised programmes within particular settings. Zimmerman (1995: 584), distinguishes between empowering processes and empowering outcomes. "Empowering processes means involving community members in the development, implementation and evaluation of interventions and working with community members as coequal partners". Thus, involving youth in developing and implementing programmes ensures that the programme is relevant and is important in developing their skills, attitude, behaviour, and knowledge. Empowering outcomes are the measurement that one uses to

study the effects of interventions and the empowering process. Thus, this contributes to the formulation of empowerment theory.

It is important that the voices of youth are heard in designing and implementing appropriate activities targeted at reducing school violence (Burton, 2008; Andreou, 2015). Partnering with children and youth is important as the outcomes of a programme tend to be more effective if they take ownership of the process. In addition, involving youth is an intervention in itself as it helps them heal by sharing their experiences with others (Pinheiro, 2006). Interventions that aim to reduce school violence should be based on issues of diversity, peace, and tolerance so as to develop a culture of human rights. Furthermore, the awareness of youth that they can make a difference to their context serves as motivation to them to effectively take action and become change agents. The school in this study was under-resourced and in the middle of a poor community. When the researcher first met the learners, there was a sense of disempowerment. Being involved in the empowerment project gave the group of learners a sense of purpose, confidence, and achievement. Thus, if learners in all schools are given an opportunity to address the issues with which they are faced, this might give them the motivation to tackle school violence because they will be seen as adding value to an otherwise unpleasant situation.

Martinez *et al.* (2018), in their paper on the power of including youth in the development of prevention strategies, outlined four case studies that demonstrated how youth were included in youth-led community projects related to health assessment, environmental issues, participatory budgeting, and social justice. The authors found positive youth outcomes across all four projects. The positive outcomes were related to an increase in skills, knowledge, competencies, leadership, communication, collaboration, and working with and respecting diverse perspectives. An evaluation of the Youth Empowerment Solutions (YES), an after-school programme related to a community change project (Zimmerman *et al.*, 2018) which was implemented with diverse groups of youth, found that youth involved in the particular programme demonstrated leadership skills, confidence, better cognitive skills, and pro-social behaviour. These elements of youth empowerment were evident in the findings of this study.

Once programmes are implemented, evaluations of the programme are critical in order to understand the value of the programme to the participants and improvements that need to be made for future implementation. Youth empowerment is reinforced in this process as well. In addition, allowing youth to voice their opinion may offer valuable insights for future implementation. The issue of evaluation is an important one and will be discussed in the following section.

4.7 International School-Based Interventions

The WHO (2009: 3), states that one of the ways to prevent violence is by developing life skills in children and youth. These could include social development programmes which include aspects of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision making.

The following sub-sections are a description of a few international school-based interventions adapted from the websites advertising these programmes.

4.7.1 The Teen Empowerment Program

Over the past 25 years, the Centre for Teen Empowerment (TE) has developed a model program that hires and trains urban youth to lead movements among their peers towards peace and reconciliation between youth, police, and the community (Pollock 2017). The TE model is based on the belief that with the proper support, training, and resources, young people, including those at high risk, have the ability to think deeply about difficult social problems and take constructive action to address the challenges that they face. Furthermore, their voices, energies, and ideas are an essential element of any effort that hopes to successfully intervene in destructive adolescent behaviour patterns, establish and maintain healthy urban communities, and build the capacity to create effective youth policies and practices.

An important factor in TE's success is the TE model's approach to group facilitation, which emphasises the use of interactive modes of communication. TE's reliance on interactive methods is based in the belief that groups function optimally when everyone's voice is heard and when group members are given the tools that they need to develop relationships based on mutual trust and respect. In this type of caring and safe environment, people of all ages become willing to take chances and experiment with new forms of creative problem solving.

The initial phase of a TE Youth Organising project is the youth leadership hiring process, which is used to identify youth, who will form the Youth Organiser group. Once hired, Youth Organisers meet four to five afternoons per week for three hours per day during the school year, and four to five hours per day in the summer. The core of the Youth Organisers' work is to plan and implement a series of initiatives designed to achieve their goals of resolving conflicts; build relationships based on cooperation and respect; and create consensus and commitment to work for positive community change. Initiatives range from the large scale,

reaching up to 800 participants in youth-run conferences, healing ceremonies, and social events, to the smaller scale – meetings and gatherings engaging 20-100 people, in police/youth and community/youth dialogues and youth-to-youth community building and conflict resolution sessions.

In 2013, TE worked with Dr Russell Schutt at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, to conduct an independent, multi-faceted evaluation of TE's work in Somerville, Massachusetts. This study established significant positive results for individual youth showing that, as compared to peers, youth who work at TE enter the program with lower levels of self-esteem and employability than the control group and leave with higher levels of employability, have greatly improved self-esteem, and are more civically engaged, and these impacts are sustained over time. In addition, the study contained statistically significant evidence that TE's efforts were responsible for a 50 percent decrease in the level of juvenile crime in Somerville's highest crime neighbourhood from 2004 to 2013.

The conceptual framework of the programme (Pearrow and Pollack 2009: 50) is cited as:

- A connection exists between feeling powerless and an increased risk of engaging in dysfunctional behaviours.
- Analysis + Decision making + Action + Success = Power
- Youth have the ability to make real and meaningful changes in their schools and communities.
- To make real change, youth need access to adequate resources to implement their ideas.
- The most effective forms of youth leadership are facilitative rather than commanding in nature.
- There is a connection between the skilful use of interactive group work methods and the ability of the group to reach consensus and to maximise the amount of productive work that they are able to accomplish.

4.8 PLAN International

Plan International was founded in 1937 with a mission to promote and protect the rights of children. Today, it is active in over 75 countries to advance children's rights and equality for girls. Plan International is committed to protecting children from violence and working with the communities, schools, and governments who can play an active role in protecting them from harm. The Champions of Change for Gender Equality and Girls' Rights programme, active in 41 countries, aims to advance gender equality through youth engagement. The programme

aims to empower girls and engage boys to identify and challenge harmful, negative masculinities that perpetuate discrimination and inequality. As part of the Champions of Change programme, girls and boys come together to discuss their changing views on gender and social transformation and work together to find solutions for their communities. Champions of Change is building a long-term, sustainable social movement by actively involving young men in the gender equality conversation. The programme also supports increased intergenerational dialogue by engaging parents, caregivers, and other influential community members to support adolescents in their journey of change by discussing issues such as gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-based violence.

4.8.1 School-Based Violence Prevention (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention)

Universal school-based violence prevention programs in the United States provide students and school staff with information about violence, change how youth think and feel about violence, and enhance interpersonal and emotional skills such as communication and problem solving, empathy, and conflict management. These approaches are considered 'universal' because they are typically delivered to all students in a particular grade or school. Focus may vary among prevention programs according to the ages of the target student population, and programs may focus on either general violence or specific forms of violence such as bullying or dating violence. The purpose of universal school-based violence prevention is to reduce both violence and victimisation among students.

A systematic review of fifty-three studies found that universal school-based violence prevention programs were associated with reductions in violent behaviour at all grade levels. The review also found that the programs appeared to be effective in reducing violent behaviour among students in all school environments, regardless of socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, or crime rate. The evidence also shows that specific programs have been associated with reductions in delinquency and alcohol and substance abuse, and improvements in academic performance.

Benefit-cost analyses conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) on three evidence-based school violence prevention programs – Life Skills Training, the Good Behaviour Game, and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) – found that they were all associated with positive benefit-to-cost ratios. All three programs were rated as 'effective' by the National Institute of Justice.

4.8 South African School-Based Interventions

Ahmad and Amirul (2017), state that the physical aspects of the classroom environment have an impact on the student's health, enjoyment, and learning. In addition, Naude and Meier's (2019), study found that a large class size as well as class and outdoor noises are the root cause of distraction and loss of concentration for learners. These factors thus hinder educators from providing support to learners. Pinheiro (2006), in the World Report on Violence against Children, posits that a poor physical environment such as unkempt, overcrowded, poorly maintained school buildings and grounds lead to low learner and staff morale. This is true for many schools in South Africa. Empowering learners within this context will be challenging. However, improving the environment does not necessarily require major expenditure but can be done as part of a school project. Pinheiro further recommends that schools should implement programmes that specifically address violence which are targeted at the whole school environment and that life-skills should be implemented to assist in the development of personal skills.

Segoe and Mokgosi (n.d.), in their guidelines for schools on creating safe and secure environments, state that schools should implement school-wide education on violence prevention and safety. They further state that one of the sources of conflict in schools is linked to discrimination and intolerance based on gender, religion, social class, race, disability, etc. Schools can therefore have school-wide awareness campaigns to make learners aware and more tolerant of issues related to diversity. In addition, students should be actively involved in making decisions about programmes and policies for two reasons, namely, they can be used as a resource as they have creative ideas to address school-based issues and secondly, they are more likely to support decisions that are made.

Burton (2012), suggests a whole school approach to violence prevention where focus should also be on an environmentally friendly school environment. If students care about the school and feel proud of it, then they are more likely to feel connected to their school. Lazarus, Khan and Johnson (n.d.), concur with Burton and also emphasise intervention strategies targeted at developing school connectedness through a supportive school environment which emphasises pro-social values. They further state that schools should reward efforts by either individual or groups of learners that foster a sense of pride and community in the schools.

Le Roux and Mokhele (2011), assert that learners should move from passivity to being agents of change. This is achieved by learners taking pride in their school environment by cleaning up and by being involved in the violence reduction programmes at school. Both educators and

learners should be taught skills to deal with conflict appropriately and school codes of conduct should be drafted democratically with input from all stakeholders. However, it is important to note that if educators themselves are abusive towards learners, then the issue of empowerment becomes a challenging one. Thus, it is imperative that the issue of corporal punishment be addressed by school management. Punitive discipline techniques should be replaced by assertive discipline techniques. They maintain that the most effective intervention strategies are focused on building resilience, social competence, and deterrence.

According to saferspaces.org, The Department of Basic Education is responsible for a) developing national policies and guidelines concerning school safety and b) monitoring and evaluating school safety interventions across the country (CJCP, 2016). The South African Council for Educators is the national statutory body for educators in South Africa (South African Council for Educators, 2017). Educators must adhere to the South African Council for Educators Code of Conduct (CJCP, 2016). If an educator is found to have been involved in a criminal act or act of violence, then this must be reported to the South African Council for Educators, who will handle the matter accordingly.

Key policies informing and guiding school safety in South Africa include, the National School Safety Framework, Safety in Education Partnership Protocol between the Department of Basic Education and the South African Police Service, the Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools, the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Use amongst Learners in Schools, and the National Anti-Gangsterism Strategy.

The following sub-section gives a description of South African school-based interventions adapted from the websites advertising these programmes.

4.8.1 The National School Safety Framework

The National School Safety Framework (NSSF), developed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), Centre of Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP), and other key governmental stakeholders, focuses on a "whole of school approach" to violence prevention and safety promotion in schools The purpose of this framework is "to create a safe, violence- and threat-free, supportive learning environment for learners, educators, principals, school governing bodies and administration" (CJCP, 2016: 10).

The National School Safety Framework, together with the Regulations for Safety Measures in Public Schools, require every school to implement the following policies: a School Safety Policy, a School Safety Plan, a policy on non-violent discipline, and a Code of Conduct for

Learners. School safety interventions are monitored by the Safe School Committee in every school (CJCP, 2016).

To better understand the safety situation, each school is required to conduct a yearly survey. The National School Safety Framework provides the survey templates for these annual audits, which are to be conducted with all school stakeholders including learners, educators, and principals. The findings of the survey are to be compiled into an annual school safety report that needs to be submitted to the respective District Safe School Coordinator. Cases of violent crime experienced or perpetrated by learners are to be reported to the local police station. If it is strongly suspected that a child is being abused at home, the school principal is required to report the case to the school social worker and the local police station (CJCP, 2016). In 2015, the Council of Education Ministers approved the rollout of the National School Safety Framework in all schools across South Africa (DBE, 2015).

One of the shortcomings is that there is a lack of follow-up, effective monitoring, and evaluation of how schools across South Africa are implementing this framework by the Department of Education. One of the drawbacks is that the NSSF is working well in theory but not in practice. This is experienced both at the school and district levels. This was evident in a study carried out by Bongweni and Tyilo (2019) on the implementation of the NSSF in schools to address the issue of gangsterism in the Western Cape (SAICEd Proceedings, 2019). The study found that incorrect procedures are followed as learners and parents are not involved in developing the school code of conduct and school safety policy. Compliance is therefore low by both learners and parents. This is seen by the lack of parental involvement when issues are raised at school and learners are not adhering to the code of conduct. The authors further state that training workshops unilaterally implemented by the Department of Education without considering the particular needs of schools is posing a challenge in the implementation of the NSSF.

4.8.2 Safety in Education Partnership Protocol

In 2011, the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the DBE drew up the Safety in Education Partnership Protocol. This protocol identifies these two government stakeholders as primarily responsible for ensuring safety in schools, during school hours. It requires them to work together to create functional safety committees in schools and to ensure that all schools are connected with a local police station. It calls for school-based crime prevention programs to prevent and reduce criminal activity among learners and improve the overall safety in schools. Another key aspect of this protocol is the requirement for all schools to develop safety incident

reporting mechanisms, ensure stringent access control, and enforce the prohibition of access to dangerous weapons and illegal substances at school.

4.8.3 Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools.

The Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools, Regulation 1128 of 2006, stipulates that all schools in South Africa are to be free of drugs, alcohol, and dangerous weapons. As part of these regulations, individuals are prohibited from entering a school if they have consumed alcohol or illicit substances, or if they have a dangerous weapon with them. If there is a strong reason to believe that someone at a school is carrying any of these items, then a policeman, the principal of that school, or a specifically designated person is allowed to search this individual. Additional strategies aimed at addressing and responding to the use of alcohol and illicit substances in schools are the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Use amongst Learners in Schools and the National Drug Master Plan.

4.8.4 National Anti-Gangsterism Strategy

In June 2016, the South African Cabinet approved the National Anti-Gangsterism Strategy. The strategy seeks to prevent and respond to gang violence and remediate the impact of this violence through a number of initiatives. These initiatives include school-based as well as community-based interventions. The strategy reiterates the importance of ensuring the successful implementation of the National School Safety Framework, the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Use amongst Learners in Schools, and the Safety in Education Partnership Protocol. A limitation, however, is that it does not itself provide any new policy recommendations or practical suggestions for effectively addressing school violence.

4.8.5 Schools-Based Crime Prevention Programme

Over the past few years, SAPS have prioritised school safety. This focus was re-emphasised in the 2016/17 SAPS Annual Report. In addition to the Safety in Education Partnership Protocol, SAPS and DBE have also developed a Schools-based Crime Prevention Programme. The Medium Term Strategic Frameworks (2015-2019) of both departments support the implementation of this programme. The objectives of the programme include the following:

- The strengthening of Safe School Committees in addressing crime and violence in schools
- Connecting schools with local police stations
- Mobilising communities to take ownership of schools in their areas

- Raising awareness amongst learners about violence and its impact
- Encouraging schools to establish crime/safety reporting systems at their school
- Implementing of schools-based crime prevention programmes in collaboration with relevant provincial, district, and local officials
- Specialised operations for hotspot schools, including visible policing and patrols
- The closure of illegal shebeens and liquor outlets within a 500m radius of schools

4.8.6 School Safety Guidelines

Gevers and Flisher (2012 cited in Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes, 2012) outline recommendations for preventing violence in schools based on recommendations developed by Burton (2008). These School Safety Recommendations (Gevers and Flisher, 2012: 206-207) are listed as follows:

- The Department of Basic Education should monitor schools' adherence to minimum safety standards and efforts at preventing and responding to school violence, particularly by collecting regular data on school violence and prevention programmes.

- School policies and procedures, including a detailed code of conduct, promoting non-violence and setting out appropriate responses and consequences for violence in accordance with the Department of Basic Education's minimum standards of safety need to be implemented and clearly communicated to all those within the school community.

- School staff need to be taught and supported in effective and appropriate classroom management and be held accountable for violence within the schools by enforcing school non-violence policies with appropriate means and any staff who perpetrate violence in the school need to be swiftly and decisively disciplined.

- Security infrastructure at schools needs to be updated, maintained, and monitored to keep the school premises safe and secure.

- Through collaboration with the South African Police Service, Department of Social Development, and local government, as well as school and community initiatives, the environment surrounding schools should be cleared of drugs, alcohol, and weapons.

- Safe transit to and from schools needs to be established such that learners and educators have access to reliable, safe, and affordable transport between their homes and the school.

- Children and youths experiencing violence in the home or community need to be identified and provided with appropriate support services, including counselling.

- Planned, co-ordinated, and consistent extramural activities should be organised to involve learners in positive leisure activities after formal school hours.

- Obtaining youths' input when designing such programmes and being sure to make them available throughout the year and accessible to all.

- Research efforts need to be increased such that programmes are effectively monitored and evaluated to inform programme improvement and generalisability to other schools.

4.8.7 STOP, WALK, TALK Anti-Bullying Programme

In April 2018, DBE initiated the 'STOP, WALK, TALK' programme, with the aim of preventing bullying in schools across South Africa (DBE, 2018). As part of this programme, the DBE created a manual entitled *Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Bullying in Schools* to guide educators on how to manage cases of bullying. In addition, E-Safety Guidelines were developed to deal with the emerging challenge of cyberbullying.

Bullying Interventions in Schools

The selected general guidelines in the DBE manual (2018) that are based on international best practices are listed as follows:

- No tolerance for bullying at school. This should be included within the school policy and all teachers and staff must be trained on how to monitor and intervene when bullying occurs.

- There should be clearly displayed classroom rules against bullying, which outline consequences for such behaviour.

- Children should not be left without supervision when they are at school, as this increases the likelihood of bullying.

- Schools must refrain from victim blaming and ensure that perpetrators receive firm discipline in a timely manner.

- Behavioural interventions should be carried out with children who are identified as bullies, to encourage pro-social behaviour.

- The school should meet with the parents of both the perpetrator and the victim.

4.8.8 Masifunde Learner Development and the Umhlali Project

In 2012, Masifunde Learner Development implemented the Youth for Safer Communities project in schools in Nelson Mandela Bay, Eastern Cape. This provides academic support to previously disadvantaged learners, thereby improving their future opportunities and decreasing the likelihood of them engaging in crime and violence. A challenge has been insufficient assistance and engagement from the public sector in the implementation and capacitation of this project.

The Umhlali Project was a crime and violence prevention project which was implemented between June 2015 and June 2018, in Walmer Township, Eastern Cape. The initiative was developed by the CJCP in collaboration with Masifunde Learner Development. The aim of this project was to enhance evidence-based youth resilience against crime and offending behaviour through early prevention interventions that include school safety, family preservation, early childhood development, access to further learning and skills development opportunities, child protection, and social functioning. The Umhlali Project intervention in schools included after-school programmes, providing unemployed youth and youth who had dropped out of school with information on positive opportunities in which they could engage, improving the services provided by early childhood development centres in the area, and capacity-building and support for two schools in implementing the National School Safety Framework.

Despite the official completion of the Umhlali Project in June 2018, half of the Umhlali interventions were part of Masifunde Learner Development's core programmes and these activities have continued. The interventions that have continued include life skills activities for children and youth, encouraging children and youth to be active citizens, academic support, and extra-mural activities such as drama, choir, visual arts, and sports. Furthermore, Masifunde Learner Development continues to work closely with all three schools in Walmer Township and facilitates capacity training for school management teams and staff. The

Umhlali Centre is now run as a centre for out-of-school youth. This centre offers career guidance, vocational training, educational opportunities, and entrepreneurship training. Umhlali's pre-school initiatives have also continued.

4.8.9 Addressing Sexual Violence against Young Girls in Schools in South Africa (SeVISSA)

The Sexual Violence against young girls in Schools in South Africa (SeVISSA) is an initiative implemented by the CJCP in collaboration with the University of Cape Town and Comic Relief. The SeVISSA project is currently being run in 40 schools in Gauteng, Limpopo, the Eastern Cape, and the Western Cape. The purpose of this project is to reduce violence against children, but particularly girls, in South African schools, and thereby improve their access to and performance at school, enhancing their educational outcomes and that of all school children. The intervention involves a) implementation of the National School Safety Framework in the schools involved in the project; b) sharing key outcomes and lessons learned from the intervention with external stakeholders, including presenting on the intervention at conferences; and c) publishing research findings. Two key learning points from this intervention are that:

- A whole-of-school approach and a collaborative, intersectoral approach are key to the efficacy of safety initiatives in schools.
- Many learners have little to do after school and are at risk of engaging in delinquent behaviour. Consequently, there is a real need for the development of positive after-school programmes at schools.

4.8.10 Birds and the Bees Peer-Education Programme

In 2006, Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust started the Birds and the Bees peer-educator programme initiative in high schools in Athlone and Khayelitsha, in the Western Cape. The purpose of this intervention is to challenge the negative attitudes and social norms that promote sexual violence and prevent survivors from speaking out, and creating in its place a culture of consent where learners can feel safe in their schools. As part of this intervention, Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust trains learners to become peer-educators. These peer-educators are trained on issues pertaining to sexual violence, including rape myths, issues around consent, and harmful social norms that enable and exacerbate sexual violence. Following this training, the peer-educators are involved in developing safety plans as well as in conducting awareness-raising activities in their schools. Further, these peer-educators serve as a point of contact for victims of sexual offences in their schools. A challenge is that

peer-educators can face resistance when they challenge harmful norms and behaviours around sexual violence in their schools and communities. These learners need support in being able to remain committed to positive gender norms and pro-social behaviour.

4.8.11 After-School Game Changer Programme

The After-School Game Changer is a collaborative initiative between the Western Cape Government, the City of Cape Town, and numerous NGOs and civil society organisations. This intervention was initiated in January 2016 in the Western Cape as one of the Western Cape Government's seven game changer projects. The rationale for this programme is that regular and consistent participation of learners in after-school programmes will improve learner outcomes, reduce school dropout rates, and reduce risk-taking behaviour. Challenges include the difficulty in ensuring that the locations in which the after-school programmes are, remain safe. In addition, there is a challenge in ensuring the safety of learners and facilitators on their way to and from these programmes. A further challenge is the financial cost of ensuring the continuous, effective functioning of the 300 programmes, which form part of the After-School Game Changer Programme.

4.8.12 The Safe Schools Programme

This programme is part of the Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) Safe Schools Division. Each school had to have a Student Governing Body (SGB). Cluster committees of districts also existed, based on a geographical grouping of school safety committees. These clusters are responsible for arranging joint workshops and programmes, formulating cluster safety plans, monitoring school programmes, liaising with the WCED on recommendations, creating a constitution, and formulating developmental plans.

The WCED has created a model that explains these conditions and forms part of the prevention model – the 'three spheres' convergence crime prevention model. The three spheres were the offender, the vulnerable victim, and an unsafe environment. Safe School Strategy is three-pronged, and the measures were reactive instead of proactive. The strategy consisted of environmental programmes which included alarms, fencing, wiring, and signs. The second aspect was behavioural programmes. These focused on attitudinal and behavioural changes in schools. They included education and learner training in conflict management, trauma counselling, entrepreneurial training, cultural activities, and interventions with troubled learners. The third facet was systems programmes. This focused on development and relationships with the larger community in which the school was situated. The motivation for this was for effective partnerships between the WCED and communities. The Safe School objectives were linked to five programme areas:

- Ensure safe and secure mechanisms at school
- Enhance school safety management systems
- Facilitate appropriate law enforcement
- Build a cohesive school-community culture which was located in a community-orientated problem-solving approach
- Limit substance abuse

The seven core projects of the safer schools initiative are:

- Access control in schools
- Forming part of the National School Safety Framework
- Ensuring occupational health and safety for teachers
- Drug testing and search and seizures
- Creative and constrictive approaches, and peer mediation
- Anti-bullying
- Youth development

In the area of youth development, the WCED had different programmes running at the schools. These were focused on:

- Empowering learners to deal with various problems, including sexual abuse, teenage pregnancies, violence, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS
- Learners gaining knowledge and skills through diversion programmes, life skills, sports, arts, and cultural activities
- Exposing learners to different types of information that assist them to make informed decisions
- Giving learners the opportunity to acquire leadership and strategic planning skills, through organising and running youth clubs and participating in after-school programmes
- At-risk learners being able to be involved in discussions and social activities with peers in an environment that encourages positive thinking and constructive behaviour and discourages self-destructive attitudes
- Outreach to communities through integrated holiday programmes
- A positive influence on learners and communities
- Creating opportunities for growth and development

The Safe Schools Call Centre (SSCC) is manned by five persons who can speak English, Afrikaans, and IsiXhosa. The SSCC serves as a coordinating centre from which referrals are made to appropriate agencies and from which vital information is disseminated to the relevant parties. Callers receive online debriefing in crisis calls and in non-crisis calls, and they are directed where necessary to the counselling agencies of the WCED, non-governmental agencies, and community-based organisations.

