DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
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REDUCING VIOLENCE THROUGH THE SEED OF GREATNESS YOUTH PROGRAMME IN EMPANGENI

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management Science: Public Management (Peacebuilding) in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis herewith submitted for the Master's in Public Administration – Peace Studies at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) is my original work and has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other university.

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Happiness Sonto Mthabela

APPROVED FOR FINAL SUBMISSION

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Simóne Plüg

ABSTRACT

Youth violence is a major issue all over the world. The prevalence and patterns of youth violence are also common in South Africa, where young people are regularly exposed to violence in their families, schools, and communities. Youth violence can lead to numerous health consequences, including increased rates of depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, suicide, anxiety and premature death. Young people who are exposed to violence at such a young age are more likely to become involved in violent cycles, both as repeat victims and as potential perpetrators of violence, or develop other antisocial behaviour. Given the extent of youth violence, unless drastic intervention strategies succeed in breaking the cycles of violence, levels of violence are only likely to rise over time.

This study aimed to uncover, understand, and respond to experiences of violence that exist amongst the youth of Empangeni in Northern KZN, by raising awareness of peacebuilding approaches and emphasising how youth involvement in peacebuilding programmes can provide lasting solutions. This study focused on youth from The Seed of Greatness Youth Programme, a youth organization based in the Empangeni area, and adopted a Participatory Action Research approach to engage youth affected by the problem of violence in building a peaceful community.

The qualitative research approach was utilised to obtain detailed and rich data. The data was collected through face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The information collected was audio recorded and then transcribed. After transcribing, the data was analysed and themes and sub-themes were derived from the collected information. The study reveals that the most prevalent forms of violence youth are experiencing in Empangeni are physical violence and gender-based violence. The main causes of violence were found to be substance abuse, peer influence, ongoing exposure to violence and a lack of economic opportunities. Findings also highlighted the perceptions of the effects of violence which were found to be PTSD and depression, development of coping strategies among victims, vigilantism and desensitisation to violence.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the participants, a training workshop aimed at reducing key factors linked to violence was designed, implemented and evaluated. The Participatory Action Research method proved to be an extremely effective approach for this study. The process allowed the youth of Empangeni to be key role players in the research and to participate in all the stages of the research process with the purpose of creating social change. This involvement made youth feel valued which, in turn, yielded positive results as their involvement and participation in the project increased. The insight and experience acquired through the participatory action research process was valuable for both the researcher and youth in that both learned from each other through the sharing of knowledge in the research process.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Beauty Sithole and the late Abraham Sithole, who taught me the value of education even though they had no formal qualifications.

My dear husband, Phumlani Mthabela for his love, support and encouragement throughout this journey, mostly for supporting my vision.

My lovely children, Mandisa, Nomfundo and Bandile for always being my number one cheerleaders, for their understanding, patience, and unconditional support. I hope this study inspires them to put much effort in their studies and understand that hard work and sacrifice pays off.

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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background of the study

Youth violence is a growing challenge that many countries, including South Africa, are facing. According to the World Health Organization's (2014) global status report on violence prevention, violence is the cause of over 1.3 million deaths each year, accounting for 2.5% of global mortality. According to the report, violence is the fourth largest cause of death for those aged between 15 and 44 worldwide. In 2000, an estimated 199,000 youth homicides (9.2 per 100,000 population) occurred worldwide. This amounts to an average of 565 people, aged 10 to 29 years, who die every day as a result of interpersonal violence (Krug *et al.* 2002).

According to Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes (2012), anyone who lives in South Africa is aware of the severity of the problem of violence. STATS SA (Victims of Crime Survey 2019/20) used comparable administrative data obtained from the South African Police Service (SAPS) to survey household and individual data that provides insight regarding the nature of crime and violence in South Africa. Their study is valuable for understanding youth violence since it gives an estimate of the percentage of all households and persons over the age of 16 that are victims of violent crime. Their survey also gives an indication of the state of the victims in relation to how safe they feel.