4.8.13 The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) (Youth Violence Prevention Programme)

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) aims to build peace, safety, and a human rights culture in schools through intervention programmes focused on victim care, education about safety in the school premises, environmental design, and school-community partnerships. The Centre also provides skills training and educational materials on request. The work is focused on exposing youth to alternatives to violence and empowers youth by giving them a voice in activities as well as opportunities to participate in social responsibility programmes. In Ekangala community, the CSVR developed and supported interventions that sought to address youth-related violence.

4.8.14 Alternatives to Violence Programme (AVP)

The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) is an international voluntary movement that organises workshops empowering people to lead nonviolent lives, based on respecting and caring for themselves and others. AVP is open to all ages, backgrounds, and genders. Workshops are not allied to a particular faith or sect. Created in 2008, AVP International is an umbrella organisation that exists to support facilitators and AVP programs to hold AVP workshops. The organisation does not discriminate in any of their policies, appointments, or other activities on account of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religious conviction, or criminal history. AVP International does not engage in political action or lobbying, or support any political position. Although AVP groups and programs operate autonomously, formally recognised member groups receive additional support from AVP International. This programme has now spread to over 50 countries around the world, including New Zealand, Costa Rica, Israel, Russia, and South Africa. AVP began with support from the Quakers (Religious Society of Friends) but the programme is non-denominational and works in many social and religious contexts.

AVP is used extensively in schools in programmes that are experiential and emotionally engaging. It aims to teach skills in order to create a level of emotional self-awareness, thereby reducing interpersonal violence. AVP has been known to help reduce classroom-related

violence and improve playground friendships and academic skills. The workshops build on everyday experiences and try to help people move away from violent or abusive behaviour by developing other ways of dealing with conflicts. Research on the website indicates the success of AVP in schools.

4.8.15 The Hlayiseka Project (Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention-www.cjcp.org.za)

The Hlayiseka Early Warning System is built on four building blocks:

- Be prepared to prevent and manage problems.
- Be aware of what is happening at school.
- Take action when something happens.
- Take care to build a caring school.

Each building block assists the school to work systematically towards achieving school safety. The broad objectives of the toolkit are to:

- help the school to understand and identify security issues and threats,
- guide schools to respond effectively to security issues and threats,
- establish reporting systems and manage reported incidents appropriately,
- monitor the school's progress over time, and
- Integrate existing departmental policy and legislation to ensure that school safety is not an 'add on'.

An overview of the toolkit

The toolkit comprises four booklets and interactive posters, which provide a step-by-step guideline for the school on how to manage school safety. The toolkit acknowledges that each school is at a different point in its journey towards school safety and that available resources and capacity differ from school to school. The toolkit thus allows for the least-resourced school to find an appropriate entry point into the system as well as the most resourced school. A large part of creating a caring atmosphere is being inclusive, that is, giving all role players in the school a say in solving problems at the school and setting the rules that affect them.

(a) The Diagnostic Tool

The first tool that a school will use is the diagnostic tool. This allows each school to assess where it is with regards to managing safety at the school. The diagnostic tool assists the school to put relevant departmental policy and legislation in place *vis-à-vis* learners, educators, and safety. It also ensures that the school is well on its way to developing a democratic, consultative management style through the process of giving educators and learners a voice

in the management of safety at the school. After working through the diagnostic tool and following the simple instructions for putting in place minimum standards for school safety, the school can then proceed to the next phase.

(b) Learner and Educator Surveys

The second tool allows a school to start identifying the issues that are threatening safety at the school. A set of surveys targeting learners and educators, together with a template, have been developed that facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the data. Nine learner surveys have been developed to allow a school to obtain more information on the nature and extent of violence at the school. These surveys deal with safety spots, routes to and from school, verbal abuse, bullying, dangerous weapons, sexual violence, substance abuse, physical assault, and discrimination. The educator survey is aimed at understanding educators' experiences of violence at school.

(c) Developing Safety Plans: The Importance of Partnerships

Armed with the information it has obtained through the surveys, the school is now ready to develop a plan of action or a 'safety plan'. The school is provided with a step-by-step guide on how to develop its particular safety plan. As the school is embedded within a community, developing partnerships with other departments and stakeholders in the community is a key element of this approach. The school is encouraged to set up a referral system of community stakeholders who can provide specific and specialised interventions in the school to deal with emerging problems. In this way, all interventions that take place in the school can be coordinated.

(d) Reporting and recording Incidents of Violence

The toolkit advocates setting up systems that will facilitate the reporting and recording of incidents of violence. The toolkit will help a school to categorise incidents according to their severity and also provide possible options for methods of recording and processing information. Monitoring the data that emerges from these processes can provide information regarding crime trends in a particular area.

(e) Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important that the school is able to track changes in the safety levels of learners and educators over a period of time. The toolkit provides the school with a simple guide on how to establish baseline data about the safety situation at the school and then how to monitor the

situation post intervention, to follow any changes. A well-functioning monitoring and evaluation system will allow the school to be confident in the progress made towards increasing the safety and wellbeing of both its learners and educators at the school level. It will also allow the school management to make informed decisions about the type of interventions needed, and when to change or terminate an intervention and focus on a new issue that may have emerged.

4.8.16 Peace Education/Peace Clubs

Harber (2018), states that there is a need to transform education from an authoritarian, rote learning pedagogy to one that incorporates justice, respect and inclusiveness. He avers that it is necessary to understand and tackle the root causes of violence in school. He recommends peace building as a tool to transform the educational landscape and thereby address issues that promote violence in the school context. The core competencies of peace education by (Bajaj, 2016: 109 cited in Harber, 2018: 11) link clearly to youth empowerment principles as they relates to empathy and solidarity; individual and collective agency as well as participatory and democratic engagement.

John (2018), in his article on "Peace Education in South Africa" reviewed formal and informal peace education programmes in South Africa. He found that some elements of peace education were incorporated into the Life Orientation curriculum in schools. However insufficient time was given to topics and teachers were not adequately trained to deliver the topics effectively. He found that peace clubs, which were founded in 2012 in South Africa were a promising intervention to address school violence. This is because it is learner centred and learner led. The learners meet on a weekly basis to discuss issues that are affecting them and develop action plans to address the issues. The use of discussion, drama and other creative methodology is incorporated into these action plans.

4.9 Using positive youth development and empowerment in school-based interventions

Positive youth development is a field of study that focusses on harnessing the strengths of young people to enable them to thrive in their environments. Similarly, empowerment is an important construct of adolescent development as it allows young people to take on meaningful roles, develop skills and participate with peers and adults. Youth are seen as agents of change through the lens of positive youth development and empowerment. Thus, school management should involve learners in designing and implementing strategies to address school violence in order to create a better school climate. For this study, a group of

Grade ten learners were involved in designing and implementing a school violence awareness campaign at their school.

4.10 Conclusion

International studies linked to youth empowerment are evident in the literature. The various studies and theoretical frameworks linked to empowerment suggest that the appeal of this approach is that it builds on the inner potential and strengths of a young person while actively engaging them in identifying, taking action, and bringing about social change in issues that affect them in their contexts. They are not merely passive participants but active social agents encouraged to develop moral identity and social responsibility. Overall, theorists in the field of positive youth development/empowerment agree that activity or project-based contexts create unique opportunities for youth to develop pro-social behaviour, character building, identity development, positive relationships, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and competencies related to problem solving, decision making, and mastery.

In South Africa however, there is a lack of clarity on youth empowerment as an intervention tool in reducing school-based violence. Thus, this study aims to examine the nature of school-based violence and the potential of a youth empowerment programme to change the attitudes and behaviours of learners in addressing the problem. Given the severity of the situation, this study is intended to identify a possible effective solution through the development, implementation, and evaluation of a youth empowerment programme to address the issue of school-based violence.

Researchers in the field agree that youth empowerment is related to giving a voice to youth and providing them with the power to make choices and decisions that affect their lives. This, in effect, gives them a sense of control and self-efficacy over their experiences. Through youth empowerment, youth in the school environment take ownership of the problems that exist within the school setting and are thus seen as agents of change. Youth have meaningful contributions to make and have a powerful voice, but they will remain voiceless and disempowered if spaces are not nurtured for them to express themselves. The next chapter will focus on the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters explored literature related to the many facets of violence as well as the theoretical framework which focused on positive youth development and empowerment. This chapter will focus on the research design that steered this study. Aspects such as data collection, sampling, design, and ethical considerations will be elaborated on.

5.2 Scope and Aim of the Problem

As explored in the literature, South African society is faced with high degrees of violence. This stems from factors such as crime, poverty, unemployment, and a political past seeped in violence which has ultimately resulted in violence being seen as a norm. This violence in society has manifested itself at the micro level in schools, both at the primary and secondary levels. As such, school-based violence is a major concern across the country. The causes of school-based violence cited by authors include factors such as an unsafe school environment, the presence of gangs, consumption of drugs and alcohol, gender-based violence directed at females, the influence of violent media viewing, a lack of motivation and commitment by educators, large educator-to-learner ratios, inadequate facilities, a general lack of discipline, and the use of corporal punishment.

In addition, family and community factors have exacerbated the impact of school-based violence. According to Burton (2008), family risk factors include family conflict and violence, caregiver criminality, large family size, low maternal age and education, child abuse, intimate partner violence, poor family management practices, permissive parenting, and low levels of family bonding. Other factors include authoritarian parenting, poor role modelling, drug and alcohol abuse by caregivers, and a lack of parental support.

Community risk factors that contribute to school-based violence include drugs, crime, poor socio-economic conditions, political violence, gang activity, and the normalisation of violence. Given the severity of the situation, this study was intended to identify a possible effective solution through the development, implementation, and evaluation of a youth empowerment programme to address the issue of school-based violence. Damon (2004: 19), in his article entitled *What is positive youth development?*, states that "the positive youth approach sees

the child as a full partner in the community-child relation, bearing a full share of rights and responsibilities". Damon further asserts that positive youth development can be used to engender the concept of moral identity, a component that is important if youth are to develop as future contributing citizens.

According to various authors, empowerment is a complex process that involves social action. Through the democratic processes of empowerment, individuals and groups are engaged in meaningful decision making, active participation, and action in order to bring about change in policies, structures, values, and norms in their social context. Thus, the research aimed to harness the potential of a youth empowerment programme to change the attitudes and behaviours of learners in addressing the problem of school-based violence.

5.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The overall aim of this research was to develop, implement, and evaluate a programme that utilises important aspects in youth empowerment, such as social action and participation, to reduce school violence.

The broad concept of youth empowerment served as a strategy to create awareness about violence within the school setting. The study had the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the forms, extent, causes, and consequences of violence in the secondary school setting
2. To explore the theory and practice of youth empowerment in a school setting
3. To develop and implement a youth empowerment programme that specifically addresses the problem of school-based violence
4. To undertake a preliminary evaluation of the impact of the youth empowerment programme

A mixed methodology approach, which employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, was used for this study. Quantitative methodology (using questionnaires) and qualitative methodology (using focus group discussions) were used to achieve objective one. Qualitative methodology (using focus group discussions and action research) was used to achieve objectives two, three, and four. Thus, although being a mixed methods study, qualitative research was largely used to achieve the objectives of this study. The researcher believes that the methods employed yielded valid, credible evidence. The following sections elaborate further on the choice of research design and how the design fulfilled each of the objectives.

5.4 The Research Design

Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 33), postulate that "a research design describes a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms first to strategies of inquiry and second to methods for collecting empirical materials". According to Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004: 36), the design type chosen for a study should reflect a "coherent group of methods that complement one another and that have a 'goodness of fit' to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose". The philosophical view underpinning this study was a qualitative research design with an emphasis on the mixed methods approach. The qualitative, mixed method approach focused on a case study and action research.

5.4.1 Mixed Methods

Greene (2007: 98) states that:

[The] overall broad purpose for mixing methods in social inquiry is to develop a better understanding of the phenomena being studied. The fundamental claim is that a mix of methods will generate a better understanding than will a single method alone.

According to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011), mix methods involves the researcher collecting and analysing data and integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods in drawing conclusions. Ritchie *et al.* (2014), are of the view that quantitative methods add breadth to the study and qualitative methods add depth to the study. They further state that the researcher needs to see both methods as equal but separate as both will assist in answering different aspects of the same issue, thus providing unique, distinctive evidence. When qualitative methods follow quantitative methods, as was the case in this study, they provide depth and detail to the phenomena being studied. They further state that triangulation is important in mixed methods research as it provides a fuller description of the study from different perspectives. Each perspective adds its own value to the study while at the same time substantiating the other. The reason for using both quantitative and qualitative methods is explained in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research.

	Quantitative research	Qualitative research
Objective	To quantify data and extrapolate results to a broader population. This study – objective one.	To gain a detailed understanding of underlying reasons, beliefs, motivations. This study – objectives one to four.
Purpose	To measure, count, quantify a problem	To understand what the influences or contexts are
Data	Numerical data	Textual data
Study population	Large sample size of representative cases. This study – seventy-seven Grade ten learners	Small number of participants selected purposively. This study – three focus group discussions consisting of five to eight learners as well as the fourteen learners who were part of the action group
Data collection methods	Population surveys, opinion polls. This study – questionnaire	In-depth interviews, group discussions. This study – three focus group discussions and the action research group
Analysis	Analysis is statistical. Chapter 6	Analysis is interpretive. Chapters 6 and 7
Outcome	To identify the prevalence, averages, and patterns in data	To develop an understanding. To identify and explain behaviour, beliefs, or actions

Source: Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011: 16).

5.4.2 Qualitative Research Design

Wig (2001 cited in Braun and Clark, 2013: 42) has noted that "a good qualitative research design is one in which the method of data analysis is appropriate to the research question, and where the method of data collection generates data that are appropriate to the method of

analysis". According to Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004), qualitative research is exploratory in nature and provides a descriptive narrative of the contextual issues that participants face. Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 4), define qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world". In addition, Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011), state that the main characteristic of qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to identify issues from the perspective of participants, so as to understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to the phenomenon being studied. This is referred to as the interpretive approach.

Thus, in this study, the researcher sought to explore the learners' perspectives on school violence at their school and how they wished to address it. Braun and Clark (2013: 10), aver that "qualitative research captures the complexity, mess and contradiction that characterises the real world, yet allows us to make sense of patterns of meaning". They suggest that a fundamental aspect of qualitative research is that it is focused on finding meaning and is based on exploring multiple versions of reality that are closely linked to the context being studied. Thus, the impact of contextual issues on the research issue being studied is an important aspect to consider. Thus, qualitative research is exploratory in nature, context-based, and produces in-depth rich data. It seeks to understand the phenomenon being studied from the lived experiences and meaning that participants bring to the process.

The authors quoted above state that through the interpretive approach, the subjectivity of the researcher who brings their own perspective, emotions, position, and background to the research is seen as a strength of the paradigm rather than a weakness. This is because qualitative research seeks to give the researcher a voice and make them visible in the research process. It is important that they reflect upon their influence on the research process. This is termed *personal reflexivity*. The researcher needs to be open-minded, empathic, a good listener, non-judgemental, and flexible. Ritchie *et al.* (2014: 4), outline the following common characteristics of qualitative research:

- Aims and objectives that are directed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about the sense that they make of their social world and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives, and history

- The use of non-standardised, adaptable methods of data generation that are sensitive to the social context of the study and can be adapted for each participant or case to allow the exploration of emergent issues
- Data that are detailed, rich, and complex
- Analysis that retains complexity and nuance and respects the uniqueness of each participant or case as well as recurrent, cross-cutting themes
- Openness to emergent categories and theories at the analysis and interpretation stage
- Outputs that include detailed descriptions of the phenomena being researched, grounded in the perspectives and accounts of participants
- A reflexive approach, where the role and perspective of the researcher in the research process is acknowledged

In addition, Ritchie *et al.* (2014: 31-35), state that qualitative research has broad functions that provide unique evidence for a study. These functions are namely contextual research, explanatory research, evaluative research, and generative research. Contextual research describes phenomena as experienced by participants. Explanatory research elaborates on why phenomena occur by looking at the influencing factors behind them. Evaluative research looks at how effectively phenomena work by looking at the processes and outcomes that occur. This is particularly linked to policy implementation and the design of programmes. Finally, generative research is linked to developing a new understanding of the phenomena being studied as well as developing new actions based on the new perspective.

5.4.3 Case Study

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 25), define case study research as "directed at understanding the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity". According to Davies (2007: 34), case study methodology involves using "a variety of research methods to produce a rounded portrayal of an identified subject". Stake (2005 cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 121), states that "the object of study is a specific, unique, bounded system". Thomas (2016: 23), provides an in-depth definition of the case study approach by concluding that:

> [C]ase studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems which are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will illuminate and explicate some analytical theme, or object.

He further states that positionality of the researcher is key in this approach as the researcher needs to be actively involved and fully immersed in the context with the participants. It is important when using a case study approach that all aspects of the context need to be

described such as the social, situational, cultural, and historical contexts. In addition, various methods of data collection need to be included. This will give the reader an in-depth understanding of the case being studied.

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005), the following two elements need to be considered when doing a case study. Firstly, it should be clearly defined and have boundaries (Wiggins Secondary in Cato Manor was chosen for this study) and secondly, triangulation is used to strengthen the case. Triangulation in this study was achieved through questionnaires with teachers and learners, focus groups with learners, and an evaluation.

An instrumental case study was used for the study (Stake, 2005 cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). An instrumental case study is the study of a case eg. person, group, organization etc. to provide insight in order to draw generalisations or formulate theory. The case being studied offers a thick description of the phenomenon being studied (Mills, Durepos and Wiebe, 2010).The reason for the instrumental case study is that the exploration of the issue of school violence and subsequent development, implementation, and evaluation of the specific youth empowerment programme was located within one secondary school in the Cato Manor area. The purpose was to provide unique, in-depth information in relation to the particular context.

Braun and Clark (2013: 4), state that one of the key aspects of qualitative research is that "it recognises data as generated in a context". One secondary school, Wiggins Secondary, in the Cato Manor area was chosen for the study. Cato Manor, bordering on Cato Crest informal settlement, is one of the poorest urban areas in Durban with a high unemployment rate. Many of the residents live in informal settlements (eThekwini Municipality, 2011). The identified school only had an African student population. The staff complement consisted of forty-three teachers and approximately two hundred and fifty Grade ten learners. Both male and female teachers and learners were included in the study.

5.5 The Action Research Approach

5.5.1 The Action Research Cycle

Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist, pioneered work around action research in the 1940s and later on at the Tavistock Institute in the 1950s (Herr and Anderson, 2015). His interest as a researcher was on how to promote social change using the principles of dialogue, engagement, and collaboration. "Lewin set the stage for knowledge production based on

solving real life problems. He shifted the researcher's role from being a distant observer to involvement in concrete problem solving" (Greenwood and Levin, 1998: 19).

Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 379), define action research as "critical research dealing with real life problems involving collaboration, dialogue, mutual learning, producing tangible results". Action research is "participatory in nature, systematic and structured. The collaborative quality of action research is empowering due to the fact that participant researchers are able to effect change and make improvements" (Craig, 2009: 4). "It is conducted with a view to finding a solution for a particular practical problem situation in a specific, applied setting" (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005: 25). "It is implemented with the participation of the people for whom the intervention is designed, usually with their help and with the aim of emancipation for the participants" (Henning, van Rensburg and Smit, 2004: 47).

Action research is similar to Paulo Freire's (1970) concept of 'conscientization' which "identifies the inquiry process as aimed at shaping knowledge relevant to action built on a critical understanding of historical and political contexts within which the participants act" (Greenwood and Levin, 1998: 77). According to McNiff and Whitehead (2011: 27), the ontological assumptions of action research are that it is "value laden, morally committed and that action researchers perceive themselves as in relation with one another in their social contexts". This means that the researcher ascribes to certain values which they bring to the research context. These values include empathy and the importance of relationships with others.

Herr and Anderson (2015), suggest that the aim of action research is to develop or transform the researcher, participants, and setting, and that action research is a socially engaged way of being a researcher. They provide the following definition of action research:

> [Action research is] inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them. It is a reflective process that is deliberately and systematically undertaken and generally requires that some form of evidence be presented to support assertions (Herr and Anderson, 2015: 3).

Action research is therefore collaborative and democratic in nature. Action research comprises three important elements, namely, action, research, and participation. Greenwood and Levin (1998: 4) state that:

> [A]ction research is social research carried out by a team encompassing a professional action researcher and members of an organization or community seeking to improve their situation. It promotes broad participation

in the research process and supports action leading to a more just or satisfying situation for the stakeholders.

They further state that the following characteristics (Greenwood and Levin, 1998: 75) are at the core of action research:

- Action research is context bound and addresses real life problems.
- Action research is enquiry where participants and researchers co-generate knowledge through collaborative communication processes in which all participants' contributions are taken seriously.
- Action research treats the diversity of experiences and capacities within the local group as an opportunity for the enrichment of the research process.
- The credibility-validity of action research knowledge is measured according to whether actions that arise from it solve problems and increase participants' control over their own situation.

The action research cycle consists of three phases, namely, planning, acting, and reflecting. A modified version of the cycle by McNiff and Whitehead (2011: 9), captures the systematic, in-depth process of action research. The cycle begins with observing that which is going on in order to identify a concern, reflect and think of a way forward, try out the action, evaluate the effectiveness of the action, modify, and then move in a new direction. Due to time constraints however, researchers are usually able to complete one cycle. Figure 5.1 depicts the action research cycle.

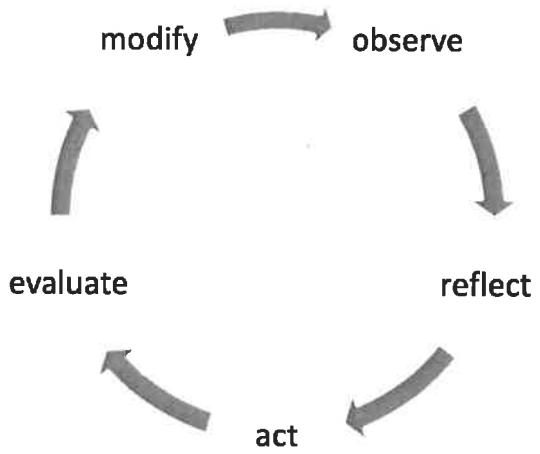

Figure 5.1: The action research cycle (Source: McNiff and Whitehead, 2011: 9).

The action research design of this study is linked to empowerment theory because both action research and empowerment relate to collaboration, participation and dialogue to bring about social change in the context.

5.5.2 The Role of the Researcher in Action Research

According to McNiff and Whitehead (2011), action researchers are insiders as they are an integral part of the context they are investigating. However, Herr and Anderson (2015), assert that the 'positionality' of the researcher is important in action research i.e. their relationship with the setting and participants will determine if the process and product of the actions taken are indeed effective and link to the core philosophical foundation of action research. According to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011: 20), reflexivity in qualitative research is articulated at a personal and interpersonal level and a researcher needs to be cognisant of both. "Personal reflexivity is how the researcher's own background and assumptions may influence the research process. Interpersonal reflexivity is when the research setting and interpersonal dynamics between researcher and participants can influence knowledge creation".

The researcher's position as the researcher was that she was an Indian, middle class, a lecturer at a university, and an adult. This differed from the learners who were African, poor to middle class, and young people. Due to these factors, the researcher was initially an outsider to them. As the sessions progressed, the researcher built a level of trust and rapport with them. The researcher made them feel comfortable during every session by being warm and friendly and respecting their thoughts and opinions. The researcher did not allow a hierarchy to exist between herself and the learners. Throughout the process, the researcher acknowledged their efforts and affirmed that they were a key element of the research. As such, the researcher went from being an outsider to an insider. According to Braun and Clark (2013), good interactional skills are important to build trust and rapport with participants.

The democratic nature of the action research process suggests that a sense of mutualism or inter-dependence should exist between the researcher and those participating in the research. The researcher views the participants as experts due to them being immersed in the context. They need to build a level of trust, respect, and rapport with participants. This will enable the participants to feel safe to offer opinions and solutions.

In addition, there should not be a hierarchy that exists which views the researcher as the one with more power. The locus of power and control is shared between the researcher and those participating in the research. De Schutter and Yopo (1981 cited in Herr and Anderson, 2015:

17) propose that in participatory research, "the subject-object relationship is transformed into a subject-subject relationship through dialogue".

Cornwall (1996 cited in Herr and Anderson 2015: 51) proposes modes of participation used in participatory methods, as presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Modes of participation used in participatory methods (Cornwall 1996 cited in Herr and Anderson, 2015: 51).

Mode of Participation	Involvement of Local People	Relationship of Research and Action to Local People
Co-option	Token; representatives are chosen, but no real input or power.	on
Compliance	Tasks are assigned, with incentives; outsiders decide agenda.	for
Consultation	Local opinions asked, outsiders analyse and decide on a course of action.	for/with
Cooperation	Local people work together with outsiders to determine priorities; responsibility remains with outsiders for directing the process.	with
Co-learning	Local people and outsiders share their knowledge to create new understanding and work together to form action plans, with outside facilitation.	with/by
Collective action	Local people set their own agenda and mobilise to carry it out in the absence of outside initiators and facilitators.	by

In this study, the researcher used co-learning as a mode of participation. The group of learners and the researcher worked together to understand the issues of violence most prevalent in the school and then they worked together to develop and implement the violence awareness campaign. The researcher guided them in the process, but they were largely responsible for brainstorming on that which they wanted the programme to look like and who should be involved. They were responsible for implementing the violence awareness campaign.

5.5.3 The Role of the Participants in Action Research

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 205), "participants in action research are actively involved in the planning and implementation of the research outcomes and are thus empowered". Action research is a participatory process in which participants involved take some responsibility and in doing so, are able to explore their capabilities and potentials. The diversity within the group means that participants come with a broad range of experience and knowledge. As such, participants are seen as assets and valuable contributors to the knowledge production process. They are able to bring a fresh perspective to the issue being studied and can offer creative solutions. The process also allows them to be independent and accountable. The entire process lends itself to a sense of empowerment for participants.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000 cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) aver about the role of participants as "the collective". This means that group of participants play a supportive role but also help each other to clarify thinking as well as regulate emotions and behaviour. During the sessions, the learners kept each other in check in terms of behaviour. If they found that someone was being disrespectful to another, they pointed this out, going back to the ground rules that had been formulated at the outset of the action meetings.

5.5.4 The Action Research Approach employed in this Study

For the purposes of this study, Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) was used. It has the same elements of action research but that which makes it distinctive is the participation of youth. Rubin and Jones (2002 cited in Herr and Anderson, 2015: 28) provide the following definition of participatory action research:

> [Participatory action research entails] research efforts conducted by youth, within or outside of classrooms with the goal of informing and affecting school, and or global problems and issues and in the process contributes to positive development of a variety of academic, social and civic skills in youth.

This definition suggests that young people are agents of change concerning the issues affecting them. In this study, a group of fourteen Grade ten learners worked together with the researcher to develop and implement a programme to create awareness about violence in their school.

5.6 The Research Method

5.6.1 Data Collection Methods

The main data collection methods included a questionnaire (quantitative) and three focus group discussions (qualitative). The three small focus groups were then combined into one large action group. This action group and the researcher developed, implemented, and evaluated a youth empowerment programme to specifically address the issue of violence present in the school.

5.6.1.1 Questionnaire

The first part of the study was quantitative. The questionnaire was used to obtain data from a large sample of students (seventy-seven) and a smaller sample of teachers (ten) in order to understand the nature of violence in the school setting. The use of a questionnaire was deemed to be appropriate for this study as baseline data was first required from a large sample of participants. This required ten teachers and a sample of ninety Grade ten learners to complete a questionnaire. Only seventy-seven learners completed the questionnaires, with forty-one females and thirty-six males. The intent of the questionnaire was to provide some baseline information for further in-depth discussion in the focus groups. Due to the large number of learners, the questionnaires were conducted over two consecutive days after school. The group chosen for the study was divided into two groups. It took half an hour to complete. The Life Orientation teacher was present at both sessions in case learners needed interpretation of the questions in Zulu.

5.6.1.2 Focus Group

Once the questionnaire was briefly analysed, three focus group discussions (male, female, mixed) comprising between five and eight learners each were conducted to explore issues raised in the questionnaire in greater detail.

The qualitative aspect of the study included three focus group discussions comprising between five and eight learners each to explore issues raised in the questionnaire in greater detail. Once the questionnaire with learners was conducted, on the same day, the researcher asked for volunteers for the focus group discussions. The focus group discussions, lasting approximately an hour each, were carried out over three days with one focus group being done each day after school. Nineteen learners volunteered for the focus group discussions. There was one male group, one female group, and one mixed group. The reason for the separate groups was that issues might arise in the group that male or female learners might

not be comfortable talking about. By separating the groups exclusively into one male and one female, it was felt that learners would feel comfortable discussing certain issues that arose.

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 201), "focus groups are described as in-depth group interviews. These groups consist of a small number of individuals that are drawn together for the purpose of expressing their opinions on a specific set of open questions". Focus groups are thus a valuable method to use when the researcher wants to elicit the perspective of a number of people at the same time. Engaging with a focus group allows the researcher to discuss a topic in an in-depth, detailed manner, as well as gain a range of opinions and unique perspectives. Braun and Clark (2013) state that during discussions with the group, completely new information might be generated that is unexpected. The authors further state that "being part of research in a group context, potentially results in a different consciousness among participants, and so research can become a tool to foster social change" (Braun and Clark, 2013: 111). This statement ties in with the purpose of this research on youth empowerment which is related to critical consciousness and bringing about social change.

According to Davies (2007), it is important to engage with participants in a setting that is comfortable, familiar, and free from disturbances where they will feel comfortable to share sensitive and confidential opinions. For this study, the focus groups were conducted in the library seminar room. The library was situated directly next to the school. The library seminar room was situated on the upper level of the library. The venue was thus convenient, accessible, and free from distractions. Because the researcher did not know the learners at this stage, on each of the three days that the focus group was conducted, the researcher waited for the group of learners outside the secretary's office and then walked across to the library seminar room with them. It was easier to get them all together quickly in this way.

Braun and Clark (2013), assert that when interviewing people, one needs to be aware of and be sensitive to the power relationship that exists between the researcher and the participants. In the case of this study, the researcher was of a different race, of a different class, a lecturer at a university, and much older than the participants. The researcher tried her best to put the participants at ease and to make them feel comfortable. The researcher's background in child and youth care work enabled her to use her interactional skills to achieve this. The use of focus group discussions was deemed to be appropriate for the study as it allowed the researcher to probe information gathered from the questionnaire in an in-depth manner.

Neuman (2006: 412), outlines the following advantages and disadvantages of using focus group discussions as a data collection tool, as presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Advantages and disadvantages of using focus group discussions as a data collection tool (Neuman, 2006: 412).

Advantages of Focus Groups	Disadvantages of Focus Groups
- The natural setting allows people to express opinions/ideas freely. - Open expression among members of marginalised social groups is encouraged. - People tend to feel empowered, especially in action-oriented research projects. - The interpretation of quantitative survey results is facilitated. - Participants may query one another and explain their answers to each other.	- Only one or a few topics can be discussed. - Focus group participants produce fewer ideas than in individual interviews. - A moderator may unknowingly limit open, free expression of group members. - A polarisation effect exists (attitudes become more extreme after group discussion).

5.6.2 Data Collection Instruments

5.6.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire had a set of closed- and open-ended questions which sought information related to the forms, extent, causes, and consequences of violence in the secondary school setting and to explore youth empowerment in the school setting. The use of a questionnaire (quantitative) was effective as it provided information across a broader spectrum of Grade ten learners in the school as well as teachers. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005), questionnaires should have clear instructions, easily understood questions, avoid jargon and have an organized format. In addition, they state that using open-ended questions in a questionnaire is useful as it provides a rich source of information that respondents might not have been able to answer or express in closed questions.

Piloting the Questionnaire

According to Davies (2007: 47), piloting a research instrument means to "try it out on subjects as similar as possible to those whom you are going to target in the main study". A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted with twenty Grade ten learners at the chosen school prior to

the main survey. These learners were not included in the main sample. The purpose of the pilot was to determine whether the questions were clear and set at an appropriate level and whether any pertinent questions might have been left out (Neuman 2006). The feedback from the pilot implementation was incorporated into the questionnaire before it was disseminated to the larger sample.

5.6.2.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide

According to Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004), focus group discussion guides are important to guide the discussion with the group of participants. The guide serves as a script and allows proper protocols to be followed. The guide should include a welcome, overview of the topic, statement of ground rules and a set of questions. Questions should be clear, bias free, open ended and should move from general to specific. This will allow the researcher to probe and gain better insight of the participant's perspective.

At the start of each focus group discussion, the researcher followed the following protocol. The researcher introduced herself to the learners, thanked them for their participation, asked for permission for the discussion to be tape-recorded, outlined the aim of the focus group discussion, and assured them that the discussion would be confidential. They were each given a name label. This allowed the researcher to call them by their name during the discussion which put them at ease. It is important to show interest and to be non-judgemental about that which the participants are stating. Social interaction amongst each other is also a key aspect of focus group discussions. The learners seemed keen to answer the questions and did not feel afraid to express their opinions and feelings or offer an alternative opinion to the one offered by the others in the group.

At the end of each question once everyone had been given an opportunity to speak, the researcher summarised the points to check whether all the pertinent information had been discussed and checked whether anyone wanted to add anything else. Summarising is helpful as it allows the researcher to check whether their understanding corresponds with that of the participants. In addition, at the end of each focus group discussion, each participant, in turn, was given an opportunity to add any final information.

5.6.3 Sample Size

The student complement consisted of approximately two hundred and fifty Grade ten learners. Purposive sampling was used to select ninety Grade ten learners for the study. According to

Braun and Clark (2013: 56), the aim of purposive sampling is to "generate insight and in-depth understanding of the topic of interest. It involves selecting data cases on the basis that they will provide information rich data".

Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004: 4), state that "purposive sampling which has elements of theoretical sampling look towards people who fit the criteria for desirable participants and who can help to build substantive theory further". Welman, Kruger and Smit (2005), assert that purposive sampling is used where the focus is on the importance of the case and in-depth information focused on key themes. Braun and Clark (2013: 59) state it succinctly as "ultimately, your sample is a crucial determinant of what you find with your research".

The reason that the researcher chose purposive sampling is because the researcher needed a group of learners who would be committed to be part of the action group in developing and implementing the youth empowerment programme which was the most crucial part of the research. It required learners who would be dedicated and responsible to meet over a two-month period, after school hours. The researcher enlisted the help of the Life Orientation teacher for this as he taught all the students and knew them well. He was aware of the students who were responsible and dedicated and would want to take part in a school initiative.

It was difficult to choose an even number of males and females as there were six Grade ten classes and the researcher needed a sample of ninety. The Life Orientation teacher and the researcher decided to choose fifteen learners (seven males and eight females) from each class. These fifteen learners were chosen by the Life Orientation teacher. The Grade ten learners were between the ages of 15 and 18 years. The researcher had chosen Grade ten learners as they are in the middle of their secondary schooling career. When they were in Grade eleven, they were in a good position to serve as mentors to Grade ten learners who wished to continue with further implementation of the youth empowerment programme.

The staff complement consisted of forty-three teachers, with thirty-four being female and nine being male. The questionnaire was completed by ten teaching staff who volunteered to be part of the study.

5.6.4 Sampling Technique

The researcher had visited the school in the week prior to the questionnaire being conducted in order to meet and brief the learners about this study. This was also done after school and lasted approximately half an hour. The Life Orientation teacher was also present at this session. During this session, the researcher informed the learners what the research was about and about the process of the research i.e. if they chose to participate, it would involve completing a questionnaire. If they chose to continue, it would involve taking part in a one-hour focus group discussion after school, and if they still wished to continue, it would mean that they would be part of an action group that would, together with the researcher, develop and implement a violence prevention programme to address the specific issues at school.

The researcher informed them that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. The researcher also informed them that the information they provided in the questionnaire and focus group discussions would be confidential. Only if they participated in developing and implementing the violence prevention programme would they be known. The researcher also gave them the assent form to complete as well as the informed consent letters for their parents to complete and return to school. The informed consent letter was both in Zulu and English.

At the end of each of the focus group discussions, the researcher asked for volunteers for the action group. The researcher explained to the learners what being part of the action group entailed i.e. as a team, the learners would develop, implement, and evaluate a youth empowerment programme specifically focused on reducing violence in the school.

Twelve female learners and only two male learners volunteered for the action project part of the research. This was a disappointment as the researcher would have liked more males to have participated in the action team. It would have been as though the male voice was drowned out by the female voice in tackling the issue of school-based violence. As it was based on volunteering, the researcher could not force the other male learners to join, and the researcher had to work with that which she had and hope for the best. The focus groups and action team meetings were conducted in the library seminar room. The library was situated directly next to the school. The venue was convenient, accessible, and free from distractions. whether any pertinent questions might have been left out (Neuman 2006).

5.7 Data Analysis

According to Braun and Clark (2013: 201):
[A]n analytic sensibility refers to the skill of reading and interpreting data through the particular theoretical lens of your chosen method. It also refers to being able to produce insights into the meanings of the data that go beyond the obvious or surface-level content of the data, to notice patterns or meanings that link to broader psychological, social or theoretical concerns.

Quantitative data analysis involves converting data to numerical form so that data can be tested, interpreted and conclusions can be drawn from it. Data is classified and the summary is tabulated (in tables and graphs) so as to make meaning and find patterns in the information generated. Data can be analysed manually or by computer software packages. Various levels of measurement are used such as nominal (classify into categories), ordinal (order by rank), interval (distance between values is meaningful, but with an absolute zero) and ratio (distance between values is meaningful and there is an absolute zero point). Nominal and ordinal variables were used for the study. The method of analysis used was multivariate i.e. more than one variable was tested for most questions in the questionnaire (de Vos *et al*, 2011).
For the quantitative part of the study, the statistical software STATA was used to analyse the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. This resulted in frequency distributions and a mean for each question asked as well as cross tabulations according to gender (Davies 2007). The researcher conducted a manual thematic analysis of the open-ended questions found in the questionnaire.

The qualitative data from the three focus group discussions were transcribed. According to Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004), the transcripts from focus group discussions and interviews are analysed in order to identify emerging categories and themes. Braun and Clark (2013) call this thematic analysis. Qualitative analysis provides a rich, thick description of the data collected. Braun and Clark (2013: 24), define rich descriptions as "detailed descriptions of the object of study, in which the complexity and contradictions of participants' stories of their lives are included". Furthermore, the authors state that "pattern-based analysis rests on the presumption that ideas which recur across a dataset capture something psychologically or socially meaningful" (Braun and Clark, 2013: 223). In addition, Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011: 218), describe thick descriptions as "reading data and delving deeper allows you to notice connections and relationships between issues within the data". In order to achieve a thick description, familiarisation with data is required. Familiarisation allows the researcher to "make distinctions that are meaningful and display content that is illuminating" (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014: 345).

Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004: 127), assert that the data analysis process has the following elements:

- An analysis commences with reading all the data and then dividing the data into smaller and more meaningful units.
- Data segments or units are organised into a system that is predominantly derived from the data, which implies that the analysis is inductive.
- The researcher uses comparisons to build and refine categories, to define conceptual similarities, and to discover patterns.
- Categories are flexible and may be modified during the analysis.
- Importantly, the analysis should truly reflect the respondents' perceptions.
- The result of an analysis is a kind of higher-order synthesis in the form of a descriptive picture, patterns or themes, or emerging substantive theory.

Developing codes is a key activity of data analysis in qualitative research. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011: 217), state that "identifying codes allows the researcher to identify the range of issues raised in the data and understand the meanings attached to these". Inductive codes are codes raised by the participants and deductive codes are raised by the researcher through the interview questions or theories explored. The authors further state that analysis should include both sets of codes as inductive codes add richness to the data as they are deemed to be important by the participants and may have been overlooked by the researcher. In addition, the authors state that comparison and categorising occur during coding. "Comparison refines issues in the data by clarifying what makes each issue distinct from others; it can uncover patterns of each issue in the data and identify the nature of links between issues" (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011: 243). "Categorizing involves codes with similar characteristics and grouping these together into meaningful categories. Individual codes highlight single issues in the data while categories bring together a group of codes that collectively represent a broader concept or issue" (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011: 246).

For in-depth analysis, open, selective, and axial coding was used. Open coding is examining and breaking down the data. Selective coding is used to identify core categories. Axial coding is then used to make meaningful connections between categories (Neuman, 2006; Craig, 2009).

For this study, the findings from the questionnaire and focus groups were compared. The findings between the learner and teacher questionnaires were also compared. The results from these will be discussed in the next chapter.

Once the youth empowerment programme had been implemented, an evaluation of the programme was done with a group of Grade ten learners who were present when the violence awareness campaign was done. Evaluation is the process of measuring the impact of the intervention. "Something new is created and then evaluated" (de Vos *et al.*, 2011: 450). The evaluation of the youth empowerment programme was done in the form of a set of reflective questions to determine the impact of the programme.

5.8 Researcher Bias

According to Braun and Clark (2013: 37), reflexivity is important when conducting qualitative research. Reflexivity refers to the process of "critically reflecting on the knowledge we produce, and our role in producing that knowledge". "Reflexivity is vital for reflecting on, learning from, and moving beyond, the discriminatory research practices we almost all (unintentionally) engage in" (Braun and Clark, 2013: 67). Thus, it is important in action research that the researcher reflects on their role in the research process and that which they bring in terms of their values, beliefs, and experiences (Herr and Anderson, 2015). To avoid bias and to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the study, triangulation is used. Triangulation in this study was achieved through questionnaires with teachers and learners, focus groups with learners, and an evaluation.

5.9 Validity and Reliability in Quantitative Research

In quantitative research the concepts of validity and reliability are important constructs the researcher uses to determine the credibility of the study. Validity refers to whether the instrument that is used is correctly measuring what it was set out to measure. Reliability refers to whether the instrument used is consistent and accurate and whether it will provide the same result every time. Statistical procedures and the instrument itself determine validity and reliability. (de Vos *et al*, 2011). As such, if the questionnaire was used in another school where violence was problematic then it would yield similar results.

5.10 Validity and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

According to Braun and Clark (2013), validity in qualitative research is whether a measure accurately captures reality. In qualitative research, this is difficult as the focus is on multiple

realities. They assert that ecological validity would be more appropriate to qualitative research. Ecological validity concerns whether the context of data collection and the findings of the research can be applied to the real world. The context of the data collection of this study (questionnaires, focus groups, and action team in a school setting) as well as the findings of school-violence-related issues can be related to the real world setting as this phenomenon is something that is problematic at many schools.

Table 5.4 explains this study in relation to Herr and Anderson (2015: 67) goals of action research and validity criteria.

Table 5.4: This study in relation to Anderson's and Herr's (2015: 67) goals of action research and validity criteria.

Goals of Action Research	Quality/Validity Criteria	This study
The achievement of action-oriented outcomes	Outcome validity – the extent to which actions occur, which leads to a resolution of the problem that led to the study.	The group of learners and the researcher designed and implemented a violence awareness campaign centred on issues that arose out of the focus group discussions and brainstorming during the action group sessions.
A sound and appropriate research methodology	Process validity – the use of triangulation to ensure credibility of results.	A questionnaire was first used followed by three focus group discussions. Thereafter, the group of learners and the researcher designed the youth empowerment programme. An evaluation of the youth empowerment programme was done with a group of ten learners who were present at the programme.
Results that are relevant to the local setting.	Democratic validity – the extent to which the research is done in collaboration with the parties who have a stake	The group of learners were involved right from the beginning in the design and implementation of the violence awareness programme.

	in the problem under investigation.	
The education of both researcher and participants.	Catalytic validity – the transformative potential of action research.	The researcher has certainly changed in the process. At first, the researcher went in as the researcher but as she worked with the group of learners intimately over a two-month period, she built a warm relationship with them. That relationship has continued even after the data was collected. The process of being given a say in decision making to develop a programme and then actually present the programme in front of the entire school made the learners feel special and empowered that if given a chance, they are able to make a difference.

Trustworthiness is determined through credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability (de Vos *et al*, 2011). Credibility refers to whether the research has been able to accurately capture the perspectives of the participants. Confirmability refers to whether the results can be confirmed by the participants. Participants were given an opportunity to voice their opinions and thoughts in the focus groups and action group. The results are therefore the direct perspectives of participants as they were captured.

Transferability is whether the results of the study can be generalised to other settings. Dependability is similar to reliability in quantitative research. That means, that if we had to use the same measure again would it yield similar results. The scope of the study is limited to one secondary school. Students in other schools might not have the same responses or experiences. One therefore needs to be aware of not generalising the findings. It can however be transferred to other settings. According to Herr and Anderson (2015), the process of collaboration and knowledge generated within the research can be transferred to another school setting that is faced with school-based violence. This lends itself to external validity or transferability of the findings. In the case of this study, the same programme will not be developed by learners in another school, however, the processes involved in setting up the

action group with the learners can be considered by another school that is also faced with issues of violence.

5.11 Triangulation

The reliability and validity of a study is also established through triangulation. According to Davies (2007: 34), "triangulation is based on the idea of using two or three different methods to explore the same subject". Stake (2005 cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 133) posits that triangulation "has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation". Furthermore, Craig (2009: 123), states that "triangulation reinforces the validity and trustworthiness of action research". Braun and Clark (2013: 285), define triangulation as "the process whereby two or more methods of data collection or sources of data are used to examine the same phenomenon, with the aim of getting close to the truth of the object of study as possible". By using triangulation, the researcher is able to capture the multiple perspectives or realities of the research phenomenon.

In this study, triangulation was achieved through using three data collection methods. Firstly, the questionnaire was implemented. Thereafter, the three focus group discussions were used to verify information found in the questionnaire. The third was in the form of the evaluation which was done after the implementation of the programme. Questions in both the questionnaire and focus groups were linked to the research objectives. Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 7), state that "multiple methods or triangulation reflects the attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomena".

5.12 Ethical Considerations

"Ethics are the norms that guide the relationship between the researcher and participants with a view to protect the latter from harm, disrespect or unfair treatment" (Chevalier and Buckler, 2013: 171). Researchers need to respect the freedom of people to participate in their research by assuring them that they can withdraw at any time without any detrimental consequences to them. Researchers must also respect the participants by ensuring confidentiality and anonymity at all times. Participants need to understand the purpose of the research, that their privacy will be protected, and that no harm will come to them during the process of the research (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005). Integrity, honesty, and accuracy are also expected by the researcher when reporting on their findings. Researchers should not misrepresent the data or the participants (Braun and Clark, 2013).

A gatekeeper's letter from the Department of Basic Education as well as the school principal was sought after ethical clearance for the study was given by the university. Learners were asked for assent to participate in the study. The researcher visited the school to do an information session with all the Grade ten learners who were chosen to participate in the study. Parents were also requested to complete an informed consent letter. Participation in the study was voluntary. Anonymity and confidentiality were adhered to in the questionnaire, during the focus group discussions, and in the evaluation. However, the action research team who planned and implemented the youth empowerment programme knew that that part of the study would not be confidential as everyone would know who they were. They agreed to this.

5.13 Reflection on the Process of the Research

At the outset of the research, a daunting task lay before the researcher i.e. to plan and implement a youth empowerment programme with a group of teenagers whom the researcher scarcely knew. As far as the objectives were concerned, these were achieved by the end of the study. There was an appropriate amount of data collected from learners through the questionnaires and focus group discussions. However, only ten teachers completed the teacher questionnaires. This was quite a disappointment as the researcher had briefed the thirty-five teachers on the objectives of the study beforehand and had expected more teachers to participate. The focus group discussions with the learners yielded robust discussions about the issues related to violence at the school. The researcher was concerned that the learners would not participate in the action part of the research as it meant them sacrificing three afternoons a week after school for two months. It was a relief when fourteen learners agreed to participate in the action project. However, only two were male learners. This was a disappointment as the researcher felt that the male voice was not given a powerful role in the group. Due to a lapse of two years in the data collection and write-up of the research, the researcher visited the school in 2019 and disseminated questionnaires to follow up with learners about the impact of the violence awareness campaign. The results of this have been included in chapter six.

5.14 Conclusion

In this chapter, the scope, aim of the study, and objectives were explained. The qualitative paradigm and in particular the case study and action research methodologies were discussed as well as the rationale for their use in this study. Furthermore, the data collection and analysis methods were explained to provide the reader with an outline of the methods used as well as

an explanation as to why they were chosen for this particular study. Issues related to the validity and transferability were outlined as well as the ethical considerations adopted by the researcher. The following chapter will provide a detailed account of the findings of the questionnaire and focus group discussions.

CHAPTER 6

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the data analysis and findings of the questionnaires and focus group discussions. The questionnaire was used to obtain data from a large sample of students (seventy-seven) and a smaller sample of teachers (ten) in order to understand the nature of violence in the school setting. Once the questionnaire was briefly analysed, three focus group discussions (male, female, mixed) comprising between five and eight learners each were conducted to explore issues raised in the questionnaire in greater detail. The statistical software STATA was used to analyse the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. This resulted in frequency distributions and a mean for each question asked as well as cross tabulations according to gender (Davies, 2007). The researcher conducted a manual thematic analysis of the open-ended questions found in the questionnaire.