According to STATS SA (Victims of Crime Survey 2019/20), there is a large concern regarding the frequency of experienced offences that involve the threat or use of violence. Overall, 5.3% (housebreakings), 0.8% (home robberies), 0.5% (theft of motor vehicles), 0.3% (deliberate property damage), 0.3% (assaults), 0.1% (murders), and 0.1% (sexual offences) were recorded in the survey. Housebreaking was reported by the highest percentage of households (7.1%) in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and the lowest

percentage (3.5%) in Limpopo. Weapons were used in 47.1% (guns) and 34.8% (knives) of home robberies. The survey indicated that persons aged 16 and older experienced offences as follows: 2.2% (theft of personal property), 1.1% (robberies), 0.6% (assaults), 0.2% (hijackings), and 0.1% (sexual offences, including rape and grabbing or touching without one's consent). The report also indicated a correlation between age and vulnerability, highlighting that young people tend to be most likely to experience a loss of personal property through theft. Furthermore:

> [More than half (53.6%) of the assaults were committed by someone close, such as a relative or other household member and about 29.8% of the assaults were committed by unknown persons. Although the proportion of individuals who felt safe walking in their neighbourhoods and at night increased from 35.1% in 2018/19 to 41.8% in 2019/20, a larger proportion of females felt unsafe walking alone at night in their neighbourhoods compared to males (Victims of Crime Survey 2019/20).

Victimisation, crime, and violence are all too common experiences for "a significant number of South Africans, particularly young South Africans" (Pelser 2008: 6).The United Nations considers "youth" to be between 15 and 24 years old; however, the South African National Youth Policy uses a much broader definition of age and considers youth to be between the ages of 14 and 35. Harmful behaviours leading to violence can start early when a person is growing up and continue into young adulthood. Youth violence can cause both emotional and physical harm. Some of the behaviour associated with youth violence can lead to serious injuries or even death. Youth violence has a major impact on the well-being of young people all over the world, including South Africa. It is a challenge that has serious implications for individuals, families, communities, and societies. On an individual level, violence has profound and often lifelong consequences on an individual's emotional, psychological and social functioning. Youth violence can impact an individual's school and job performance; mental and physical health; social skills; community safety; and, eventually, a country's social and economic development (Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes 2012),

It is critical to understand violence in South Africa from a historical perspective. During the apartheid era, the White population dominated South Africa politically, socially, legally, and economically. Under the regime, racial segregation, oppression, and

discriminatory laws forced different races to live and develop separately. The laws led to violations of human rights and also to violence and many deaths. Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes (2012: 4) stated that:

> South African history is steeped in violence, from pre-colonial times through colonisation, slavery, and apartheid, to the period of resistance and liberation when many thousands of black youths were subject to state violence and white youths were conscripted to exert the force required to sustain the system of white privilege and domination.

These structural violence practices by the apartheid government resulted in increasing levels of inequality and direct violence. Galtung (1969: 170-171) explained that direct violence involves physical harm to another person and that structural violence is built into the way societies are structured and manifests itself as unequal power dynamics and unequal life opportunities, for example, poverty and discrimination.

Apartheid was abolished in 1994, and the African National Congress (ANC) became the first political party in history to be democratically elected by all South Africans. The years of apartheid (1948–1994) presented the new government and administration with some significant challenges. While apartheid was abolished, its traces and high levels of interpersonal violence remain in society (Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes 2012: 4; Norman *et al.* 2007: 695). This is particularly evident for the generation of young people born in 1994 or later, “born-frees”, which form part of this study. These 27 million young people (who comprise half of South Africa’s population) have been born into one of the world’s most violent cultures, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations (2015). They are perpetrators as well as victims. Although they have been born free and are not directly affected by apartheid, they continue to experience apartheid-related conditions such as poor living conditions, child-headed homes, unemployment, HIV, a lack of resources, and poor education. These conditions have resulted in violence and criminality. In addition, the use of guns during the apartheid era was associated with liberation and represented power for young men. With the transition to democracy, many young men who, due to inequalities of the past, had no education and limited job opportunities, turned to crime, which often included the use of violence (Burton 2007: 42). According to Fleetwood (2012), the challenges that today’s youth face in South Africa in overcoming the legacy of