The qualitative data from the three focus group discussions were transcribed. A thematic analysis was done where the transcriptions were analysed in order to identify emerging categories and themes. The researcher commenced analysis by reading all the data and then divided the data into smaller and more meaningful units. The researcher then looked for patterns and similarities in all three focus group discussions. Themes, sub-themes, and categories were then defined according to these patterns and similarities (Henning, van Rensburg and Smit, 2004). In addition, the findings between the learner and teacher questionnaires were compared. Due to the lapse in time between the first stage of data collection and the completion of the project in 2016, a further evaluation was done in 2019. The results are included later in this chapter.

6.2 The Case Study: Profile of the chosen school

In order to provide a context for the analysis, information in this section will focus on the school, community, learner, and teacher demographics. The secondary school chosen for the case study, Wiggins Secondary, is located in Cato Manor, Durban. The information provided by the deputy principal indicates that the school was established in 2000 as part of the Cato Manor urban renewal project funded by the European Union. It is a no-fee public school that caters for learners from Grade eight to twelve. The medium of instruction is Zulu and English.

It has an all-African learner population of one thousand three hundred and thirty learners. The average number of learners per class is as follows: Grade eight – seventy, Grade nine – sixty, Grade ten – forty-two, Grade eleven – forty, and Grade twelve – forty-three. These figures would suggest that there is a large drop-out rate after Grade nine. The teacher population consists of forty-three teachers. Of the forty-three teachers, thirty-four are female and nine are male. In addition, eight of the teachers are Indian and thirty-five are African. It has twenty-seven classrooms and no school hall. Other facilities include one physics lab, one life sciences lab, one kitchen/hospitality room, two computer rooms, and one engineering graphics room. The researcher's general observation is that the school grounds and buildings are in need of repair. Many classrooms have broken windows. The soccer and netball fields are neglected and unkempt. However, the school yard and classrooms are kept clean by the cleaning staff.

The school is in Cato Manor in the middle of the densely populated Cato Crest informal settlement which is one of the poorest urban areas in Durban with a high unemployment rate. Cato Crest is seven kilometres from the inner city of Durban (eThekwini Municipality, 2011). According to a study by Gray and Maharaj (2017), the Cato Manor area is rife with issues of crime, poverty, and inequality. Over the past few years, the area has been affected by service delivery protests, xenophobic violence, gender-based violence, and political intolerance. In addition, drugs are a major problem, especially dagga and whoonga. This is having a devastating effect on families and the community. There is a housing shortage in the area. This is seen from the many shacks and RDP houses in the area surrounding the school, with shacks in very close proximity to each other, almost as though they are built on top of each other. According to Statistics SA (2011), Cato Crest has an all-African population of 17,857 with 7,610 households within a radius of sixty-two kilometres. Households have access to water and electricity. Sanitation is however a problem. As one drives through the area, there is evidence of outside latrines.

6.3 Sample Size- Learners

Purposive sampling was used to select ninety Grade ten learners for the study. The rationale for using purposive sampling has been explained in the research methodology chapter. Fifteen learners (seven male and eight female) from each of the six classes were chosen. They were between the ages of fifteen and eighteen years. However, of the ninety learners chosen, seventy-seven learners completed the questionnaires (N=77), with forty-one females (53%) and thirty-six males (47%). The questionnaire had a set of closed- and open-ended questions which sought information related to the forms, extent, causes, and consequences of violence

in the secondary school setting as well as how youth empowerment is/can be experienced in the school setting.

Due to the large number of learners, the researcher conducted the questionnaires over two consecutive days after school. The group chosen for the study was divided into two groups. It took approximately half an hour to complete as the researcher had already briefed the learners in the previous week about the study and the processes that were entailed. Permission was obtained from the parents/guardians for the learners to participate. Before the learners started the questionnaire, the researcher went through all the questions with them. The Life Orientation teacher was present at both sessions in the event that learners needed interpretation of the questions in Zulu.

6.3.1 Learner Questionnaire – Closed Questions

Table 6.1 presents the learners' responses on whether violence was a problem at school.

Table 6.1: Learner responses on whether violence is a problem at school.

Response	Male	Female
Agree	64%	42%
Strongly Agree	11%	27%
Neutral	14%	17%
Disagree	11%	12%
Strongly Disagree	0%	2%

From Table 6.1, in the combined responses for 'agree' and 'strongly agree', both male and female learners acknowledged that violence is a problem at the school. Fourteen percent (14%) and seventeen percent (17%) of the male and female learners, respectively, were neutral with only a small percentage disagreeing that violence was a problem. The statistics therefore correlate with other studies done nationally that suggest that school violence is indeed of concern and is experienced by many children and adolescents. A national study by Burton and Leoshut (2012) indicated that 22% of secondary school learners had been victims of school-based violence. Furthermore, the assessment report on youth violence, policy and programmes in South Africa by the Department of Social Development and World Bank (2012) strongly indicates that young people in South Africa are at a high risk of violence manifested through crime, maltreatment, corporal punishment, and bullying which are perpetrated mostly in schools. Table 6.2 presents the learners' responses on how often they saw or heard violence at school.

Table 6.2: Learner responses on how often learners see or hear violence at school.

Response	Male	Female
Every day	25%	25%
A few times a week	31%	25%
Once a week	25%	7%
Rarely	14%	36%
Never	5%	7%

According to the responses in Table 6.2, most of the male learners stated that they had seen or heard violence either every day, a few times a week, or at least once a week. Only 14% stated that it occurred rarely. Most of the female responses indicated that violence was seen or heard every day or a few times a week. Only 7% reported that it was witnessed once a week. However, 36% responded that it was seen or heard rarely. This is in contradiction to the results in Table 6.1 where a high percentage (64% male and 42% female) agreed that violence is a problem at the school. Table 6.3 presents the types of violence present at the school.

Table 6.3: Types of violence present at school.

Type of Violence	Male	Female
Bullying	44%	49%
Fighting	47%	73%
Swearing and teasing	25%	44%
Stealing	64%	73%
Being threatened	14%	20%
Sexual Harassment	6%	2%

The statistics from Table 6.3 suggest that stealing seems to be the most prevalent type of violence at the school. Stealing in a school situation is done secretly and does not usually cause physical harm. It can be attributed to structural violence (Galtung, 1969: 171) which is linked to "unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances". Poverty, which is seen as a form of structural violence, hinders parents from providing for the material needs of their children. This school is in a poverty-stricken area and thus may be the reason why children resort to stealing.

As compared to female learners, the male learners did not perceive swearing and teasing as a type of violence even though it might be quite common. The female learners, with a

resounding 73%, perceived fighting to be as prevalent as stealing. Male learners, however, might not perceive fighting as an issue but rather see it as a norm of how boys are expected to behave. This might be because aggression and violence are seen as socially acceptable for males and are perceived to be the norm when resolving disagreements and conflict (Burton and Gustaffson, 2010; Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014). Males see violence as a legitimate way to protect themselves and obtain respect from others. Thus, males are more likely to be victims and perpetrators of physical violence (Mahlangu, Gevers and De Lannoy, 2014; Tsabedze, Maepa and Pila-Nemutandani, 2018).

That which was quite interesting in this study is that only 6% of male and 2% of female learners stated that sexual harassment is a type of violence at the school. These low figures for both males and females is quite contradictory to the literature which states that sexual harassment is prevalent as a common type of violence at school. A study by Mothibi, Mathopo and Mofokeng (2017), found an upward trend in the sexual harassment of girls in schools. The manner in which girls deal with the issues of gender violence in school is related to the way in which gender-related issues and violence are dealt with in the family and community setting. In many ways, there is bias in both these settings towards male dominance. Ultimately, many girls are powerless against the dominant male culture of power and authority.

This bias towards the powerful role of masculinity places more risk on boys to engage in gender-based school violence (Ngqela and Lewis, 2012; Shiva Kumar *et al.*, 2017). Girls are at the receiving end as they are perceived as inferior, defenceless, and fear punishment for reporting incidents of sexual violence (Malongo and Mwale, 2019). It is reported that more than 30% of girls are sexually assaulted at school (SACE, 2011). According to the Report on Violence against Children in South Africa (2012: 7), "for many young women, the most common place where sexual coercion and harassment are experienced is in school". This low response rate was further explored in the focus group discussions. Table 6.4 presents the causes of violence at school.

Table 6.4: Causes of violence at school.

Cause of Violence	Male	Female
Peer pressure	42%	66%
Drugs	75%	51%
Alcohol	8%	27%
Gangsterism	17%	32%
Weapons	11%	7%

Media influence	3%	15%
Family	22%	34%
Community	8%	12%
Poor school environment	8%	24%

Male and female learners had similar views related to the causes of violence. Female learners perceived the most prevalent cause of violence to be peer pressure, followed by drugs, family influences, gangsterism, alcohol, and poor school environments. For male learners, the most prevalent cause of violence was drugs followed by peer pressure, family, and gangsterism. Only 8% of male respondents cited alcohol as a cause of violence as opposed to 27% of female respondents. Both male and female learners did not perceive the community, media, and weapons to be prevalent causes of violence in the school. The data above is consistent with literature.

Alcohol, drugs, weapons, and gangs are key causes of violence perpetrated at school (Report on Violence against Children in South Africa, 2012; Mncube and Harber, 2013). According to Burton and Leoshut (2012), one in seven learners had access to alcohol and one in ten had access to drugs. Having delinquent friends increases the risk of the young person engaging in delinquent behaviour at school. There is a great pressure by the peer group on male learners to be brave. Much of this show of bravery is displayed in physical fighting (Hamlall, 2012). Mothibi, Mathopo and Mofokeng (2017), found that peer groups had a role to play in peer victimisation and engaging in violence to impress each other. Similarly, Steyn and Singh (2018), state that peer pressure in the form of seeking power and attention is equally problematic.

According to Madikizela-Madiya and Mncube (2014), informal and formal gangs that operate within the school grounds or that have been infiltrated from outside pose a threat to learners. Mothibi, Mathopo and Mofokeng (2017), posit that gang formation is a result of school violence, as many learners join gangs to protect themselves against bullies. In addition, Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) and Burke and Gielen (2012), state that indiscipline, gangs, drugs, weapons, peer pressure, and easy access of outsiders to the school were linked to school violence. Hamlall and Morrell (2012), found that peer expectations and affirmation of aggressive behaviour served as validation of the aggressor's masculinity in public, and avoiding humiliation, defending oneself, and aggressive actions by others led to conflict most of the time.

Factors such as poverty or low socioeconomic status, physical and sexual violence, and family factors such as parental conflict, poor family cohesion, poor attachment between children and parents, poor parental support and involvement, a lack of communication, poor supervision, parents abusing drugs and alcohol, and harsh punishment for misbehaviour can place a young person at risk for engaging in violent aggressive behaviour (Van der Merwe, Dawes and Ward, 2011; Leoschut and Kafaar ,2017; Maternowska and Fry, 2018). Table 6.5 presents the effects of violence on the learners.

Table 6.5: The effects of violence on learners.

Effect of violence	Male	Female
Fearful and anxious	28%	34%
Poor school performance	44%	56%
Poor concentration in class	33%	41%
Bunking	47%	68%
Lack of interest in school	31%	41%
Dropping out	19%	51%
Depression	5%	24%

For female learners, the main effect of violence on learners was bunking followed by poor school performance, dropping out, poor concentration in class, a lack of interest in school, feeling fearful and anxious, and depression. For male learners, the main effect was also bunking followed by poor school performance, poor concentration, a lack of interest in school, and feeling fearful and anxious. As compared to the female learners, they did not think that dropping out and depression had an impact on learners.

According to the literature, the consequences of school-based violence are linked to the emotional, social, cognitive, educational, and behavioural development of learners which have an impact even in adulthood. These include absenteeism, a decline in achievement, dropping out of school, reluctance to participate in school activities, isolation from peers, depression, eating problems, sleep disorders, and psychosomatic complaints (Madikizela-Madiya and Mncube, 2014; Ghorab and Al-Khaldi, 2014); chaos, lost time, and unpleasant classroom environments (Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013); post-traumatic stress disorder, and mood and anxiety disorders (Report on Violence against Children, 2012; Mkhize, Gopal and Collings, 2012); and impaired concentration, fear, a diminished ability to learn, fear of victimisation, truancy, low self-esteem, depression, withdrawal, and suicide (Le Roux and Mokhele, 2011; Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013; Singh and Steyn, 2014; Mncube and Steinmann, 2014).

According to the World Report on Violence and Health (2002: 15-16), psychological consequences of school violence include alcohol and drug abuse; criminal, violent, and other risk-taking behaviour; depression and anxiety; eating and sleep disorders; feelings of shame and guilt; poor relationships; poor school performance; poor self-esteem; post-traumatic stress disorder; psychosomatic disorders; suicidal behaviour; and self-harm. Burton and Leoschut's study (2012), found that the consequences of school violence included truancy, absenteeism, dropping out, low academic achievement, poor concentration, anxiety, apprehension, isolation, a lack of interest in school, depression, fatigue, later aggressive behaviour, mistrust towards peers, poor relationships with educators, poor self-image, poor impulse control, lying, cruelty, fighting, destruction of property, and a disorderly school environment.

6.3.2 Learner Cross Tabulations

The cross tabulations focus on male and female responses to various questions in the questionnaire. Sexual harassment has been left out due to the minimal responses which will overinflate the statistics. Table 6.6 presents to what extent violence is seen to be a problem linked to types of violence.

Table 6.6: To what extent violence is seen to be a problem linked to types of violence.

Extent	Types of violence									
	Bullying		Fighting		Swearing/teasing		Stealing		Being threatened	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Agree	44%	61%	67%	43%	58%	41%	58%	49%	54%	38%
Disagree	22%	0	7%	14%	14%	7%	21%	7%	14%	0
Neutral	17%	14%	13%	17%	14%	19%	8%	19%	14%	23%
Strongly Agree	15%	25%	10%	26%	12%	33%	13%	23%	16%	39%
Strongly Disagree	2%	0	3%	0	2%	0	0	2%	2%	0

For male learners who agreed that violence was a problem at school, the most prevalent type of violence was fighting, swearing/teasing and stealing, being threatened, and bullying. For those who strongly agreed that being threatened was the most prevalent, this was followed by bullying, stealing, swearing/teasing, and fighting. For those who disagreed that violence was a problem, 21% stated that stealing was a problem and 22% stated that bullying was a problem. For female learners who agreed that violence was a problem, bullying was cited as

the most prevalent type of violence with fairly similar percentages for the other types of violence. Table 6.7 presents how often violence is seen or heard at school linked to the types of violence.

Table 6.7: How often violence is seen or heard at school linked to the types of violence.

How often	Types of violence									
	Bullying		Fighting		Swearing / teasing		Stealing		Being threatened	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Every day	17%	33%	33%	19%	28%	19%	29%	23%	25%	23%
Few times a week	26%	28%	30%	26%	20%	40%	29%	26%	27%	31%
Once a week	22%	8%	17%	15%	14%	19%	8%	19%	14%	23%
Rarely	24%	28%	10%	36%	28%	22%	29%	24%	27%	23%
Never	7%	0	3%	4%	6%	0	0	6%	5%	0
No response	4%	3%	7%	0	4%	0	5%	2%	2%	0

The highest responses for how often types of violence occur indicates that female learners saw or heard of bullying every day while male learners saw or heard of fighting every day. It is likely that both males and females saw the same events but interpreted them differently or that fighting occurs in spaces occupied by males and is therefore more visible to them. Swearing and teasing were experienced every day for males and a higher number of females reported that they experienced it a few times a week. Stealing and being threatened had similar response rates for both males and females for occurrences every day and a few times a week. Sexual harassment has been left out due to the minimal responses which will overinflate the statistics. Table 6.8 presents to what extent violence is seen to be a problem linked to the causes of violence.

Table 6.8: To what extent is violence seen to be a problem linked to the causes of violence.

Extent	Causes of violence																	
	Peer Pressure		Drugs		Alcohol		Gangsters		Weapons		Media		Family		Community		Poor School Environment	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Agree	57%	48%	52%	52%	52%	50%	50%	58%	51%	57%	53%	43%	49%	59%	54%	38%	55%	38%
Disagree	17%	7%	24%	4%	14%	0	16%	0	13%	0	10%	29%	13%	9%	11%	12%	13%	8%
Neutral	11%	19%	7%	21%	14%	21%	14%	16%	17%	0	15%	14%	14%	18%	14%	25%	10%	38%
Strongly Agree	15%	24%	14%	23%	18%	29%	17%	26%	17%	43%	20%	14%	22%	14%	19%	25%	20%	16%
Strongly Disagree	0	2%	3%	0	2%	0	2%	0	2%	0	2%	0	2%	0	2%	0	2%	0

As the statistics in Table 6.8 suggest, it seems that both male and female learners had similar views and both agreed that the causes of violence were indeed peer pressure, drugs, alcohol, gangsterism, weapons, the influence of the media, family, community, and poor school environments.

Table 6.9 presents to what extent violence is seen to be a problem linked to the effects of violence on learners.

Table 6.9: To what extent is violence seen to be a problem linked to the effects of violence on learners.

Extent	Effect of violence on learners													
	Fearful and anxious		Poor performance		Poor concentration		Bunking school		Lack of interest		Drop out of school		Depression	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Agree	53%	50%	61%	44%	54%	48%	56%	49%	54%	50%	58%	43%	55%	33%
Disagree	17%	0	13%	10%	17%	4%	19%	7%	12%	11%	12%	11%	12%	8%
Neutral	9%	29%	10%	21%	10%	24%	6%	22%	16%	14%	14%	17%	14%	24%
Strongly Agree	19%	21%	16%	23%	17%	24%	16%	22%	16%	25%	14%	29%	17%	33%
Strongly Disagree	2%	0	0	2%	2%	0	3%	0	2%	0	2%	0	2%	0

The statistics here indicate that both male and female learners agreed that the effects of violence on learners were feeling fearful and anxious, poor school performance, poor concentration, bunking, a lack of interest, dropping out of school, and depression.

6.4 Teachers

The questionnaire was completed by ten teaching staff who volunteered to be part of the study. Due to the small sample size, the researcher has analysed the responses for the closed- and open-ended questions manually. The closed-ended questions have been presented using tables. Due to the small sample size, the actual number and not percentages have been used for this section. Six female and four male teachers completed the questionnaire. Their ages ranged from twenty-four to fifty-eight years of age.

Questionnaire – Closed Questions

Table 6.10 presents the teacher responses on whether violence is a problem at school.

Table 6.10: Teacher responses on whether violence is a problem at school.

Response	Male	Female
Agree	2	2
Strongly Agree	1	0
Neutral	0	3
Disagree	0	1
Strongly Disagree	1	0

The responses here seem to suggest that half of the teachers (five out of 10) do acknowledge that violence is a problem at the school. However, two do not think that it is a problem. Three female teachers were neutral in their responses. These responses are similar to the ones held by learners. Table 6.11 presents the teacher responses on how often violence was seen or heard at school.

Table 6.11: Teacher responses on how often violence was seen or heard at school.

Frequency of violence	Male	Female
Every day	1	1
A few times a week	0	0
Once a week	2	1
Rarely	1	4
Never	0	0

Of the three female teachers who stated that they had rarely seen or heard violence at the school, three were neutral in their responses to the first question about violence being a problem at school. The other half of the sample recognised that violence happens every day

or once a week. If one had to compare these responses to the learner responses, one would see that the learners perceive violence to occur more frequently as opposed to the views held by the teachers. Most of the male learners stated that they had seen or heard violence either every day, a few times a week, or at least once a week. Most of the female responses indicated that violence was seen or heard every day or a few times a week. Table 6.12 presents the types of violence present at school.

Table 6.12: Types of violence present at school.

Type of violence	Male	Female
Bullying	3	5
Fighting	4	5
Swearing and teasing	3	5
Stealing	4	4
Being threatened	2	2
Sexual Harassment	1	0
Other	Gangsterism	Stabbing Corporal punishment

The responses above suggest that bullying, fighting, swearing/teasing, and stealing are seen to be the most prevalent types cited by both the male and female teachers. These were also cited by both male and female learners as being the most prevalent types of violence in school. It is interesting to note two aspects, firstly, that one of the female teachers acknowledged that corporal punishment is a type of violence at school, and secondly, only one male teacher cited sexual harassment as a type of violence perpetrated at school. The responses to sexual harassment are similar to those expressed by the learners. In both instances, the findings are contradictory to the literature that states that sexual harassment is prevalent as a common type of violence at school. Table 6.13 presents the causes of violence at school.

Table 6.13: Causes of violence at school.

Cause of violence	Male	Female
Peer pressure	1	5
Drugs	3	3
Alcohol	1	2
Gangsterism	2	1
Weapons	1	1
Media influence	3	3

Family	4	4
Community	3	5
Poor school environment	1	1

From the responses above, male and female teachers seemed to agree that drugs, the media, family, and community have a role to play in school-based violence. Unlike the learners, the teachers felt that the community is a contributing factor to the violence manifested in school. The Report of the Media Violence Commission (2012), states that the media impacts on the thinking, affective state, and behaviour of the person viewing it. The report outlines various studies and meta-analysis that looked at the link between the media and heightened aggression in young people. It found that exposure to violent media increases the aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of young people not necessarily in the short-term but in the long-term.

"Parental behaviour and the family environment are central factors in the development of violent behaviour in young people" (World Report on Violence and Health, 2002: 33). Young people who are exposed to such violence learn that violence is a norm and this is how one solves problems and resolves conflict (Leoshut and Bonora, 2007). Schools located within violent, crime-ridden communities are at a greater risk of school-based violence as they reflect the violent norms and acts to which learners are exposed in the community which then influences their behaviour. There are limited opportunities for young people to engage in activities that expand their potentials and skills. This leads to boredom and risk-taking behaviour. According to Dunbar-Krige, Pillay and Henning (2010: 7):

[B]ecause there are so many troubled schools in South Africa that try to operate in extremely troubled communities, the school invariably becomes part of the troubled community's ecology, and if neither the school nor its community can resist the onslaught of disabling social forces, both will succumb to them.

The responses also indicate that like the female learners, the female teachers perceive peer pressure to be the most prevalent cause of violence at the school. According to the literature, having delinquent friends increases the risk of the young person engaging in delinquent behaviour at school (SACE, 2011; Hamlall, 2012). Risk-taking and anti-social behaviour such as using alcohol, drugs, weapons, and physical fights are done to gain approval of the peer group (Van der Merwe, Dawes and Ward, 2011; Mahlangu, Gevers and De Lannoy, 2014). Table 6.14 presents the effects of violence on learners.

Table 6.14: The effects of violence on learners.

Effect of violence	Male	Female
Fearful and anxious	3	4
Poor school performance	4	3
Poor concentration in class	3	3
Bunking	2	4
Lack of interest in school	3	4
Dropping out	1	2
Depression	1	2

As with the male and female learners, both the male and female teachers seem to have similar views on the effects that violence has on learners. These factors include that it leads to feeling fearful and anxious, poor performance, poor concentration, a lack of interest and bunking, and to a lesser extent, dropping out and depression. These consequences for the young people are linked to the emotional, social, cognitive, educational, and behavioural development of learners which have an impact even in adulthood. These include a decline in achievement, reluctance to participate in school activities (SRSG on Violence Against Children, 2011), impaired concentration, fear, a diminished ability to learn, fear of victimisation, truancy, dropping out, low self-esteem, depression, and suicide (Le Roux and Mokhele, 2011; Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013; Singh and Steyn, 2014; Mncube and Steinmann, 2014).

6.5 Comparison of Responses by Learners and Teachers to the Open-Ended Questions

This section explores the responses/themes that emerged from the three open-ended questions in the questionnaire completed by the learners and teachers. From the responses in Table 6.15, one can see that there are similarities in the responses to questions one and three. These have been highlighted. Question two was related to that which they, as a learner or teacher, could do to reduce violence in school. These responses have not been compared. Table 6.15 presents a comparison of responses by learners and teachers to the open-ended questions.

Table 6.15: Comparison of responses by learners and teachers to the open-ended questions.

Question	Learners	Teachers
1. How do you think violence at school affects teachers?	- Disturbance in classroom and trying to solve issues of violence affects teaching time. Less time for teaching. (1) - Affects performance of teachers. - Teachers lose interest in teaching. (2) - Learners threaten teachers. - Teachers are not respected. - Teachers are afraid of learners. (3) - Affects teachers emotionally. (4) - Teachers end up hating the whole class because of two or three learners. - Teachers use corporal punishment because of anger. - Stealing from teachers. - Teachers leave the school. (5)	- Feeling fearful. (3) - Lack of interest in teaching. (2) - Leave the profession. (5) - Too much time spent mediating and disciplining. (1) - Emotionally affected. (4) - Losing control of learners
2. What can you do to reduce violence at school?	- Treating others fairly, support each other. - Report violence to teachers. - Form a group to talk about/deal with violence. - Being a good role model. - Doing programmes to stop drug abuse. - Putting up posters so learners can learn about how to handle violence. - Respecting the teacher. - Stand up to bullies.	- Discipline learners. - Motivating learners that teasing, bullying, and swearing is not appropriate - Take strict measures such as detention and doing tasks. - Monitoring violent learners and sending them for counselling. - Engage learners in activities that will enable them to grow holistically. - 'I am not a police' – this statement suggested by

		one teacher suggests that the teacher does not see their role as one of being involved in disciplining learners.
3. How do you think learners, teachers, parents, and the community can reduce violence at school?	- Security needed at school. - Learners, teachers, parents, principal, and community working together. (1) - Learners supporting each other. - Having counselling for learners. (2) - Teachers must not punish learners. (3) - Community to remove people who sell drugs. (4) - Having programmes that deal with violence/school violence. (5) - Involving the police.	- Involving all stakeholders and ensuring that school safety committee works – SAPS, parents, ward councillors, CPF, NGOs (1) - Parents should instil good discipline at home. - Community should not sell drugs and alcohol to learners. (4) - Problem learners need to be referred to NGOs (SANCA) and social workers. (2) - Parents should be supportive of teachers and work together - Teachers should monitor learners and report issues of bullying. - Educating learners about the consequences of violence. (5) - Teachers should be taught alternative methods to corporal punishment. (3)

6.6 Focus Group Interviews – Discussion of Learner Themes

Once the questionnaire was completed, three focus group discussions comprising between five and eight learners each were conducted to explore issues raised in the questionnaire in greater detail. Nineteen learners volunteered for the focus group discussions. The focus group discussions, of approximately an hour each, were done over three days after school. The groups were divided into male-only, female-only, and mixed groups (both male and female). By separating two groups to be exclusively male and female, it was felt that learners would feel comfortable discussing certain sensitive issues that arose. The learners were willing to share information freely when they were told that it would be confidential. The researcher found that there were many overlaps in the responses given by the three groups. The following questions were used to guide the focus group discussions:

1. Is violence a problem at your school?
2. What types of violence occur at your school?
3. How often does each of these types of violence occur?
4. What do you think are the causes of violence?
5. What effect does violence have on the learners?
6. What effect does violence have on the teachers?
7. What can be done to reduce violence at the school by parents, the community, teachers, and the school management?
8. What can learners do to reduce violence at the school?

Table 6.16 presents the learner themes in the male, female, and mixed focus groups.

Table 6.16: Learner themes in male, female, and mixed focus groups.

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
Types of violence	Learner-on-learner	• Bullying • Teasing • Stealing • Fighting • Swearing • Gambling • Gangsterism • Sexual harassment

	Teacher-perpetrated	• Name-calling • Corporal punishment
Causes of violence	Individual	• Drugs • Satisfying needs
	Interpersonal	• Peer pressure • Image/power/respect
	Family	• Parenting • Issues at home
	Community	• Crime • Drugs
Consequences of violence	Learners	• Poor performance • Fear • Poor concentration • Truancy • Self-esteem
	Teachers	• Loss of interest in school • Low morale • Fear • Absenteeism • Teaching time wasted • Retaliation
Managing violence	Learners	• Reporting incidents • Peer support • Creating awareness
	School	• Improving infrastructure • Improving security • Providing extra-curricular activities • Psycho-social support to learners

6.6.1 Theme 1: Types of Violence

(a) Sub-Theme 1: Learner-on-Learner Violence

The categories that emerged from learner-on-learner violence were consistent with the types of violence that were highlighted in the questionnaire. All three focus group participants were unanimous and agreed that bullying, teasing, stealing, fighting, and swearing happened on a regular basis. Teasing and swearing were seen to be minor issues. Bullying, stealing, and fighting were perceived to occur more regularly. Bullying seemed to happen more amongst boys than girls.

Learner M in the female group stated that "Mostly boys bully each other, grade eight to ten learners bully each other". Learner N in the male group stated: "Mostly boys bully each other, sometimes female bully each other. Older boys bully boys from lower grades. Sometimes they bully girls". Learner P in the mixed group stated: "bullying happens every day. Every class has a bully".

All three groups confirmed that stealing happened every day and was of major concern. Stealing was perpetrated to obtain money for drugs, gambling, or items that were needed. Boys tended to steal more than girls.

Learner S from the female group stated that "learners don't have money, so they steal from you to buy drugs. Also, stealing is caused because they need to buy things they can't afford". Learner F in the male group reiterated this by stating: "stealing happens because they don't have things". Learner N from the mixed group further stated that "anyone steals, not just the ones doing drugs. They steal to get things for their younger brothers and sisters. If there is a need, they will steal".

The issue of gambling was only brought up by the mixed group. One male learner in the mixed group stated that "Gambling happens every day at school. Gambling leads to fighting". Another male learner in the group stated that "learners steal money from others so they can gamble".

The children come from the poor community surrounding the school where poverty and unemployment are rife. It seems therefore that the learners steal and gamble in order to fulfil their needs. According to Van der Merwe, Dawes and Ward (2011), Report on Violence against Children in South Africa (2012), Collins (2013), and Mathews and Benvenuti (2014),

the prevalence of a climate of economic inequality, social exclusion, marginalisation, unemployment, and deprivation are evident in such communities.

According to the questionnaire, sexual harassment was not seen to be of major concern by the learners. When probed in the focus group, all three groups stated that they did not think that it was a major problem at the school. Their responses indicated that it does happen but when speaking about it, they did not see it as an important problem to be tackled. It was seen as normal and acceptable and was demonstrated as a means of power that boys have over girls. However, the issue of feeling fearful was raised.

Learner T in the female group stated that "the boys do it but the girls don't mind. They enjoy it". When the researcher asked how one knows that the girls are enjoying it, Learner T responded that "Their faces do not show that they mind being touched". However, another learner in the same female group, Learner X, stated that "some girls allow it and some girls do not allow it. They stand up for themselves. The boys won't try anything with these girls".

Learner P from the male group stated that "Boys do it to feel power over the girls". A female learner in the mixed group, Learner F, seemed to have reiterated that which male Learner P had stated by stating that "Girls do say to the boys don't do it but they do it anyway because they are boys and they think they have power over the girls". Another female learner in the mixed group, Learner G, further stated that "Us girls do not talk about it. It happens but girls don't do anything about it. They are scared".

The manner in which girls deal with the issues of gender violence in school is related to the way in which gender-related issues and violence are dealt with in the family and community setting. In many ways, there is bias in both these settings towards male dominance. Ultimately, many girls are powerless against the dominant male culture of power and authority. This bias towards the powerful role of masculinity places more risk on boys to engage in gender-based school violence (Ngqela and Lewis, 2012; Pradubmook-Sherer and Sherer, 2014). Girls are at the receiving end as they are perceived as inferior, defenceless, and fear punishment for reporting incidents of sexual violence (Malongo and Mwale, 2019). Females are seen as weak and vulnerable, and males are seen as dominant with power and control (Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013).

(b) Sub-Theme 2: Teacher-Perpetrated Violence

The two main issues brought up were those of name-calling and corporal punishment.

Learner N from the female group talked about name-calling: "teachers tease learners sometimes. They call you names and how you look. They pick on your grades if you are not doing well. They say it like a joke but it's not a joke". Learner M from the mixed group stated that "Teachers must mind their words. They must be respectful to learners so learners will respect them".

There was a lengthy discussion centred on corporal punishment. Learners spoke about the types of corporal punishment that occur, the reasons why it is used by teachers, and the effect that it has on learners. All three groups stated that corporal punishment happened every day by most teachers and included a slap on the face or hitting on the hand, backside, or head with a pipe, ruler, or duster.

Responses from the female group for the reasons for corporal punishment included: "If the class is not clean", "If homework is not done", "If the learner does not know the answer to a question", and "If the learner does not attend the 7am class".

Responses from the male group included: "If homework is not done", "Learners being disruptive and disrespectful", and "If the learner does not attend the 7am class".

Responses from the mixed group included: "If homework is not done", "When you don't respond when they ask you a question", "If you come late to class", and "If the learner is not attending the 7am class".

One can thus see that corporal punishment, although prohibited since 1996 by law, is still practised at the school. It seems that the educators use corporal punishment as they lack the appropriate skills and techniques to manage behaviour effectively. The responses from the learners suggest that the teachers use petty reasons to punish learners. Most cases of corporal punishment go unreported. By employing corporal punishment for wrongdoing, the school system reinforces the notion that violence is the only way to deal with problems. Instead of taking on the important role of teaching young people pro-social behaviour, corporal punishment increases the behaviour that it seeks to control. The use of corporal punishment demonstrates a lack of teacher professionalism and democracy. The autocratic handling of learners' behaviour by educators through the use of physical and verbal aggression heightens

violence in the classroom context. The use of a power relationship hinders mutual respect and engagement (Mncube and Dube, 2019; Ghorab and Al-Khaldi, 2014).

6.6.2 Theme 2: Causes of Violence

(a) Sub-Theme 1: Individual

The individual causes of violence cited by learners were largely focused on drugs and satisfying needs.

Stealing was cited as being linked to drugs. Learner B from the female group stated that "They don't have money, so they steal from you to buy drugs. Also stealing is caused because they need to buy things they can't afford". Another learner in the group stated that "If they do not have money to buy drugs, they will take out their anger on you". Learner M in the male group further reiterated that "Drugs is a big problem. When they are high, they disrespect and bully others and fight with teachers". Learner F from the male group further stated that "If the boys didn't smoke the dagga and cigarettes, they can't think straight. Then they become angry. They also steal from other people to buy cigarettes and dagga".

As noted in the previous section, stealing can be attributed to structural violence (Galtung, 1969). Poverty, which is seen as a form of structural violence, hinders parents from providing for the material needs of their children. This school is in a poverty-stricken area and thus may be the reason why children resort to stealing. According to the Report on Violence against Children in South Africa (2012), drugs and alcohol are one of the key causes of violence perpetrated at school. A study done by Avdija and Jobi (2014), found that schools larger in size that were located in high-crime areas were more likely to experience a higher number of violent crimes with weapons, vandalism, drugs, alcohol, and theft.

Drugs have been cited as a major issue at the school. The learners in this school lead stressful lives through the type of community in which they reside as well as being faced with family issues. They are thus more likely to be exposed to drugs through community or family influences in terms of poor role modelling and easy access to substances. Young people who do not receive love and attention from their families are more likely to turn to friends to fill the gap and are therefore likely to adopt negative behaviour related to drug usage. According to Ololade and Mndzebele (2017), drug abuse has been linked to young people experiencing stressful events in their lives, being raised in single-parent families, and accessing drugs through friends and peers.

Steyn and Singh (2018), found that the absence of after-school activities and inadequate resources and facilities resulted in young people being engaged in destructive behaviour in order to evade boredom. There are limited opportunities for young people to engage in activities that expand their potential and skills. In addition, Mncube and Harber (2014: 328), posit that young people resort to drugs because "schools are failing to provide an environment that gives students the feeling of security, confidence and sense of personal well-being they need". Thus, it is important that young people are involved in school activities that would provide a sense of empowerment and engage in positive peer relationships, deterring them from destructive behaviour and encouraging them to engage in developmentally appropriate activities. Youth empowerment programmes at schools can address this need.

(b) Sub-Theme 2: Interpersonal

At an interpersonal level, the two main causes of violence were reported to be linked to image/power/respect and peer pressure.

Learners in the female group stated the following: "Thinking you have more power than the other ... like my lifestyle, how I look, how I dress, intelligence" (Learner M); "Showing off to your friends, looking good in front of your friends. Wanting to prove you are better than the other person so you will fight" (Learner B); and "Problems at school are caused because of peer pressure. If friends are doing the wrong thing and you want to fit in" (Learner X). Similarly, Learner T from the male group stated that boys fight because "you don't want to look weak in front of your friends", and Learner P from the mixed group stated that "Others want to be respected through power, they want to get noticed".

Aggression and violence are seen as socially acceptable for males to display and to resolve disagreements and conflict (Burton and Gustaffson, 2010; Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014; Mahlangu, Gevers and De Lannoy, 2014). Gender-based violence stems from stereotypical roles that are socially imposed where masculinity is traditionally equated with sexual prowess, achievement, success, and superiority. Traditional gender norms mean that males are expected to show off their masculine traits and distress through aggression.

Having delinquent friends increases the risk of the young person engaging in delinquent behaviour at school. There is a great pressure by the peer group on male learners to be brave. Much of this show of bravery is displayed in physical fighting. (SACE, 2011; Burton and Leoshut, 2012; Hamlall, 2012). According to the World Report on Violence against Children (2006), there is an increase in the perpetration of violence and victimisation at around age

fifteen for boys. Attitudes supporting peer violence are associated with the perpetration of violence against peers, especially in high-risk communities (Ali, Swahn and Sterling, 2011).

Young people growing up together in a crime-ridden community where there is unemployment, a lack of education, and a low standard of housing will engage with delinquent friends and peers (World Report on Violence against Children, 2006). "Adolescents who are surrounded by deviant moral values may become deviant because of their environment. Such delinquency has its origins in the values represented by the surrounding subculture" (Gouws, Kruger and Burger, 2008: 131). This negative identity results in risk-taking and anti-social behaviour involving alcohol, drugs, weapons, and physical fights. Many of these acts are carried out to gain approval of the peer group. They model and reward anti-social behaviour (World Report on Violence against Children, 2006; Van der Merwe, Dawes and Ward, 2011; Mahlangu, Gevers and De Lannoy, 2014).

(c) Sub-Theme 3: Family

All three groups stated that one of the main causes of violence is family issues and the parenting skills. Learners who were exposed to violence at home or who were experiencing difficulties at home manifested that anger towards other learners at the school.

To highlight the extent of the problem, Learner T from the female group pointed out that "If there is swearing and alcohol in the family, it makes the child angry and they take out the anger in school. The child does the same thing they see at home because they are learning it from their parents".

Learner P in the male group further stated that "Sometimes starts at home. Sometimes the child witnesses violence at home, the father hitting the mother". Learner M in the same group suggested that bullying is linked to family issues by stating that "Bullying is because of anger problems. If something bad happens at home, you take it out at school". Learner G from the mixed group seemed to echo similar sentiments by stating that "Family problems cause school violence. Someone is angry at home and brings that anger to school".

"Parental behaviour and the family environment are central factors in the development of violent behaviour in young people" (World Report on Violence and Health, 2002: 33). The family environment is a key socialising agent in childhood and adolescence. In the family, the young person learns values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour that serve as a moral compass for the young person. If the young person is socialised in a family environment that is rife in

dysfunction and violence, then this can have a detrimental effect on their holistic development as well as place them at a greater risk for engaging in violent anti-social behaviour in other settings such as the school and community. Young people who are exposed to such violence learn that violence is the norm and this is how one solves problems and resolves conflict (Leoshut and Bonora, 2007).

(d) Sub-Theme 4: Community

The two main focus areas discussed here were related to crime in the community and how freely available drugs are. It was stated that people from the community sell drugs to learners in school. It was even reported by Learner N in the mixed group that "People from the community steal from the school". When asked what they steal, he stated that "They steal cabling, copper pipes, water and computers".

Schools located within violent, crime-ridden communities are at a greater risk of school-based violence as they reflect the violent norms and acts to which learners are exposed in the community which then influences their behaviour. "Because there are so many troubled schools in South Africa that try to operate in extremely troubled communities, the school invariably becomes part of the troubled community's ecology, and if neither the school nor its community can resist the onslaught of disabling social forces, both will succumb to them" (Dunbar-Krige, Pillay and Henning, 2010: s7).

6.6.3 Theme 3: Consequences of Violence

The findings here were consistent with the data from the questionnaires for both learners and teachers.

(a) Sub-Theme 1: Learners

For learners, the common categories in all three groups were poor performance, fear, poor concentration, truancy, and impact on self-esteem. These findings were consistent with the ones found in the literature (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006; Bezuidenhout and Joubert, 2008; van der Westhuizen and Maree, 2010). In addition, Burton and Leoshut's study (2012), found that the consequences of school violence included truancy, absenteeism, dropping out, low academic achievement, poor concentration, anxiety, apprehension, isolation, a lack of interest in school, and depression.

Responses from the female group included:

Learners do not concentrate on their studies. Their marks go down.

Some learners end up not coming to school because they are scared.

It affects their self-esteem and how they look at themselves.

The male group provided the following responses:

Some of them fail because you bunk school out of fear.

They are not focused in school. They don't think properly in class because they are scared and embarrassed.

The mixed group responded as follows:

They lack in schoolwork because they lack focus.

They don't want to attend school at all.

They lose interest in school because they are scared.

(b) Sub-Theme 2: Teachers

The categories that emerged in all three groups related to the consequences of school violence on teachers were consistent with the literature as well. These included a loss of interest in school, low morale, fear, absenteeism, retaliation, and wasting teaching time on discipline issues (SACE, 2011; Le Roux and Mokhele, 2011; Ncontsa and Shumba. 2013; Singh and Steyn, 2014; Mncube and Steinmann, 2014).

Responses from the female group included:

The teacher will not come to class because they are scared of the learner.

They lose morale.

Teachers get aggressive against the learners.

From the male group, the responses were:

They can't teach properly with other children disrespecting them.

They end up not teaching and children fall behind in their work. Time is wasted.

Responses from the mixed group included:

Teachers do not want to come to class because learners are rude or high.

Some learners beat teachers.

6.6.4 Theme 4: Managing Violence

When discussing how the issue of school-based violence could be managed, the roles of learners and the school were explored.

(a) Sub-Theme 1: Learners

The categories that emerged were focused on learners reporting incidents, peer support, and creating awareness about school-based violence. Learners felt that providing support to peers was important.

Responses from the female group included:

> We should start up a group, maybe make posters and make people aware about violence.
>
> We could act out scenes to help learners deal with violence.
>
> We could involve social networks like WhatsApp. Start a group to create awareness on WhatsApp.

Responses from the male group included:

> Maybe start a campaign. Ask learners to make posters to make others aware of violence in school. The learners can be involved with the teachers in a campaign.
>
> They can report to the teacher if somebody does something to them.
>
> The learners who witness can report to the teacher if they see something wrong. They only like to watch.

From the mixed group, the responses included:

> Learners can talk to their classmates about their problems.
>
> Create awareness through posters.

That which came out strongly was the need for learners themselves to create awareness about the issues affecting them in school. They wanted to lead the process and feel empowered to be in a position to do something about the situation rather than merely being observers or victims.

Empowerment is a complex process that involves social action. Through the democratic processes of empowerment, individuals and groups are engaged in meaningful decision making, active participation, and action in order to bring about change in policies, structures,

and values and norms in their social context (Christens and Peterson, 2012; Ramey and Rose-Krasnor, 2012; Ozer *et al*,. 2013; Cahill *et al*., 2011; Neal, 2014). It is therefore important that the voices of youth are heard in designing and implementing appropriate activities targeted at reducing school violence (Burton, 2008; Andreou, 2015). Partnering with children and youth is important as the outcomes of a programme tend to be more effective if they take ownership of the process. In addition, involving youth is an intervention in itself as it helps them heal by sharing their experiences with others (Pinheiro, 2006).

(b) Sub-Theme 2: School

The learners discussed the need for the school to provide safety and security by improving infrastructure, security, and providing extra-curricular activities and psycho-social support for learners. A safe school environment is imperative for a conducive learning environment. Hiring security guards, installing cameras, and fixing the perimeter fence was of great concern to all three groups. In addition, providing counselling services to victims and witnesses of violence at school or for those who are exposed to those issues in their families and communities was seen to be lacking in the school. The school where the study took place is under-resourced with inadequate sporting facilities. A key point was brought up by one of the learners about the need to engage learners in sport such that they are diverted from being involved in risk-taking behaviour.

Responses from the female group included:

> The school can hire counsellors for the ones doing the bullying and the ones being bullied.
>
> Parents must be involved because most of the problems start at home.
>
> Maybe if we could increase more sports, the learners would not have time for violence if he or she is busy. There is soccer and netball but not everybody is interested in soccer and netball. There should be other sport like volleyball, tennis and golf.

Responses from the male group included:

> Hire security guards to check bags for drugs.
>
> The school should install camera, hire security, fix the fence and have an alarm system.

From the mixed group, the responses were:

> The school should provide security, fix the school fence and install CCTV cameras.
>
> They should replace windows and doors in the classrooms.

They should hire professional counsellors or a social worker.

6.7 2019 Evaluation

This evaluation was undertaken in 2019 with a group of Grade eleven learners. These learners were in Grade eight when the violence awareness campaign was done by the youth empowerment group in 2016. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out if the same issues of violence were visible in the school four years later. Twenty female and eight male learners from one class completed the questionnaire (N=28). These learners were chosen by the deputy principal. The questionnaires were analysed manually due to the small number received.

The data from this group was similar to data received from the initial group. Both male and female learners either agreed or strongly agreed that violence was a problem at school with forty-one percent of male learners stating that it occurred every day and thirty-two percent of female learners stating that it happened a few times a week.

The group cited fighting (25% male and 71% female), stealing (11% male and 39% female), bullying (18% male and 39% female), and fighting (male 25% and female 71%) as prevalent types of violence. These findings were similar to those of the previous group. In addition, the main causes of violence cited by both males and females were peer pressure, drugs, family problems, and easy access to weapons. The effect on learners included feeling fearful and anxious, bunking school, and poor performance.

6.8 Reflection

These findings suggest that nothing much has changed since the data was collected from the first group. Violence is still a major issue in school. Learners mentioned that in order to reduce school violence, measures need to be taken by the learners, families, and the school. Learners need to feel supported in reporting incidents, and families should manage their children's behaviour and should not involve them in their family issues which increase their stress levels. At school level, learners suggested increasing school security, a good relationship needed between learners and teachers, and school awareness programmes targeting school violence through school youth clubs. The issue of youth empowerment is thus an important one. However, it needs to be done in a sustainable manner in order to be effective.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided findings related to the questionnaire and focus group discussions. The categories that emerged from the themes were consistent with those found in literature. It was also evident that findings from the questionnaire and focus group discussions were similar in many respects. Various overall themes emerged related to the perception of sexual harassment, peer pressure, the differences in how male and female learners viewed violence, the role of family in school violence, and the issue of poverty and drugs. These will be analysed further in Chapter 8 in the discussion and findings. The next chapter will focus on the action research project that formed the crux of this study.

CHAPTER 7

THE ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the first and second stages of data collection were discussed. The questionnaire was used to obtain data from seventy-seven students. Once the questionnaire was briefly analysed, three focus group discussions (male, female, mixed) comprising between five and eight learners each were conducted to explore issues raised in the questionnaire in greater detail. Thereafter, a group of fourteen learners volunteered to be part of the action team who would plan and implement a programme focused on addressing the issue of violence experienced by learners and teachers at the school.

This chapter will focus on the action research project that was planned and implemented at the school. It will answer the following research questions:

- To develop and implement a youth empowerment programme that specifically addresses the problem of school-based violence
- To undertake a preliminary evaluation of the impact of the youth empowerment programme

7.2 Feedback from the Focus Group Discussions

Before embarking on the action part of the research, the researcher had to explore the issues concerning violence that were prevalent at the school. To do this, the researcher conducted questionnaires which gave her baseline data. With this baseline data, the researcher then proceeded to conduct three focus group discussions with learners (male, female, and mixed) in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the issues. As stated in the previous chapter, the four major themes that emerged from the focus group discussions were the types of violence, causes of violence, consequences of violence, and managing violence. With this information, the researcher then proceeded to take the next step i.e. the action stage of the research. In the following sections, the researcher will discuss and reflect on this journey.

7.3 Action Research

As discussed in the literature review, Chinman and Linney's (1998), *Adolescent Empowerment Cycle* describes empowerment as an important construct of adolescent development as it allows young people to develop their identity by taking on meaningful roles, developing skills, bonding, and actively participating with peers and others within a social setting. It also involves youth experiencing positive recognition and reinforcement for their efforts in contributing positively to a group. This leads to greater self-esteem, self-efficacy, a sense of control, and ultimately, positive empowerment. Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010) echo similar sentiments. Other key features of the cycle are an experienced adult facilitating the process and the opportunity to work in a group for the sake of peer approval and reflection on experiences while engaged in the project.

The action research component was composed of four stages, namely, planning, implementing, evaluating, and exploring how the project undertaken could be sustained by the group of learners involved in the project. At the end of each of the focus group discussions, the researcher asked the learners to volunteer for the action group. The researcher explained to the learners what being part the action group entailed i.e. as a team, the learners would develop and implement a youth empowerment programme specifically focused on addressing the issues of violence in the school. Twelve female learners and only two male learners volunteered for this part of the research. This was quite disappointing as the researcher was hoping that more male learners from the focus group would be involved in the project. As it was done on a voluntary basis, the researcher could not force the male participants of the focus group to join the action group.