apartheid are immense. Fleetwood argued that “the apartheid period left a legacy of socio-economic inequality, socio-spatial divisions and psychological scars, all of which continue to connect persistently to race” (Fleetwood 2012: 2). The present study was conducted using young people from the Seed of Greatness (SOG) Youth Programme, a youth organisation based in Empangeni, in the North Coast, in KZN. Young people in Empangeni today still face continuing conditions of violence. They, as the majority of South African youth, face challenges such as poverty, poor education, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, violence, crime, and unemployment. The 2017/2018 Umhlathuze Municipality (where Empangeni is situated) Integrated Development Plan specifically identified youth unemployment, increased incidents of HIV/AIDS, and increasing levels of violent crime as some of the challenges that are affecting youth in the area. In their study, Jarstad and Hoglund (2015) identified Empangeni as one of the “hotspot” areas affected by political violence either during apartheid or after the 1994 watershed election. They mentioned that all interviewees in their study had directly experienced violence. They further added that the political parties (ANC and Inkatha) as well as state forces carried out violence. The participants in Jarstad and Hoglund’s study mentioned that they had been targets of physical violence, including being beaten and stabbed or having their houses burned down.

According to Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes (2012), South Africa is facing a major challenge concerning young people’s involvement in violence, but they believe that there is much that can be done to address this issue. Most significantly, it requires the will to work with young people. To help youth overcome the majority of the social ills that may influence their involvement in violence, programmes that allow them to develop new skills and attitudes that can contribute to the development of a culture of peace and create peaceful societies are required. This study focuses on participatory action research where youth from the SOG Youth Programme explored their understanding and experiences of violence. Through their collaborative involvement, these young individuals developed and implemented a peacebuilding programme that hopes to create positive change in their community and transform the current or existing culture of violence into a culture of peace. Through action research (AR) with the participants from the SOG Youth Programme, this study drew on the youth’s needs

and experiences in the programme, allowing them to be social change agents and facilitate transformation in their community. AR, also known as participatory action research (PAR), is among the few research techniques that takes into account concepts of involvement, reflection, empowerment, and the interests of people who want to better their social situation (Berg 2004: 195-196). Berg further stated that in AR, “the researcher is a partner with the study population, thus, this type of research is considerably more value-laden than other more traditional research roles and endeavours” (Berg 2004: 202).

Dr. Nelson Mandela’s foreword statement in the World Report on Violence and Health (Krug *et al.* 2002: 1) involved the following message:

> We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in any society, a life free from violence and fear. In order to ensure this, we must be tireless in our efforts not only to attain peace, justice and prosperity for countries, but also for communities and members of the same family. We must address the roots of violence. Only then will we transform the past century’s legacy from a crushing burden into a cautionary lesson.

In line with this message, this study hopes to address youth’s experiences of violence and promote change towards a more peaceful and less fearful community in Empangeni.

1.2 Research Problem

Young people face many challenges, including family issues, pressure from social media and peers, substance abuse, crime and violence, and a lack of programmes that provide young people with essential knowledge and skills that will assist them in resolving societal challenges. When the SOG Youth Programme was founded in 2016, the main objective was to create a space and environment where youth felt free to share their struggles, challenges, fears, dreams, and hopes while being afforded a nurturing environment where they could learn new skills and knowledge allowing them to cultivate a positive self-image, self-control, and decision-making abilities. While the programme assisted youth through various workshops and engagements to tackle social issues affecting them and the community, most of these engagements were

planned and organised by the researcher, the founder. Youth have, however, never been exposed to or involved in designing and implementing their own intervention programme aimed at bringing about change in their community.

During the engagements, the youth brought up the issue of violence in the community on a number of occasions and expressed how this issue was affecting their wellbeing. The motivational factor for carrying out this research project was based not only on the concerns about the issue of violence as raised by the youth but also on a heartfelt personal desire to see the youth of Empangeni work together in a project that would transform them, resulting in every young person becoming encouraged to choose a path that does not support violent activities. PAR was the most suitable method to achieve this since it provided youth a space for meaningful involvement and participation by allowing them to be actively and directly involved in all the different stages of the research, including designing and implementing an intervention programme of their own aimed at reducing violence in the community. When young people commit to join hands and work together, there is hope that they will effect a change that will bring sustainable peace to the community.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of the study is to uncover, understand, and respond to the experiences of violence that exist amongst the youth of Empangeni in northern KZN by raising awareness of peacebuilding approaches and emphasising how youth involvement in peacebuilding programmes can provide lasting solutions. This research addresses the following specific research objectives:

(a) To identify the types and causes of violence experienced by the youth in Empangeni
(b) To design and implement a youth awareness programme that will help to reduce youth violence in Empangeni
(c) To evaluate the effectiveness of the designed and implemented awareness programme in reducing violence

The following questions drove this research study:

(a) What are the types and causes of violence experienced by the youth in Empangeni?
(b) What type of peacebuilding intervention can be designed and implemented, together with young people in the SOG Programme, to reduce youth violence in Empangeni?
(c) How effective is this peacebuilding intervention, designed and implemented, in reducing youth violence in Empangeni?

1.4 Research Methodology

The research followed the PAR approach and adopted a qualitative research methodology to meet the study's objectives. PAR ensures that the research process is a collaborative one from the initial stage of the research to the end. According to Fossey et al. (2002), “qualitative research seeks to address questions that concern developing an understanding of the meaning and experience of human lives and social worlds”. Qualitative research is stated to be a more natural approach because it investigates phenomena in context-specific settings (Dhingra and Dhingra 2012: 49). One of the goals of qualitative research is to understand human experience (Silverman 2020: 3). As a result, this was the most suitable approach for gathering information about the perceptions and experiences of youth violence in Empangeni.

Data was collected using a combination of individual interviews and focus group discussions. Focus group discussions were used to understand the types and causes of violence experienced by the youth in Empangeni. As a result, the researcher was able to obtain in-depth contextual information regarding the experiences of young people. Face-to-face interviews were used to probe further, at an individual level, allowing the youth to share their understanding of violence in the community in a more intimate or personal space. The findings influenced the third phase of this study which incorporated a collaborative effort to design and implement a training workshop intervention.

Thematic analysis was used to group and analyse the qualitative data that was collected. Thematic analysis enabled the identification of relevant patterns across all collected data as well as the formulation of answers to the research problems.

1.5 Limitations of the study

Simone and Goes (2013) stated that every study has limitations, which are occurrences and conditions that the researcher cannot control. These conditions or influences can affect the study outcome. A major limitation came from the research study being carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. This posed a major challenge in following the planned programme since at the time that the researcher was supposed to commence the field work, the country was placed under level 5 lockdown. Since the study follows PAR this meant data collection was only to take place when the restrictions were relaxed and during permissible lockdown levels to allow interaction with participants during interviews and focus group discussions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic there were so many uncertainties with lockdown levels which caused the study to encounter time and resource constraints. At times a date would be set for fieldwork and would later have to be rescheduled when the lockdown restrictions had been amended. These frequent time intervals and changes influenced the participants' level of interest in the project and had a significant effect on attendance.

When the restrictions were finally relaxed to allow field work to commence, there was also another resource constraint that caused another delay in the study. The venue for which the researcher had the gatekeeper's letter was no longer accessible and suitable due to limited space to ensure proper social distancing. After some time, another suitable space was found. This also caused a major delay.

The study also incurred extra costs that the researcher had not budgeted for. The researcher had to take necessary safety precautions, which involved extra costs,

including purchasing a temperature scanner and printing screening COVID-19 material information sheets for the participants. The researcher also had to purchase sanitisers for all the surfaces in the venue, hand sanitisers for the participants, and additional masks in case the participants came to the venue without masks.

Although the interviews were conducted under level 3 lockdown restrictions, another challenge encountered was when participants were approached to participate in the interviews, they were hesitant to leave their homes for fear of contracting the virus. The richness of having face-to-face interviews, in-person focus groups, and actual observations was also challenged by the use of facial masks since it was not easy to observe facial expressions.

Another limitation was that the study's third objective, which was to evaluate the effectiveness of the awareness programme designed and implemented to reduce violence, was measured based on its short-term impact. Since the project was conducted mainly for academic purposes, due to timelines and time constraints, the project evaluation was conducted immediately after the end of the training workshop. With the uncertainties regarding the lockdown level, it was going to be a challenge to organise a different date for the evaluation process. Participants were therefore not given enough time to fully process what they had learned and reflect on the experience. Based on the participants' responses and feedback, it would be insightful to see the long-term impact of the intervention and assess the possible positive attitudes and behavioural changes in the youth over time.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

Delimitations are ideally limitations or boundaries set by the researcher for the study. According to Simon and Goes (2013), these concepts include the theoretical framework, research questions, objectives, and the population that the researcher has chosen their sample from. A researcher may decide to set boundaries such that the study's aims and objectives do not become unrealistic.