Much of the literature on empowerment is linked to participatory action research. Through a youth empowerment process and participatory action research, children and youth are given a voice during the research process, whether it involves identifying the problem or providing the solution. This is an empowering process for youth and leads to a positive contribution towards their healthy development and a sense of inclusion and well-being (Prilleltensky, 2010). In a school setting, empowerment is achieved by giving learners skills and knowledge to think critically about issues within the school setting such that creative and doable strategies can be developed to address the issues. This leads to change. It allows learners to address issues that are important to them by being directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects. Cahill *et al* (2011), postulate that through participatory action research and a critical youth studies perspective, youth and adults negotiate and exchange ideas on framing the problems and developing strategies to address the identified problems.

They further maintain that youth should not merely be seen as a source of data collection but rather as serious agents of change in the particular context in which they live or attend school.

For the purposes of this study, Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) was used. It has the same elements of action research but that which makes it distinctive is the participation of youth. Rubin and Jones (2002 cited in Herr and Anderson, 2015: 28) provide the following definition of participatory action research:

[Participatory action research is] research efforts conducted by youth, within or outside of classrooms with the goal of informing and affecting school, and or global problems and issues and in the process contributes to positive development of a variety of academic, social and civic skills in youth.

This definition suggests that young people are agents of change around the issues affecting them.

7.4 The Researcher's Role and Position in the Group

According to McNiff and Whitehead (2011: 8), "action researchers are insider researchers as they see themselves as part of the context they are investigating". Herr and Anderson (2015), assert that the 'positionality' of the researcher is important in action research i.e. their relationship with the setting and participants will determine if the process and product of the actions taken are indeed effective and link to the core philosophical foundation of action research.

The researcher's position as the researcher was that she was an Indian, middle class, a lecturer at a university, and an adult. This differed from the learners who were African, poor to middle class, and young people. Due to these factors, the researcher was initially an outsider to them. As the sessions progressed, the researcher built a level of trust and rapport with them. The researcher made them feel comfortable during every session by being warm and friendly and respecting their thoughts and opinions. The researcher did not allow a hierarchy to exist between herself and the learners. Throughout the process, the researcher acknowledged their efforts and affirmed that they were a key element of her research. As such, the researcher went from being an outsider to an insider. According to Braun and Clark (2013), good interactional skills are important to build trust and rapport with participants.

The democratic nature of the action research process suggests that a sense of mutualism or interdependence should exist between the researcher and those participating in the research. The researcher views the participants as experts due to them being immersed in the context. They need to build a level of trust, respect, and rapport with participants. This will enable the participants to feel safe to offer opinions and solutions. In addition, there should not be a hierarchy that exists which views the researcher as the one with more power. The locus of power and control is shared between the researcher and those participating in the research. Important elements that the researcher needs to consider is how to create inclusion, equality, and harmony in the group where everyone feels comfortable to participate and their opinions are considered in decision making. In addition, the researcher needs to ensure that participants feel empowered and supported to participate, there is a flow in communication, and that conflicts are resolved amicably.

The personal nurturing of participants is important. The researcher did this by ensuring that there were refreshments at every session, that participants had the resources needed for the planning and implementation of the project, paid for T-shirts that would be worn on the day, and participated with them during the planning phase. The researcher also served as a liaison between the school management and the learners. Ultimately, the role of a researcher in an action project is that of a facilitator, nurturer, probe, resource person, scribe, and liaison with management. In this study, the researcher used co-learning as a mode of participation. The group of learners and the researcher worked together to understand the issues of violence most prevalent in the school and then they worked together to develop and implement the violence awareness campaign. The researcher guided them in the process but they were largely responsible for brainstorming on that which they would like the programme to look like and who should be involved (Cornwall, 1996 cited in Herr and Anderson, 2015: 51). In addition, the locus of power and control is shared between the researcher and those participating in the research. De Schutter and Yopo (1981 cited in Herr and Anderson, 2015: 17), propose that in participatory research, "the subject-object relationship is transformed into a subject-subject relationship through dialogue".

7.5 Entry into the Group

I met the group of Grade ten learners for 13 sessions. We met for one and a half hours after school from 2:30pm to 4pm twice a week. I decided that the best place to meet them would be in the library seminar room which was in the public library next to the school. This is also where the focus group discussions took place. The room was quiet and spacious, and the researcher and learners could work productively there. The library staff were accommodating

and allowed me to book the room in advance. The learners were informed that this would be the meeting place.

The first time that the learners and I met, there was apprehension in the air. The learners were from mixed Grade ten A to E levels and did not know each other very well. In addition, I did not know these learners very well as I had only spent approximately two hours with each group while doing the focus group discussions. At the initial meeting, a few thoughts went through my mind. Were these learners going to get along? Were they going to cooperate with me and take me seriously given that these were teenagers? Were they going to commit and attend every session? What was going to be the final product/outcome of these action research sessions? At this stage, I did not know at all what was going to be the end result of our time together. It was quite daunting yet exciting at the same time.

When I met the group for the first time, I formally introduced myself once again and asked them to introduce themselves. I gave each learner a label on which to write their name. I did this for the first few sessions. This made it easier to learn their names. I spoke about the data collection thus far i.e. questionnaires and focus groups, and going forward, and what I hoped to achieve with this part of the research. I stated that I needed their help in developing and implementing a project at the school related to the issue of school violence and that they would be the ones leading the project in terms of ideas and implementation. I was merely the facilitator and would guide them if the need arose. I then did a few icebreakers with them to break the tension in the room. This certainly did help make everyone feel comfortable.

I asked the group to develop a set of ground rules that would characterise how they expected each other to behave during the upcoming sessions. The ground rules that they developed included punctuality, attendance, commitment, respect for each other, and participation. I felt that it was important for the group to develop the ground rules rather than me merely telling them what I expected in terms of their behaviour. Developing their own rules would enable them to take ownership of these rules and they would therefore hold each other accountable.

We then decided that it would be a good idea to have a name for the group instead of calling themselves the action research group. I split the group into three small groups. Each group was given approximately fifteen minutes to brainstorm two names. Afterwards, each group presented their two names. A vote was taken, and the name chosen was "Future Leaders of Change". From then on, the action group was referred to by this chosen name. This name seemed quite fitting considering that which the group planned to do.

As I ended the first session, I asked each member of the group if they had any comments or questions. To my complete surprise, one of the girls stated that she was hungry as it was after school and she had not eaten anything since lunch break. That statement stopped me in my tracks. If she had not mentioned it, I would have never considered that it was after school, they were volunteering their time to the researcher, and that she should offer them something to eat. I thanked the girl for her feedback and then told them that going forward, I would offer refreshments at each session. Thereafter, at every session, I would take along cold drinks, biscuits, and chips. This seemed to lift their spirits and energy levels at the working sessions.

7.6 Planning the Project

It is important that the voices of youth are heard in designing and implementing appropriate activities targeted at reducing school violence (Burton, 2008; Andreou, 2015). Partnering with children and youth is important as the outcomes of a programme tend to be more effective if they take ownership of the process. In addition, involving youth is an intervention in itself as it helps them heal by sharing their experiences with others (Pinheiro, 2006). Interventions that aim to reduce school violence should be based on issues of diversity, peace, and tolerance so as to develop a culture of human rights. Furthermore, the awareness of youth that they can make a difference to their context serves as motivation to them to effectively take action and become change agents.

Teachers should also be part of the project from the planning phase such that support can be garnered and sustainability can be ensured. To this end, the researcher included the Life Orientation Grade ten teacher from the onset of the research. He assisted the researcher by liaising with the management of the school on the researcher's behalf as well as informing the teachers of the project. At the second session, the members of the Future Leaders of Change started planning the action research project. The event was planned for seven weeks from the first time that they had met.

According to Stringer (2014), when working on an action research project, the researcher and participants need to develop a 'Framework for Interpretation' which considers the group process for interpreting issues. It includes the following steps:

- Meeting with the group
- Setting the agenda to gain clarity on the purpose of the project
- Understanding the issues that need to be addressed
- Identifying priorities for action

- Formulating follow-up activities and tasks to address the highlighted issues
- Identifying people who will carry out activities/tasks
- Determining the time frame within which each activity/task will be completed
- Accessing resources required for the activities/tasks

At the onset, the researcher had no idea which suggestions would be put forth by the group about how they would like to address the issues highlighted. It was an exploratory process of trusting them to put forth good ideas that could be implemented. Throughout the process, the researcher merely acted as a guide and facilitator.

7.6.1 Step One – Highlighting the Issues

During this session, the learners were asked to brainstorm on the issues related to violence that affected their school. They were asked to take into consideration the issues discussed in the focus groups. From this exercise, the issues presented in Figure 7.1 were highlighted. These issues were congruent with those found in the questionnaires and focus group discussions.

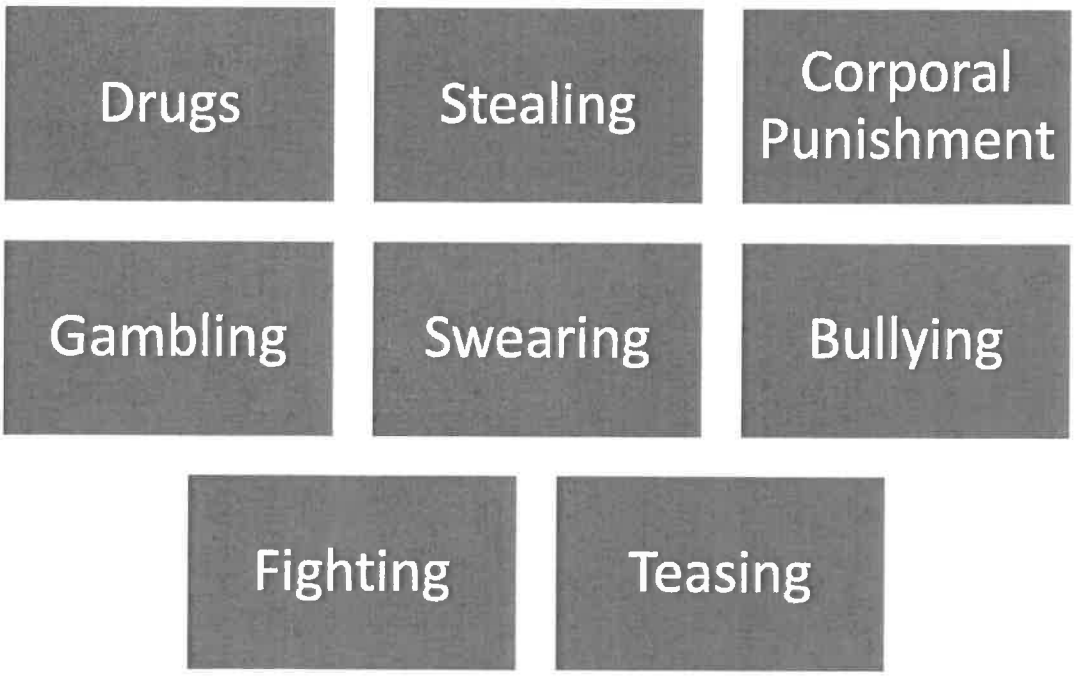

Figure 7.1: Issues highlighted by learners in this study with regard to how violence affects their school.

7.6.2 Step Two – Action Plan

The group then discussed how they would address these issues at the school. It was decided by the group that there should be a day of action creating awareness about these issues at school. This day of action would be called 'Standing Up Together Against Violence'.

The group stated that for a greater impact with the other learners, the programme should be done in a creative manner. As such, they decided to incorporate music, poetry, drama, and guest speakers into the programme. Denzin (1997: 68 cited in Stringer, 2014) states that:

> [P]eople may be better able to represent their ideas and experiences through performance rather than written reports. Thus it may be possible to present the outcomes of the research process as a drama, role-play, dance, poem, work of art or combination of these elements.

He further states that performance is important in action research as participants often include people who have been disempowered and voiceless.

In order to plan a programme for the day of action, the group was split into two teams. Each team had to discuss and reach a consensus on the plan for a programme. The researcher indicated to them that the programme should include activities that included the identified themes of violence, time allocated for each activity in the programme, as well as the resources needed. The researcher had also asked them to consider how they would include learners from other grades into the programme. Each team wrote their ideas on chart paper and then presented it to everyone. A consensus was then reached by the whole group of the types of activities to be included, the sequence of the programme, and the time allocated for each activity.

The draft programme included the following:

- A drama focused on violence in school, at home, and in the community
- A poem by a Grade nine learner on violence
- A rap song by a group of learners
- A music item by the school choir focused on violence
- Guest speaker e.g. someone from the police or the ward councillor
- A wall of hope where learners would be given an opportunity to write their messages opposing violence

The researcher had suggested that the action group wear T-shirts on the day of the event. This would set them apart from the other learners and they would be recognised as the action

research group that planned and implemented the event. The group liked this idea and then decided on the colour and design of the T-shirt. The chosen colour was black with white writing, and the back of the T-shirt had the words 'Future Leaders of Change' and the front had their names.

Denzin (1997), postulates that the quality checks that need to be adhered to by the researcher to ensure successful participation and a successful project should include whether:

- Participants experience feelings of self-worth, independence, competence, identity, and empowerment
- Participants are given control over resources, decisions, actions, and activities
- There is communication, unity, and harmony in the group
- Participants feel at ease to participate and be themselves

The drama was developed by the learners themselves. They were all included in this process. Some decided to participate. Friends from the other grades also participated. The drama also included a song by the school choir, a poem, and a rap song linked to the theme of violence. The programme that was developed can be found in Appendix 3. The researcher's task was to obtain resources to develop the posters and to invite the ward councillor and district police officer in charge of school awareness campaigns. The researcher also decided, upon the advice of her supervisor, to video record the event. The researcher has included a copy of the video with this thesis.

The researcher and learners used one session to create posters to place around the school to alert the learners and teachers about the upcoming awareness day. The researcher noticed much passion and enjoyment from the group as a whole when they were involved in creating the posters and practising the drama item. Two of the girls from the group decided, with permission from the others, to draft the drama. At the following session, this draft was discussed with the group. The remaining learners were given an opportunity to provide input into the drama.

They decided to spend the next two sessions practising the drama. The researcher was taken aback by their level of dedication and commitment to the process. They managed to get a few of their friends to come along to practise as well. Notably, the narrator of the drama was not even from the action group. He was a Grade eleven learner. The poem and rap group were also not part of the original action group. The school choir director was approached by one of

the learners from the action group to be included. She happily agreed to participate in the choir and spent two sessions practising with them. The researcher was honoured to be invited by the choir director to one of the practice sessions.

7.7 Implementing the Project

On the day of the programme, the group was involved in assisting to set up the sound system, putting up pieces of chart paper on the wall behind the assembly area where the event was going to take place, as well as getting everyone together to practise the flow of the programme one more time. The researcher could see the excitement and anxiousness, but also pride on the faces of the Future Leaders of Change.

The researcher was also quite nervous as she did not know if everything was going to go according to plan in the drama and also in the programme itself. The researcher had empowered the group to develop and implement this mostly by themselves and she needed to trust that they were going to be successful. She also wondered how the other learners from the school would respond to the programme and the drama. High school children can be harsh, and she was afraid that they would not respond well to the hard work by the Future Leaders of Change. She had begun to feel quite protective of them.

It was very hot on the day of the programme and there was no shade in the assembly area, thus the researcher was worried that the audience would feel restless. Despite the heat, the programme was well received by the audience. The drama proceeded without problems and the learners applauded the creative elements of the drama, the poem, the rap, and the school choir. The talk by the police officer was also well received. He was quite adept and relayed the message well about the types of violence in school, its consequences, and why it is unacceptable. In her address, the school principal also reiterated why school violence is unacceptable and thanked the Future Leaders of Change for their hard work in bringing the programme to fruition. The researcher was very proud to call each one of them up to receive a certificate and to acknowledge the journey on which they had joined the researcher. It was truly a day of accomplishment for both the learners and the researcher.

7.8 Evaluation of the Project

According to Church (2011), programmes, projects and organizations are evaluated in the field of peace building for the purpose of accountability and learning. When evaluating a programme or project it is important to adhere to certain standards namely, *feasibility* (is it

realistic?), *propriety* (is it ethical?), *utility* (does it serve the needs of users?) and *accuracy* (does it accurately determine the value of the programme?). In addition, evaluation criteria should measure the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence of the programme or project. Process evaluations of the programme are critical in order to understand the value of the programme to the participants and improvements that need to be made for future implementation (Franzen *et al.* 2009). On the day after the event, an evaluation form was filled in by twenty-six Grade eleven learners and thirty-six Grade nine learners. The following questions were asked in the evaluation:

1. What **did you enjoy** about the awareness campaign?

The majority of both the Grade nine and Grade eleven learners indicated that they enjoyed the drama and the talk by the police constable. A few learners stated that they enjoyed the information presented and that learners were participating in the campaign.

2. What **did you not enjoy** about the awareness campaign?

Both the Grade nine and Grade eleven learners reported that it was very hot and that the venue was not conducive. They suggested that the community hall next to the school should have been used. They also reported that there were not enough speakers thus those further away from the drama could not hear properly. Some stated that teachers should have been involved in the campaign and that written information in the form of a pamphlet should have been given as well.

3. What did **you learn** from the awareness campaign?

The majority of the students stated that they had learnt that fighting, bullying, drugs, stealing, and weapon carrying should not be tolerated at school. They also reported that violence and bullies should be reported. This demonstrates that the themes of violence displayed in the drama were portrayed effectively for the learners to identify these issues. Other comments included:

> We must stop fighting and revenge is not a good thing, it can get you into trouble.
>
> I learnt that a small thing can affect the whole nation and if you see something or someone abusing people, convince that person into a positive way.
>
> Not every sticky situation can be resolved through violence.

Boys must stop abusing girls so that violence would stop.

To choose good friends, ignore things that will lead you to trouble.

We must stand up together against school violence.

It is important to think before you do something to others.

4. How could the campaign be **done differently** for next year?

The comments indicated the following:

- The community hall should be used.
- Pamphlets should be given with more information.
- Include more learners and teachers.
- Bring in victims and perpetrators of school violence to talk about their experiences.
- Include a question and answer session.

7.9 Sustainability of the Project

Approximately one month after the programme, the researcher met with the group again and the school president to discuss how the programme and initiative related to the 'Future Leaders of Change' would continue.

It was decided that two of the group members would address the assembly about the 'Future Leaders of Change' programme. Three other group members would go to each Grade ten class to recruit two girls and two boys who wanted to volunteer to be part of the programme. In addition, four of the current group members would volunteer to see the new group through in the following roles: programme leader, secretary, school executive liaison person, and booking the library seminar room for meetings. The new group would meet twice a month to decide on a project for the year. This happened for the year after the programme was implemented in the school. Unfortunately, the programme did not continue the following year due to a lack of commitment and time by the learners. It is thus important for an adult to oversee the process with learners to ensure that the sustainability of the programme continues. The implementation of a peace club would ensure sustainability of such initiatives.

7.10 Presentation about the Project at the Durban University of Technology

The presentation by the Future Leaders of Change was held at the Durban University of Technology on 4 November 2016.This was done with the help of the researcher's supervisor. Guests included the Life Orientation teacher from the school, Masters and PhD students from the Peace Building programme, the Vice Chancellor's office, as well as colleagues from the researcher's department. The researcher started by doing a short presentation on the planning and implementation of the project, including a video clip. Each learner was then given an opportunity to speak about his/her experiences. This was an empowering experience for them. Overall, the presentation was well received. The guests were impressed by the group of learners and the researcher was very proud of each one of them. Each future leader of change spent a few minutes talking about the following questions:

1. Introduce yourself
2. Why did you join the action group?
3. How did you feel about being part of the action group?
4. What did you learn about yourself in this whole process?
5. How did you feel the campaign went?

"Creating a Youth Empowerment Model for Peaceful Schools" [DUT news]

News

With ongoing reports on the increase in school violence, Fathima Dewan, a Peace Building PhD student and lecturer in the Child and Youth Care Programme at DUT, is conducting a study aimed at empowering students to tackle the problem.

More than half of the pupils who were surveyed in Dewan's study said they have been victims of abuse in classrooms, school playground and amongst their peers. Some of the main factors contributing towards this dilemma include corporal punishment, gambling and bullying.

A pupil, who had been a perpetrator of violence at Wiggins Secondary School, Durban, said the study made him change his bad behaviour. "I did most of my bullying and fighting with other kids in the classroom when the teacher was not there but more often in the playground during lunch breaks. Until this study, I had thought it was okay to physically attack and mock my fellow learners. We are not taught about the effects of such behaviour and how to conduct ourselves," he said.

Although the investigation only focused on one school in Mayville, the outcomes of the programme tend to be more effective if young people take ownership of the process. The case study consisted of questionnaires which were done by 70 grade 10 pupils, 20 teachers and three focus groups (one male, one female and one mixed). The final product consisted of an action team which comprised of the Dewan and 15 grade 10 pupils.

During the planning and implementation stage, 13 sessions took place between August and October. The final implementation was conducted

through a role-play ("Stand Up Against Violence"). Evaluation forms were filled in by 20 grade 9 pupils and 20 grade 11 pupils on the day of the event. Through the case study, the school has decided to have an annual campaign on school violence.

In her report back on the case study, Dewan said through her investigation, she hoped to give the pupils that she had conducted the study on a voice. "Youth empowerment is about giving young people a voice. Involve them and in order to build peaceful schools and what better way than to guide them towards the right direction and allow them to take ownership of the process," she said, adding that this was a special time for her and the pupils she worked with.

– Noxolo Memela

Pictured: Fathima Dewan and the 15 pupils known as "Future Leaders of Change".

7.11 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the entire process related to the action project component related to the study. Principles of youth empowerment were used during the planning and implementation of the project. The following chapter will discuss the overall findings from the study.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion of the findings as they respond to the research questions. The discussion will encompass the themes from the questionnaires, focus groups discussions, as well as the themes derived from the action research component of the study. The chapter concludes with reflections related to the lessons learned from the action research project. The overall aim of this research was to develop, implement, and evaluate a programme that utilises important aspects in youth empowerment such as social action and participation to reduce school violence. The broad concept of youth empowerment served as a strategy to create awareness about violence within the school setting. The study had the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the forms, extent, causes, and consequences of violence in the secondary school setting
2. To explore the theory and practice of youth empowerment in a school setting
3. To develop and implement a youth empowerment programme that specifically addresses the problem of school-based violence
4. To undertake a preliminary evaluation of the impact of the youth empowerment programme

Objective one was explored in the questionnaires and focus group discussions that were done first and formed the basis for the action research project. The action research project explored objectives two, three, and four.

In terms of the extent of violence at school, both male and female learners indicated that it was a regular occurrence at school, occurring every day to a few times a week. This correlates with national and international literature that have highlighted the high levels of violence in secondary schools. Learners exposed to high levels of school violence begin to internalise the normalcy of such events. In addition, it has an impact on their physical, social, and emotional well-being. Section 8.2 will focus on school violence and Section 8.3 will focus on the youth empowerment component.

8.2 School Violence

The findings below confirm that the first research objective was achieved: To examine the forms, extent, causes and consequences of violence in the secondary school setting.

8.2.1 Poverty and its Link to Stealing and Drugs

That which was quite evident in the questionnaire and focus group discussions was that stealing was a major type of violence seen at the school. Learners had indicated in the focus group discussions that stealing occurred every day and was of major concern. Drugs were also cited as a major cause of school-based violence. Learners stated that the high rate of stealing was linked to obtaining money to buy drugs and to purchase items that they could not afford. This could be the case as the school that formed the basis of the study, which is in Cato Manor, is in the middle of the densely populated Cato Crest informal settlement which is one of the poorest urban areas in Durban. According to a study by Gray and Maharaj (2017), the Cato Manor area is rife with issues of crime, poverty, and inequality. Over the past few years, the area has been affected by service delivery protests, xenophobic violence, gender-based violence, and political intolerance. In addition, drugs are a major problem, especially dagga and whoonga.

Substance abuse is a problem in both affluent and poor communities. Substance abuse in affluent communities is linked to the values and accepted behaviours displayed by parents and the belief that higher socio-economic status means lower health risks. Adolescents are therefore more likely to experiment with and abuse substance. The issue of drug use in this study could be due to the type of community in which the learners reside as well as being faced with difficult life circumstances due to poverty. They are more likely to be exposed to drugs through community or family influences in terms of poor role modelling and easy access to substances. In addition, adolescents who do not receive love and attention from their families are more likely to turn to friends to fill the gap and are therefore likely to adopt negative behaviour related to drug usage. Family issues, discussed later in this chapter, was also brought up as a cause of school violence. According to Ololade and Mndzebele (2017), drug abuse has been linked to young people experiencing stressful events in their life, being raised in single-parent families, and accessing drugs through friends and peers. In addition, Mncube and Harber (2014: 328), posit that young people resort to drugs because "schools are failing to provide an environment that gives students the feeling of security, confidence and sense of personal well-being they need". Schools should be a place that offers safety and security to learners. The school in question, which is very under-resourced, in a poor community, and

which has high levels of school violence occurring frequently, could therefore be contributing to drug use and thus the vicious cycle of violence continues.

Even though stealing does not cause direct harm, it does cause indirect harm to learners by psychologically affecting their well-being. Galtung (1969: 171), states that structural or indirect violence does not directly harm another but rather is "violence that is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances". In South Africa, structural violence is linked to poverty, because it hinders parents from providing for the material needs of their children. Thus, children in poverty-stricken schools experience an array of social problems that affect their physical, cognitive, and social development. Poverty increases the chances of an adolescent being involved in delinquency and anti-social peer group criminal activity. Poverty also increases the risk of victimisation. Many of the studies on school violence have been focused on public schools rather than private schools. There seems to be higher reported incidences of violence at under-resourced public schools with learners from poorer communities. This suggests that there is a clear link between poverty and school violence (Clark, 2012; Foster and Brooks-Gunn, 2013; Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014; Richter *et al.*, 2018).

8.2.2 Aggression in the form of Bullying and Fighting

Aggression in the form of bullying and fighting was highlighted as the second biggest problem at the school. According to Huesmann (2019), aggression in adolescents is the product of personal traits and environmental factors. Through observational learning, adolescents create social cognitions about the world which they then manifest in behaviour. He states that violence can be viewed as a "contagious disease which can be caught simply through its repeated observation" (Huesmann, 2019: 119). Thus, repeated observation of aggressive behaviour is seen in the home, community, and peer group.

In addition, Agnew (1992: 49), in his Strain Theory, suggests that young people are forced into deviant behaviour due to negative emotional states as a result of being involved in negative relationships. The emotional state causes the adolescent to make use of inappropriate mechanisms to achieve goals and also causes them to become violent towards others. In the context of school violence, an adolescent may become involved in acts of violence such as acquiring possessions through theft or bullying other learners. They could also become a bully themselves if they have been victimised by others or defend themselves when being bullied by others. Tsabedze, Maepa and Pila-Nemutandani (2018), found that boys engaged in physical aggression and girls in verbal aggression. Physical aggression in boys is linked to beliefs about masculinity. It was reported in the focus group discussions that

boys were involved in physical fighting to show off their strength. This is because aggression is seen as socially acceptable behaviour and a way for males to impress others and resolve conflict. Traditional gender norms mean that males are expected to show off their masculine traits and distress through aggression. According to Moreau *et al.* (2019), stereotypical views of gender norms are internalised by early adolescence through family socialisation patterns.

These findings correlate with a study by Hamlall and Morrell (2012), who found that peer expectations and affirmation of aggressive behaviour served as validation of the aggressor's masculinity in public, avoiding humiliation, and defending oneself, and that aggressive actions by others led to conflict most of the time. Hamlall (2014), in another study on the construction of violent masculinities in school, found that the use of harsh discipline measures and aggression by male teachers to maintain control resulted in heightened violent behaviour in boys and a climate of hostility in school. The violent handling of conflict by the teachers modelled violent values of hostility and confrontation which resulted in the boys distorting the view of masculinity. Corporal punishment is also a major problem at the school. The use of corporal punishment could thus be linked to aggressive tendencies of boys at the school. The issue of corporal punishment is highlighted in Chapter 2 and later in this chapter.

8.2.3 Sexual Harassment

According to the literature, gender violence is one of the major forms of violence in the school setting. However, that which was quite interesting in this study is that only 6% of male and 2% of female learners stated that sexual harassment is a type of violence at the school. This low figure for both males and females is quite contradictory to the literature which generally states that sexual harassment is prevalent as a common type of violence at school. According to the questionnaire, sexual harassment was not seen to be of major concern by the learners. A submission by the Department of Education (n.d.) to a task group dealing with sexual violence in schools reported that there is a high rate of under-reporting by learners due to fear, stigma, and blame.

This finding could be related to the manner in which girls deal with the issue of gender violence in school, in the family, and in the community setting. According to Bhana (2012: 352), "schools are integrally related to the social contexts and cultures that constitute gender power and expressions of gender violence". In many ways, there is bias in these settings towards male dominance. Ultimately, many girls are powerless against the dominant male culture of power and authority. This bias towards the powerful role of masculinity places more risk on boys to engage in gender-based school violence (Ngqela and Lewis, 2012; Pradubmook-Sherer and Shere, r 2014). Girls are at the receiving end as they are perceived as inferior and

defenceless, and fear punishment for reporting incidents of sexual violence (Malongo and Mwale, 2019). It is for this reason that girls at the school could be underplaying the occurrence of sexual advances and harassment at the school. When probed in the focus groups, all three groups stated that they did not think it was a major problem at the school. Their responses indicated that it does happen but when speaking about it, they did not see it as an important problem to be tackled. It was seen as normal and acceptable and was demonstrated as a means of power that boys have over girls. However, the issue of feeling fearful was raised.

8.2.4 Teacher-Perpetrated Violence – Corporal Punishment

During the focus group discussions, there was a lengthy discussion centred on corporal punishment. Learners spoke about the types of corporal punishment that occur, the reasons why it is used by teachers, and the effect that it has on learners. All three groups stated that corporal punishment happened every day by most teachers and included a slap on the face or hitting on the hand, backside, or head with a pipe, ruler, or duster. Corporal punishment, although prohibited since 1996 by law, is still practised widely at the school. Most cases of corporal punishment were not reported, and the school management did not discipline educators who used corporal punishment as a discipline technique. The findings suggest that educators use corporal punishment as they lack the appropriate skills and techniques to manage behaviour effectively. Thus, by using corporal punishment, the teachers reinforce the belief that violence solves violence. Instead of teaching young people how to behave properly, corporal punishment increases the behaviour that it seeks to control. According to Mncube and Dube (2019), the use of corporal punishment demonstrates a lack of teacher professionalism and democracy. The autocratic handling of learners' behaviour by educators through the use of physical and verbal aggression heightens violence in the classroom context. The use of a power relationship hinders mutual respect and engagement. Mayisela (2018), highlights the fact that parents supporting corporal punishment has a cultural root as they used this in their own parenting practices due to being raised in this way as well. This perpetuates the cycle of violence.

8.2.5 Peer Influence

According to the findings, peer pressure was cited as a major cause of school-based violence by the learners. This is likely because during the adolescent stage of development, more than in any other stage, friends and peers become a key socialising agent for young people. This influence of friends and peers has either a positive or negative effect on the attitudes and behaviour of the adolescent. Peer influence is achieved through modelling and social reinforcement (Albert and Steinberg, 2015). In their quest for independence, adolescents make their own decisions, conform to group culture, and question their values and identity.

Conformity provides a sense of security for the adolescent as they gain independence from their parents. Conformity is not necessarily a bad attitude but when the adolescent is forced to conform towards anti-social behaviour, values, principles, and attitudes, this then creates a sense of conflict for the young person in relation to the formation of their identity. This conflict results in a negative identity and thus they become a role player in school-based violence. In their desire to be accepted within the group, and in seeking power and attention, adolescents may be pressured into bullying others, taking drugs, carrying weapons, stealing, and joining gangs. This stage places youth at risk due to experimenting in risky and anti-social behaviour which includes school-based violence (Ali, Swahn and Sterling, 2011; Steyn and Singh, 2018).

According to Hirsch's (1969), social bond/social control theory, peers and school are an important aspect of *attachment* for the adolescent. If young people form close attachments with their pro-social peers and schools, then they are less likely to become involved in deviant behaviour. If they have deviant peers, then they themselves become involved in deviant behaviour. In a school rife with violence (as was the case in this study), it becomes very difficult for a learner to feel any form of close attachment to school. In addition, the decrease in parental relationship and monitoring leads to an increase in peer influence, both positively as well as negatively (Tome *et al.*, 2012).

Mathai, Mathopo and Mofokeng (2017), found that peer groups had a role to play in peer victimisation and engaging in violence to impress each other. Having delinquent friends increases the risk of the young person engaging in delinquent behaviour at school. Girls are influenced by peer groups and tend to be focused on non-violent relationship-orientated behaviours and therefore are more likely to engage in destructive behaviour such as excluding and spreading rumours about others. Boys, on the other hand, are influenced by peer groups to engage in acts of physical aggression rather than non-violent ones. They seek approval in terms of their masculinity (Hamlall, 2012; Farrel, Thompson and Mehar, i 2017). Attitudes supporting peer violence are associated with the perpetration of violence against peers, especially in high-risk communities (Ali, Swahn and Sterling, 2011). Young people growing up together in a crime-ridden community where there is unemployment, a lack of education, and a low standard of housing will engage with delinquent friends and peers (World Report on Violence against Children, 2006). Cato Manor, the area in which the school in the study is located, is rife with issues of low-cost housing, unemployment, crime, poverty, gender-based violence, political intolerance, and drugs.

On a positive note, the power of peers can be harnessed to play a valuable role in addressing school violence. They can play an important role as support mechanisms in schools to identify

and support learners who have been victims of school violence as well as be incorporated into school safety initiatives. Peer influence can be used during the empowerment process both to influence young people to work with each other on school awareness campaigns as well as to use the power of school awareness campaigns to address the issue of school violence amongst their peers.

8.2.6 The Role of the Ecosystem on School-Based Violence: Family, School, and Community Factors

One of the key findings of the research was the impact of family factors as a cause of school-based violence. Community and poor school environments were cited as a cause to a lesser extent. A key theory to understanding the impact of violence on the development of a young person is the eco-systemic model of development. The ecological model by Bronfenbrenner (1999), is a well-known eco-systemic theory that looks at how factors in the environment hinder or support the development of an individual throughout their lifetime. The positive features and risk factors present within each of the settings converge to influence the levels of violence in the young person's life. Violence in the home, school, and community have a ripple effect on each other. A model comparable to the eco-systemic one is Sameroff's Transactional Model of Development (1975). According to this model, there is an interplay between the individual and the experiences to which the individual is exposed in their family and social environment. Sameroff (1975) called this equal interplay between the individual and the environment bidirectional effects. Both eco-systemic models suggest that experiences and the environment are not seen as independent of the individual but something that shapes their development. There is an interplay between the individual and their context. Thus, the experiences of violence within the school, family, and community would impact on the holistic development of the young person.

In addition, the social learning theory (Bandura 1971), states that the social environment in which a person is socialised has a major role in determining their behaviour. The individual observes the behaviour of significant others with whom they regularly associate. It is then imitated in various settings such as the family, school, and community. A young person is socialised and observes violence in the family, school, or community by significant others such as parents, peers, teachers, and other adults. These violent acts are then imitated in the school setting (Botha, Myburgh and Poggenpoel, 2012). On the other hand, they might observe violence in the school setting by teachers or peers and then imitate such acts in the family or community setting. The findings of this research validate that view.

The family environment is a key socialising agent in childhood and adolescence. In the family, the young person learns values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour that serve as a moral compass for the young person. Family factors such as poverty, poor child rearing, a lack of parental involvement, and family violence also contribute to violence at school (Pahad and Graham, 2012). If the young person is socialised in a family environment that is rife in dysfunction and violence, then this places them at a greater risk for engaging in violent anti-social behaviour in other settings such as the school and community. Steyn and Singh (2018), posit that violence is exacerbated by children who come from broken homes where there is poor discipline and a lack of control by parents, and parents who themselves model aggressive behaviour.

Many adolescents today are being raised in homes with single parents. Children from single-parent families are at a greater risk for violence as compared to those raised in two-parent families (Burton and Leoschut, 2012; Leoschut and Kafaar, 2017). The absence of one parent might lead to a lack of parental supervision and low socioeconomic status and places young people at a greater risk of engaging in violent behaviour. Even if there are two parents in the family, factors such as poverty or low socioeconomic status, physical and sexual violence, parental conflict, poor family cohesion, poor attachment between children and parents, poor parental support and involvement, a lack of communication, poor supervision, parents abusing drugs and alcohol, and harsh punishment for misbehaviour can place a young person at risk for engaging in violent aggressive behaviour (Le Roux and Mokhele, 2011; Van der Merwe, Dawes and Ward, 2011; Mathews and Benvenuti, 2014). Through the example of parents, caregivers, and older siblings, young people learn how to behave in socially acceptable and unacceptable ways. Thus, with these types of role models in close proximity, there is a greater risk of young people being involved in violence at school (Pahad and Graham, 2012).

Poorer communities in South Africa (such as the one in the study) are faced with high levels of violence. The Human Sciences Research Council policy brief (2016), found a clear link between school violence and high crime levels of communities. The policy brief also found that low socio-economic status increased the risk of exposure of young people to violence. In addition, youth who live in violent communities pick up violent behavioural traits early in life due to observational learning (Meyer and Chetty, 2017). Schools located within violent crime-ridden communities are at a greater risk of fostering school-based violence as they reflect the violent norms and acts to which learners are exposed in the community, which then influences their behaviour.

8.2.7 Consequences of School Violence

In both the questionnaires and focus group discussions, learners were very clear that violence at the school did impact on learners. The main consequences of violence were cited as truanting from school, poor concentration in class, and feelings of fearfulness and anxiety. It also affected the self-esteem of learners. These factors led to poor performance and ultimately dropping out of school. This is consistent with the literature which has found that the consequences of school-based violence are linked to the emotional, social, cognitive, educational, and behavioural development of learners which have an impact even in adulthood (Madikizela-Madiya and Mncube, 2014; Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013; Ghorab and Al-Khaldi, 2014).

8.2.8 Learner Perspectives: Factors to be considered in addressing School Violence

The participants stated that the learners in the school could be involved in reporting incidents, offering peer support, and creating awareness around the issue of violence. They also identified improving infrastructure, improving security, and providing extra-curricular activities and psycho-social support for learners. A lack of recreational facilities were cited as causes of violence. Steyn and Singh (2018), found that absence of after-school activities and inadequate resources and facilities at school or in the community resulted in young people being engaged in destructive behaviour in order to evade boredom. There are limited opportunities for young people to engage in activities that expand their potential and skills. The school where the study took place is under-resourced with inadequate sporting facilities. A key point was brought up by one of the learners regarding the need to engage learners in sport such that they are diverted from being involved in risk-taking behaviour. What came out strongly was the need for learners themselves to create awareness about the issues affecting them in school. They wanted to be part of the process of finding solutions rather than merely being observers or victims. Thus, it is important that young people are involved in school activities that would provide a sense of empowerment, engage them in positive peer relationships, deter them from destructive behaviour, and encourage them to engage in developmentally appropriate activities. Youth empowerment programmes at schools can address this need.

An example of such a programme is the Youth Empowerment Solutions (YES), an after-school programme related to a community change project (Zimmerman *et al.*, 2018) which was implemented with diverse groups of youth and found that youth involved in the particular programme demonstrated leadership skills, confidence, better cognitive skills, and pro-social behaviour. Martinez *et al.* (2018), in their paper on the power of including youth in the development of prevention strategies, outlined four case studies that demonstrated how youth were included in youth-led community projects related to health assessment, environmental

issues, participatory budgeting, and social justice. The authors found positive youth outcomes across all four projects. The positive outcomes were related to an increase in skills, knowledge, competencies, leadership, communication, collaboration, and working with and respecting diverse perspectives.

8.3 Youth Empowerment: Reflection of a Youth Empowerment Project

After having completed the action research project with the group of young people at the school, which culminated in a school-wide violence awareness campaign, the points mentioned in the following sub-sections were discovered.

The findings below confirm that the following objectives of the study were achieved:
Objective 2: To explore the theory and practice of youth empowerment in a school setting.
Objective 3: To develop and implement a youth empowerment programme that specifically addresses school-based violence

8.3.1 Youth Empowerment and Action Research

For the purposes of this study, Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) was used. It has the same elements of action research but that which makes it distinctive is the participation of youth. Youth empowerment links well with action research. This is because action research, like youth empowerment, is participatory in nature. The collaborative quality of action research is empowering due to the fact that participants are able to effect change and make improvements (Craig 2009: 4). Furthermore, "It is implemented with the participation of the people for whom the intervention is designed, usually with their help and with the aim of emancipation for the participants" (Henning, van Rensburg and Smit, 2004: 47).

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 205), "participants in action research are actively involved in the planning and implementation of the research outcomes and are thus empowered". Because action research is a participatory process, the learners in the action group were meaningfully involved throughout the process and in doing so, were able to explore their strengths and potentials. The diversity within the group meant that they came with a range of experience and knowledge. The researcher listened to their ideas and their contribution was seen as valuable to the knowledge production process. They were able to bring a fresh perspective to the issue being studied and offered creative solutions to how the issue of violence could be addressed. Thus, they chose to implement a school-wide violence

awareness campaign. The process allowed them to be independent and responsible for the elements of the school violence campaign and how those were to be delivered. The entire process lends itself to a sense of empowerment for the participants.

8.3.2 The Benefits of Youth Empowerment in a School Context

As discussed in the literature review, Chinman and Linney's (1998), *Adolescent Empowerment Cycle* describes empowerment as an important construct of adolescent development as it allows young people to develop their identity by taking on meaningful roles, developing skills, bonding, and actively participating with peers and others within a social setting. It also involves youth experiencing positive recognition and reinforcement for their efforts in contributing positively to a group. This leads to greater self-esteem, self-efficacy, a sense of control, and ultimately empowerment.

Youth empowerment is linked to cultivating moral identity in youth. Through empowerment, youth are seen as assets and instruments of change in their own development. Thus, interventions should empower them to be the best that they can be (National Youth Policy, 2015-2020). Furthermore, using empowerment harnesses the strengths of children and youth to enable them to tap into their skills, knowledge, and resources so as to bring about change in their social context (Augsberger, Gecker and Collins, 2018). The empowerment lens allows adults to see youth as active in their own development and reflect and act on how to facilitate the process of their development. It enables youth to see themselves as change agents with an active role to play in their school and community.

Barnes, Brynard and de Wet (2014), found that the better the school climate and culture, the lower the levels of violence experienced at school. They also propose that in order to create safer schools and a better school climate, schools should involve learners in decision making around school policies as well as the design of strategies to address school violence. The Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children (2012: 24), in his report on Tackling Violence in School: A Global Perspective, states that:

[E]ffectively addressing violence in schools cannot be done without the meaningful involvement of children themselves. Indeed, children have the capacity to become agents of change, to campaign and raise awareness of the issue, organize themselves and others, protect and support each other, and identify and support victims of violence among their peers.

Thus, partnering with children is a key element in reducing school violence. Zimmerman *et al.* (2018), found that youth involved in empowerment programmes demonstrated leadership

skills, confidence, better cognitive skills, decision making, and pro-social behaviour. Conversely, when the school climate is poor, youth are disempowered with a diminished sense of control over school matters. They are not involved in decision making. The issue of authority is an important one because excessive control by teachers diminishes empowerment.

8.3.3 Youth Empowerment and Marginalised Youth

This study was conducted with marginalised youth in a community rife with poverty, violence, and inequality. According to Pearrow and Pollack (2009), empowerment is a powerful tool that can be used with marginalised youth. Youth violence is a social justice issue, therefore empowerment is a key manner in which youth themselves can be given the power to address the issue of school violence. Empowerment in this study consisted of exploring issues from a social justice perspective and then using a practical approach to address the identified issues. Prilleltensky (2010: 242), conceptualises power within empowerment "as having the opportunity to exercise self-determination and democratic participation. Power is not an inherent quality that children are born with but rather is something which is attained from experiences and opportunities in the environment". Thus, empowerment gives marginalised youth an opportunity to exercise power in a responsible manner.

Through the democratic processes of empowerment, youth are engaged in meaningful decision making, active participation, and action in order to bring about change in their social context. Youth participatory action research provides a unique platform for young people to acquire skills, knowledge, critical thinking, self-confidence, leadership skills, and teamwork skills (Livingstone *et al.*, 2014: 287). As seen in this research study, through a youth empowerment process and participatory action research, youth were given a 'voice' during the research process by identifying the problem of school-based violence that exists at the school and formulating a plan which they, as an action research group, wished to address. This is an empowering process for youth and leads to a positive contribution towards their healthy development and a sense of inclusion and well-being (Prilleltensky, 2010).

Youth empowerment is emancipative because it allows youth to control the actions and processes (Martinez *et al.*, 2016). It nurtures the 'spark' in youth to follow through with something about which they are passionate. The researcher has found that if a young person shows passion for making a difference in their school or community, creating a supportive environment for the young person to make a difference encourages them to feel empowered. Nurturing the 'spark' contributes to positive development in all spheres (Scales, Benson and Roehlkepartain, 2011).

8.3.4 The Importance of Positionality and Relationships

Herr and Anderson (2015), assert that the 'positionality' of the researcher is important in action research i.e. their relationship with the setting and participants will determine if the process and product of the actions taken are indeed effective and link to the core philosophical foundation of action research. The researcher considered her positionality to be very important when working with the action group. Notably, positionality is key to an effective empowerment group and achieving the outcomes set out by the researcher. The democratic nature of the manner in which the researcher worked with the action group created a sense of inter-dependence between the researcher and action group. The researcher viewed them as experts because they were the ones who were facing the issues of violence on a daily basis. The researcher built a level of trust, respect, and rapport with them. This enabled them to feel safe to offer opinions and solutions.

According to the *Critical Youth Empowerment* model (Jennings *et al.*, 2006), making youth feel welcome and safe is an important dimension of empowerment. The action group was made to feel welcome from the first session. The researcher provided a sense of belonging and safety. This was achieved by learning the learners' names, allowing them to choose a group name that increased their sense of identity (The Future Leaders of Change), and reassuring them that whatever personal information was discussed within the group would remain confidential. They felt supported, cared for, and respected whilst at the same time enjoying themselves during the planning and implementation of the violence awareness campaign. They felt comfortable to share their opinions and creative ideas because the researcher encouraged them to take responsibility for those ideas and put them into action by delivering the violence awareness campaign. The group was given the opportunity to explore ideas and put into action those ideas that were deemed to be important. However, guidelines were set at the beginning of the project.

The relationship aspect of empowerment is key to an effective empowerment project. Christens (2012: 121), expands on the relational aspect of psychological empowerment where relationships are seen as a distinct component. The relational aspect deals specifically with interpersonal processes that bring about transformative change to relationships within settings. Other aspects of relational empowerment include bridging social divisions with others who are different; facilitating the empowerment of others through providing opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities, identifying their strengths and providing support; mobilising others to participate in the project; and passing on legacy by collaborating with others to

ensure sustainability. The relational aspect is important such that collectively, the group can achieve the desired outcomes and bring about change.

Building relationships with youth is based on empathetic listening and respect as well as supporting and motivating youth, thereby increasing their self-confidence (Blanchett-Cohen and Brunson, 2014). During the action research project, the youth developed relationships between themselves and a relationship with the researcher, their facilitator. This relationship was a key factor in the way the group worked with each other and with the researcher. It ultimately led to the successful implementation of the violence awareness campaign. Group identity and social relationships in terms of positive peer norms, values, and behaviours were also reinforced as the youth worked together as a team. Social cohesion and a sense of togetherness, as well as empowering others in achieving social change, are linked to a sense of empowerment. The process of empowering others (peer-to-peer empowerment) is important seeing that peer relationships are a key developmental milestone in the adolescent phase (Russel *et al.*, 2009).

8.3.5 Empowerment is about Partnership with Youth

Throughout the process of planning and implementation, the group was given many opportunities to actively engage and make a meaningful contribution towards the project. In the process, the youth learnt about leadership, communication, planning, and organising (Larson and Angus, 2011). They were also given an opportunity to take on different roles and responsibilities that came with those roles. Zeldin, Christens and Powers (2013), describe youth-adult partnerships as shared work between adults and youth who together, democratically and collectively, dialogue about, plan, implement, and reflect on projects that are being undertaken. The partnership allows for shared meaning-making of the identified issues and the most appropriate strategies to address the issues.

Key aspects of the youth-adult partnership include youth being involved in authentic decision making in issues affecting them and where adults and youth are seen as co-learners who share ideas and expertise. These processes support the development of both the youth and the adults and see them both as agents of change. Ownership is important as it results in youth experiencing agency over their work where they were given control to select and implement activities. It is important for the adult, as the facilitator, to resolve conflicts that arise within the group as well as offer information and alternatives to the group when they cannot find the solution. In addition, setting clear boundaries and expectations related to the role of the adults and the youth is important so as to guard the adults from taking away control from the youth.

In this study, I used cooperative learning as a mode of participation. The concept of cooperative learning was discussed in Chapter 3 which was related to empowerment theory and practice. The group of learners and I worked together to understand the issues of violence most prevalent in the school and then we worked together to develop and implement the violence awareness campaign. I guided them in the process, but they were largely responsible for brainstorming on that which they would like the programme to look like and who should be involved. They were responsible for implementing the violence awareness campaign. Christens and Kirshner (2011), identify common elements of working collaboratively with youth. These elements firstly include relationship development to build trust and understand the perspective of youth about issues that affect them, and secondly, include social action towards promoting social justice through participatory research and evaluation. Thus, transformative change is achieved by assisting young people to gain independence and enhancing their competency through partnership with them (Kay and Tisdall, 2017).

In addition, there was equitable sharing of power between the group and myself. I provided support, guidance, and kept them focused by using her authority as the adult but without dominating the process. This particular aspect appears in Wong, Zimmerman and Parker's (2010), *Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment Pyramid* where they state that the *pluralistic* participation type is the best form of youth empowerment as youth are active participants in the process and there is shared control between youth and adults. The authors state that this shared control results in a co-learning process that is empowering for both the adults and youth.

8.3.6 Key Elements of a Youth Empowerment Model to address School-Based Violence

This study has demonstrated to me that youth empowerment is a useful tool to use in schools to address the issue of school violence. Many intervention programmes at school are based on tools that are developed and implemented by adults, with learners merely being participants. This was evident in the various interventions outlined in chapter four. Learners do not see value in it because they are not engaged in exploring issues and implementing solutions themselves. My project was different to the interventions mentioned in chapter four because it used the principles of youth empowerment to address the issue of school violence at the school. I facilitated a process with the learners but they ultimately took ownership of developing and implementing the programme.

The role of the adult facilitator is important to ensure a process that allows young people to be meaningfully engaged in shared decision making and ownership of the programme being developed and implemented. The empowerment process enhances the development of learners at an individual level by honing their leadership, responsibility, participation, creativity and problem solving skills. This ultimately increases their self-confidence and their ability to see themselves as change agents. The group process is equally important as it offers a unique, valuable learning opportunity that learners can use in future such as teamwork and advocacy. It provides a platform to work with others and develop values related to respect, shared decision making, compromise etc. in addition it advances their problem solving and creativity skills. If done properly, the process results in meaningful action that is context specific. This leads to empowerment and a change (even a subtle one) in the school environment.

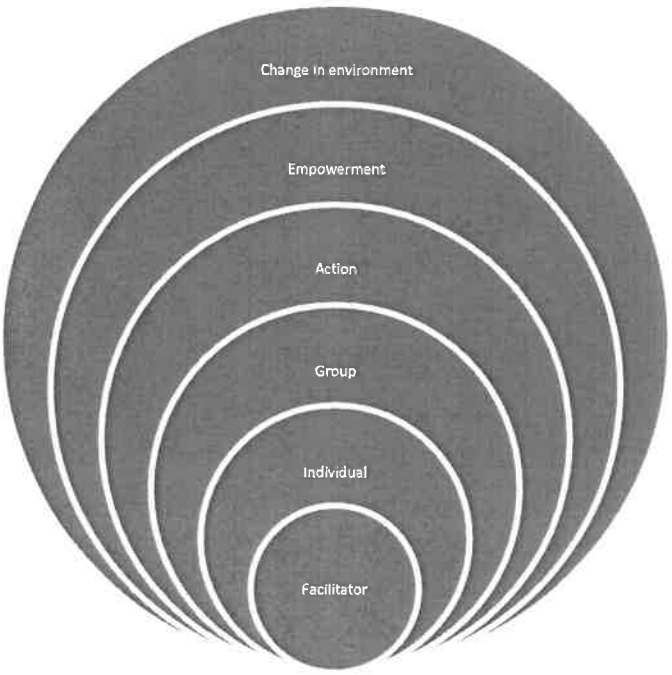

Figure 8.1: Key elements of a youth empowerment model to address school-based violence.

Facilitator Characteristics	Empathy Rapport Trust Partnership Respect Sharing power Facilitation Listening

Individual Characteristics	Self confidence Responsibility Participation Creativity Leadership
Group processes	Teamwork Respect Shared decision making Compromise Problem solving Creativity Advocacy

8.4 Conclusion

In a school setting, empowerment is achieved by giving learners skills and knowledge to think critically about issues within the school setting such that creative and doable strategies can be developed to address the issues. This leads to change. It allows learners to address issues that are important to them by being directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects. Involving youth in developing and implementing programmes ensures that the programme is relevant and is important in developing their skills, attitude, behaviour, and knowledge. Empowering outcomes are the measurement that one uses to study the effects of interventions and the empowering process. Thus, this contributes to the formulation of empowerment theory. The following chapter will conclude this research by outlining the conclusions and recommendations derived from this study.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

The chapter concludes the study by drawing conclusions and recommendations based on the findings presented in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 regarding school violence and youth empowerment.

9.2 Conclusions

The broad concept of youth empowerment served as a strategy to create awareness about violence within the school setting. The study had the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the forms, extent, causes, and consequences of violence in the secondary school setting.

This objective was achieved by the data collected through the questionnaire and focus group discussions. Both tools were adequate in obtaining data that was relevant and in-depth.

2. To explore the theory and practice of youth empowerment in a school setting.
3. To develop and implement a youth empowerment programme that specifically addresses the problem of school-based violence.

Objective two and three were linked. I was able to explore the practice of empowerment through working with a group of learners who developed and implemented a programme by using the principles of empowerment. However, the sustainability of the project could be strengthened. An introduction of a peace club at the school would be beneficial.

4. To undertake a preliminary evaluation of the impact of the youth empowerment programme.

A preliminary evaluation was undertaken after the completion of the programme. It indicated that it did create an awareness of violence at the school.

9.2.1 School-Based Violence

In terms of the extent of violence at school, both male and female learners indicated that it was a regular occurrence at school, occurring every day to a few times a week. This correlates with national and international literature that have highlighted the high levels of violence in secondary schools. That which was quite evident in the questionnaire and focus group discussions was that stealing was a major type of violence seen at the school. Learners had

indicated in the focus group discussions that stealing occurred every day and was a major concern. Drugs were also cited as a cause of school-based violence. Learners stated that the high rate of stealing was linked to obtaining money to buy drugs and to purchase items that they could not afford. This could be the case as the learners come from the poor community surrounding the school where poverty and unemployment is rife. It seems therefore that the learners steal in order to fulfil their needs. Literature has indicated that children from poverty-stricken homes experience an array of social problems that affect their development. In this study, structural violence is seen as a contributor of violence as it is linked to the poor community in which the learners reside and the under-resourced school that they attend.

Violence in the home and school have a ripple effect on each other as there is an inter-play between the individual and the experiences to which the individual is exposed in their family and social environment. One cannot only look at school violence as a problem residing in the individual, but one needs to look at how the ecological system surrounding the individual impacts on the prevalence of school violence. If the young person is socialised in a family environment that is rife in dysfunction and violence, then this can have a detrimental effect on their holistic development as well as place them at a greater risk for engaging in violent anti-social behaviour in other settings such as the school and community.

One of the key findings of the research was the impact of family factors as a cause of school-based violence. The participants indicated that due to poor parenting skills and violence witnessed and experienced at home, many learners manifested their anger by bullying others at school. Thus, aggression in the form of bullying and fighting was highlighted as the second biggest problem at the school. This was also linked to peer pressure. Traditional gender norms mean that males are expected to show off their masculine traits and distress through aggression. Learners displayed power through acts of violence and to gain approval from peers. Approval by peers is linked to conformity and seeking attention.

During the focus group discussions, there was a lengthy discussion centred on corporal punishment. Learners spoke about the types of corporal punishment that occur, the reasons why it is used by teachers, and the effect that it has on learners. All three groups stated that corporal punishment happened every day by most teachers. It seems that the educators use corporal punishment as they lack the appropriate skills and techniques to manage behaviour effectively. The responses from the learners suggest that the teachers use petty reasons to punish learners and most cases of corporal punishment go unreported. By employing corporal punishment for wrongdoing, the school system reinforces the notion that violence is the only way to deal with problems. Instead of taking on the important role of teaching young people

pro-social behaviour, corporal punishment increases the behaviour that it seeks to control. The use of corporal punishment demonstrates a lack of teacher professionalism and democracy. Thus, the autocratic handling of learners' behaviour by educators through the use of physical aggression heightens violence in the classroom context.

Sexual harassment, although cited as a major form of violence in literature, had a low response rate in this study. However, in the focus group discussions, the learners indicated that although it was not a major problem, girls were fearful, and it was seen as acceptable behaviour by boys. This points to the fact that ultimately, many girls are powerless against the dominant male culture of power and authority and this behaviour is not confronted or questioned. Violence awareness campaigns need to address this issue such that youth are aware that it is unacceptable and should be reported.

9.2.2 Youth Empowerment

This study aimed to harness the potential of youth empowerment to change the attitudes and behaviours of learners in addressing the problem of school-based violence. Literature has indicated that through the democratic processes of empowerment, individuals and groups are engaged in meaningful decision making, active participation, and action in order to bring about change in their social context. Being involved directly in planning and implementing a programme to address the issues with which they are faced in school is an empowering process and it gave the learners who were involved in this study an opportunity to have their voices heard, to take ownership, and to contribute in a meaningful manner. The researcher saw their voice and confidence develop over the weeks that the researcher and learners spent together. On the day that the violence awareness campaign was implemented, the researcher observed a sense of responsibility, pride, and achievement in their demeanour. They were clearly stressed by this very large task that lay before them but worked together as a team on that day to ensure that that which they had planned came to fruition. The principal, in her address to the school, commended the group of learners on the campaign that they had planned.

The youth empowerment project proved that even in an under-resourced school, if there is cooperation from school management and a group of positive, enthusiastic learners, it can be used as a useful strategy to address the issue of school violence. Empowerment advances development at the individual and group levels. It allows youth to see themselves as change agents with an active role to play in their school. Interpersonal interactions of young people and adults sharing power is transformative and emancipative because young people who are usually powerless are in control of the process now. Empowerment develops competence,

confidence, leadership, and communication skills in youth. The adult serves as a guide and facilitator. Positionality is key to an effective empowerment group and achieving the outcomes set out by the researcher. The democratic nature of the manner in which the researcher worked with the action group created a sense of inter-dependence between the researcher and action group. The researcher viewed them as experts and built a level of trust, respect, and rapport with them. This enabled them to feel safe to offer opinions and solutions. This relationship was a key factor in the way the group worked with each other and with the researcher. It is important to set group norms and behaviours as it determines how successfully the process will unfold.

Once programmes are implemented, evaluations of the programme are critical in order to understand the value of the programme to the participants and improvements that need to be made for future implementation. The issue of sustainability is important because if there is no adult or teacher to drive the process, then the programme will not follow through. The researcher found this to be true in this study. Feedback from the group indicated that the programme was not continued the following year because there was no one to drive the process. This was therefore a limitation of this study.

9.3 Recommendations

9.3.1 Using Peers as Support Mechanisms

Peer relationships are a key developmental milestone in the adolescent phase as they play an influential role in the lives of young people. Thus, schools need to harness peer-to-peer empowerment in order to address the issue of school violence. Peer groups can play an important role as support mechanisms in schools to identify and support learners who have been victims of school violence as well as be incorporated into the safety initiatives in school. The participants in the study stated that the learners in the school could be involved in reporting incidents, offering peer support, and creating awareness around the issue of violence. For this to happen, the management of the school needs to make a concerted effort to have mechanisms in place for reporting incidents and develop a structured peer-mentor system. In addition, incorporating learners into decision-making processes within the school is important.

9.3.2 Harnessing the Power of Youth to Tackle School Violence from Within

Power is not necessarily an inherent quality with which children and youth are born but is rather something that is attained from experiences and opportunities in the environment. In order to create safer schools and a better school climate, schools should involve learners in

decision making around school policies as well as the design of strategies to address school violence. Using youth in school violence campaigns and programmes can increase their motivation to collectively influence changes within their school. These can be achieved through a process of shared decision making, collective vision, and partnership with young people. Involving youth in developing and implementing programmes ensures that the programme is relevant and is important in developing their skills, attitude, behaviour, and knowledge. Partnering with children and youth is important as the outcomes of a programme tend to be more effective if learners themselves take ownership of the process. That which came out strongly from the participants was the need for learners themselves to create awareness about the issues affecting them in school. They wanted to be part of the process of finding solutions rather than merely being observers or victims.

In the school system, authority rests with the teachers and management. Youth are disempowered with a diminished sense of control over school matters. They are not involved in decision making. The issue of authority is an important one because excessive control by teachers diminishes empowerment. However, with the current educational situation in South Africa, using the empowerment process will be challenging as it contradicts how young people are generally treated and perceived. Thus, a change in mind-set is required by both teachers and learners. A power shift is necessary if empowerment is to be successful.

The relational aspect of empowerment is also important if empowerment is to be used as a strategy. Findings have suggested that there is a poor relationship and a sense of distrust and disrespect between learners and teachers. This is increased by the use of corporal punishment instead of discipline. A sense of care, relationship building, respect, and use of appropriate discipline techniques are vital to the process of empowerment. Not all teachers can be involved in empowering learners to take charge and address the issues with which they are faced in school. Thus, specific teachers who are enthusiastic about working with learners to improve the school environment in a forum of shared decision making and responsibility could be tasked with facilitating violence reduction campaigns with the learners. These campaigns could be incorporated into specific subjects in the curriculum.

9.3.3 Providing Learners with Structured Activities

Young people will be less likely to be involved in school violence if they are engaged in developmentally appropriate, stimulating activities. Participants stated that providing extra-curricular activities would be beneficial to learners as a lack of recreational facilities were cited as one of the causes of violence. Participants stated that there were limited opportunities for young people to engage in activities that expand their potential and skills. The school where

the study took place is under-resourced with inadequate sporting facilities. Learners could be engaged in sport such that they are diverted from being involved in risk-taking behaviour. Funding could be sought by under-resourced schools as part of a community initiative to fix sporting facilities and acquire sporting equipment such that the sporting codes could be offered to learners as a start.

9.3.4 Alternative Discipline Techniques as part of Teacher Education

Corporal punishment, which is prohibited, is widely used. The use of corporal punishment to address the aggressive behaviour of learners perpetuates the violent culture in school. Concerted effort needs to be made by learning institutions offering teacher education to incorporate discipline techniques that address the behaviour of learners but within a rights-based, humanistic perspective. The Department of Education could develop a range of workshops for teachers currently employed highlighting the use of discipline rather than punishment.

9.3.5 Policy recommendations

Policy recommendations flowing from the findings are among others:

a) School management should make a concerted effort to have mechanisms in place for reporting incidents, and to design a structured peer-mentor system.

b) Schools should involve learners in decision-making around school policies and strategies.

c) Young people in schools need to be more involved in organised extra-curricular activities.

d) Techniques of discipline within a rights-based, humanistic perspective should be implemented.

9.4 Major Learning from the Study

The first major learning I derived from my study is that empowerment is a powerful tool to use with young people as it brings about change at an intra and inter personal level. However, there is a lack of youth-led initiatives at schools tackling violence. Where there are initiatives at school, these are educator led .The core values of empowerment can be used within the context of peace clubs in schools, both at primary and secondary school levels as this seems to be the best fit for empowerment. In addition, if done within the context of peace clubs then the issue of sustainability will be addressed. However it is critical that an adult facilitates the process.

The second major learning is that one needs to be cognizant of the fact that improving the school environment does not necessarily mean that the community environment will be improved. Therefore it is crucial that awareness campaigns are done at community level as well. This will filter down to the family environment as well. This will spread the values of empowerment from one context to the next. This ultimately is the true measure of empowerment.

9.5 Summary

Overall, through this study, the researcher was able to achieve the objectives set out i.e. to examine the forms, extent, causes, and consequences of violence in a high school setting and to explore the theory and practice of youth empowerment by developing and implementing a youth empowerment programme that specifically addressed school-based violence. A preliminary evaluation of the impact of the youth empowerment programme indicated that it did make the learners at the school aware of the issues with which they are faced on a daily basis. As a researcher, this study broadened the researcher's knowledge and practice of action research as it takes the researcher out of their comfort zone because action research is only successful through engaging with participants in a meaningful way. The researcher is encouraged to see the positive impact that it had on the action research group in terms of how it changed their view of violence from the first meeting and the feedback that the researcher received after implementation of the violence awareness campaign. In addition, the researcher was able to witness the impact that empowerment had on the personal development of the action research group. Their confidence, communication skills, problem solving ability, creativity, positivity, and leadership was clearly evident by the end of the project. The process enabled the researcher to build relationships with some of the participants with whom the researcher still keeps in contact. However, the researcher has realised that the sustainability of future empowerment projects needs to be addressed through a structured system of engaging with school management.

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Appendix 1

DEVELOPING A YOUTH EMPOWERMENT MODEL FOR PEACEFUL SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY

This questionnaire is being conducted to better understand the experiences of learners and teachers in terms of school-based violence.

Participation in the study is strictly voluntary and you are assured of anonymity. You may withdraw from the study at any stage with no negative consequences for yourself.

SECTION A

Please place an X in the appropriate box or fill in the blank.

1. What is your present age? _____ years

2. What is your gender?

Male		Female	

SECTION B

Please place an X in the appropriate boxes that apply below.

1. Do you think that violence is a problem at your school?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree

2. How often have you seen or heard of violence at your school?

Every day	
A few times a week	
Once a week	
Rarely	
Never	

There can be more than one response for question 3, 4 and 5.

3. What types of violence are present at your school?

Bullying	
Fighting	
Swearing and teasing	
Stealing	
Being threatened	
Sexual harassment	
Other	

4. What do you think are the causes of violence at your school?

Peer pressure	
Drugs	
Alcohol	
Gangsterism	
Easy access to weapons	
Learners imitating what they see on television or in the movies	
Family problems	
Community problems	
Poor school environment	
Other-please specify	

5. What do you think are the consequences of violence at your school?

Feeling fearful and anxious at school	
Poor performance in school work	
Poor concentration in class	
Bunking school	
Lack of interest in school	
Dropping out of school	
Depression	
Other-please specify	

SECTION C

Please write a few comments about the questions below

1. Do you know the procedure for reporting school violence incidents? Please explain.

2. How do you think you can reduce violence at your school?

3. How do you think others can reduce violence at your school?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

Appendix 2

DEVELOPING A YOUTH EMPOWERMENT MODEL FOR PEACEFUL SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Date:

Time:

Number of participants:

Number of male and female:

Introduce myself and the purpose of the focus group. Thank learners for their participation. Outline the ethical considerations and ask for permission to tape record the session. State that the tapes will only be listened to by the researcher (myself) and that the tapes will be stored in a secure place.

PS: The focus groups will only take place after the questionnaire has been analysed. As such, important recurring information obtained from the questionnaire will be elaborated on and discussed in the focus group.

The same questions that were used in the questionnaire will be used as guiding questions in the focus group.

1. To what extent is violence a problem at your school?
2. What types of violence are present at your school?
3. What do you think are the causes of violence at your school?
4. What do you think are the consequences of violence at your school?
5. What is the procedure for handling incidents of violence?
6. What do you think can be done to reduce violence at your school?
7. How can the learners be involved in reducing violence at your school?

Appendix 3

Programme: Violence Awareness Campaign (Future Leaders of Change)

Theme: Standing Up Together Against Violence
Date: 21 October
Time: 12.30 – 2.00 PM
Venue: School Assembly Area

12.30 Welcome by deputy principal
12.35 Music item by school choir
12.45 Drama item
13.15 Talk by Constable Mokoena- SAPS Cato Manor
13.30 Address by school principal about school violence
13.40 Vote of thanks and closing by Fathima Dewan
13.45 Issuing certificates to learners –Fathima and principal
13.55 Music item
14.00 Writing messages against violence on the wall of hope

Future Leaders of Change: Drama on Violence in School

	SONG BY SCHOOL CHOIR
NARRATOR Lucky	It's a Monday morning where every learner is tired from the weekend. A group of boys who call themselves Masters of Sway (MOS) are planning to take other learner's school bags.
Phindile (leader of the group)	Sho sho boy
Litha	Howzit
Phindile	Grade 8 boys there is this job I have for you, taking nike bags
Nokubonga	No guys that will take too long. I want weed now not tomorrow

Phindile	Let's take this girls money now
	The young girl walks past
Litha	Hey you, bring all your money here
Neliswa	I don't have any
Nokubonga	Hey hey don't test my temper you stupid girl. Bring all your money here
Neliswa	(with tears) Here it is…It's all I have
Mandisa	From now on bring all your money to me every day
NARRATOR Lucky	The bell rings at 8am in the morning for all the learners to attend class. The teacher comes to class
Class (action group)	Good morning mam
Luyanda	Morning class sit down
Class (action group)	Thank you mam
NARRATOR Lucky	The teacher continues teaching until a group of the learners makes a joke and the whole class laughs. After a few minutes they do it again
Luyanda	Who was that?
NARRATOR Lucky	The class did not respond. The teacher shouts the whole class. She then tells the learners to own up or else she is not going to continue with the lesson. Nobody owns up. She exits the class

	THE RAPPER ENTERS HERE WAIT FOR RAP TO FINISH
NARRATOR	It's 12.30 and every learner is enjoying their lunch break. The MOS are in their usual spot in the corner of the school ground smoking weed as always.
Phindile	Guys we have run out of money to buy weed for this afternoon
Mandisa	Look at that boy I am sure he has money
Mlungisi	Let me handle this job. Leave this job to me.
NARRATOR Lucky	He went to some cheese girl and asked for money.
Mlungisi	Hey you cheese girl
Nozipho	What do you want from me now?
Mlungisi	(laughing) Oh wow cheese girl has changed to stupid girl. Nxa. Bring all your money to me now. I need to smoke
Nozipho	I……don't….have money
Mlungisi	(slapping cheese girl) Don't make me a fool. Instead of your money only, bring me your money and cell phone.
Nozipho	(crying) I……
Mlungisi	You still explaining. Hey stupid girl, your money and cell phone now
NARRATOR Lucky	Cheese girl gave all of her lunch money and her cell phone

Mlungisi	To cheese girl: Now that wasn't hard was it (laughs)
NARRATOR Lucky	Cheese girl reported the matter to the teacher. Mastermind denied everything. There was no evidence so the matter could not go forward.
NARRATOR Lucky	Before period 6 when cheese girl realised that nothing could be done she thought of another way she could seek revenge. She decided to go the leader of the other gang at school called the Dope Dogz. She goes to them and she finds them gambling.
Nozipho	Salute bo lova
Mnotho	What did you say?
Nozipho	I said salute bo lova
Mnotho	If you ever greet us again like that I will make sure your life knows no peace la esgele
Nozipho	Ok Ok I am never greeting you like that again. I need you guys to do me a favour. It's complicated but I am sure you guys are going to do it.
Litha	As long as you are going to join the gang
Nozipho	Definitely, besides I am loaded with cash so I think I will join the gang. I need you guys to sort out the masters of swag for me because they embarrassed me and took my money and cell phone from me.
Mnotho	They did what? Yazi yin. We sort them very quick on Thursday after school.
Litha	For sure boss. I will organise Uyazi nawe.
Mnotho	Sharp. In the meantime give me the dice. Put your money down and bet on your number cheese girl. Azishe

Narrator Lucky	Cheese girl joins them in gambling and they all continue to gamble until after school. Thursday afternoon, masters of swag and dope dogz are fighting in front of the whole school. One of the grade 8 learners lost her nike bag. It's Friday morning.
Luyanda	Class, I want to see those who were absent yesterday.
Bongiwe	Even if I have a valid reason for my absence mam. I had to go to the clinic mam.
Luyanda	I hear you but you will have to face the consequences.
Bongiwe	Well mam can I go fetch my mom?
	POEM is read
Narrator Lucky	The issues of violence continued in school until one of the learners recited their poem at assembly about school violence and how badly it affects learners and teachers. All the learners and teachers were touched even the gang members. Two days later in class
Luyanda	Good morning class. My children I know I have been harsh to you and I am sorry for that. I should have listened to your reasons first before you faced the consequences.
Bongiwe	We forgive you
Phindile	Well class, we as the masters of swag also apologise for everything we have put you through and to show that we are deeply sorry we would like to start an awareness campaign at school about how violence affects all of us.
Narrator Lucky	The masters of swag and dope dogz forgive each other.
Mandisa	Class, I would like to come clean. Mam, every day at home my father beats my mother. Every chance he gets, he controls us. He makes sure we do what he wants. My mother is too scared to report him. Because of all these

	issues at home I take out my frustrations on the other learners in school.
Luyanda	Wow, thank you for sharing your touching story. I also grew up in a home where violence was a big problem. Each one of us needs to decide whether to be violent or not. It begins with us. The masters of swag are right. We need to start a campaign to raise awareness and do something about school violence because it affects all of us. If we don't make a stand, nobody will.
	THE ACTION GROUP CLAPS
Narrator Lucky	Everyone in class were clapping. The masters of swag and dope dogz created an awareness campaign about school violence with the help of the teachers. This is our school and we should be proud of it. We should also ensure that the environment inside and outside the classroom is clean and presentable. We can't expect others to take care of our school if we ourselves don't bother about it. The time to change is now
	THE END