The scope of the study was limited to young people in the Empangeni area alone. Thus, the findings are representative of only the youth in this area. As a result, the study findings, therefore, cannot be generalised more widely. This is consistent with most qualitative research, where the overall aim is to develop an in-depth and complex understanding of a small group of people and not to make broad generalisations. The findings of this study connect with areas of similarities and differences in the research area more broadly, thus highlighting their wider applicability.

1.7 Overview of Chapters

Chapter One

This chapter contains the introduction, background of the study, and research problems. Other elements contained in this chapter include the research motivation, aim and objectives of the study, the research question, methodology, study limitations and delimitations, and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two

This chapter explores key literature sources in the research field, focusing on conflict, violence, and peace theories. Furthermore, in trying to understand youth and violent behaviours, the researcher unpacked the role of youth as victims of violence and perpetrators of violence. Bronfenbrenner's ecological development theory investigates how environmental factors influence a person's development in order to better understand how youth are influenced by their surroundings. Finally, understanding the meaning of peacebuilding with reference to the potential of youth as peacebuilders was explored.

Chapter Three

This chapter discusses the conflict transformation theory and the youth participation theory, both of which serve as guiding theories for the study. The conflict transformation theory, influenced by Lederach (2003), is important in this study since it goes beyond conflict management and conflict resolution. Instead, it focuses mainly on addressing the underlying root causes of conflict and emphasising attitudes leading

to the transformation of social issues in the long term. The youth participation theory discusses two models, Hart's ladder of youth's participation and Shier's pathways to participation, in order to explore ways of understanding youth participation in relation to peacebuilding.

Chapter Four

The purpose of chapter four is to explain the methodology used in this study, highlighting the adoption of a qualitative approach. The qualitative method enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the types and causes of violence experienced by the youth in Empangeni. The study used a PAR strategy to gather and analyse the experiences of youth who have witnessed or experienced violence in Empangeni as well as to find solutions.

The chapter also discusses sampling and population procedures, data collection methods (interviews and focus group discussions), data analysis (using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis), trustworthiness of data, ethical considerations, limitations and delimitations of the study, and it also presents the researcher's personal reflections.

Chapter Five

This chapter contains presentation of data collected during face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions accompanied by a detailed analysis. Key themes were identified, namely, forms of violence, the causes of violence, and the perceptions of the effects of violence.

Chapter Six

This chapter discusses the planning, designing, implementation, and evaluation of the training workshop aimed at reducing violence and developing peacebuilding strategies.

Chapter Seven

This chapter contains the study findings, personal reflections, conclusion, and summary of the study with recommendations for future researchers interested in pursuing this area of work.

CHAPTER TWO:
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature. It specifically covers the concepts of conflict, violence, and peace, as well as an understanding of youth development.

2.2 Concept of Conflict

People, by nature, differ in their personalities, gender, status, values, interests, and goals. With the world becoming increasingly diverse, people are becoming even more different in their interests in cultural values, politics, and religion (Turaev 2020). A clash of these prompts them to disagree, and, thus, conflicts are inevitable between human beings. One cannot argue with the fact that people will always hold different views about different aspects of life. Different authors have different understandings about the definition of conflict. One of the most influential works of conflict draws upon the theory of conflict by Galtung where he views conflict in terms of the ABC triangle (see Figure 2.1). (A) represents Attitudes, (B) Behaviour, and (C) Contradictory Goals (Galtung 1996: 72). Contradictory goals are defined as a clash of interests between parties. Attitudes are formed by the different parties' perceptions and misperceptions of one another or themselves and about their views around the conflict situation itself. Emotions such as fear, hatred, and anger often influence attitudes. Behaviour involves gestures signifying cooperation and conciliation or coercion and hostility. In Galtung's view, conflict is largely informed by these components, and all three have to be fully present for a conflict to exist.

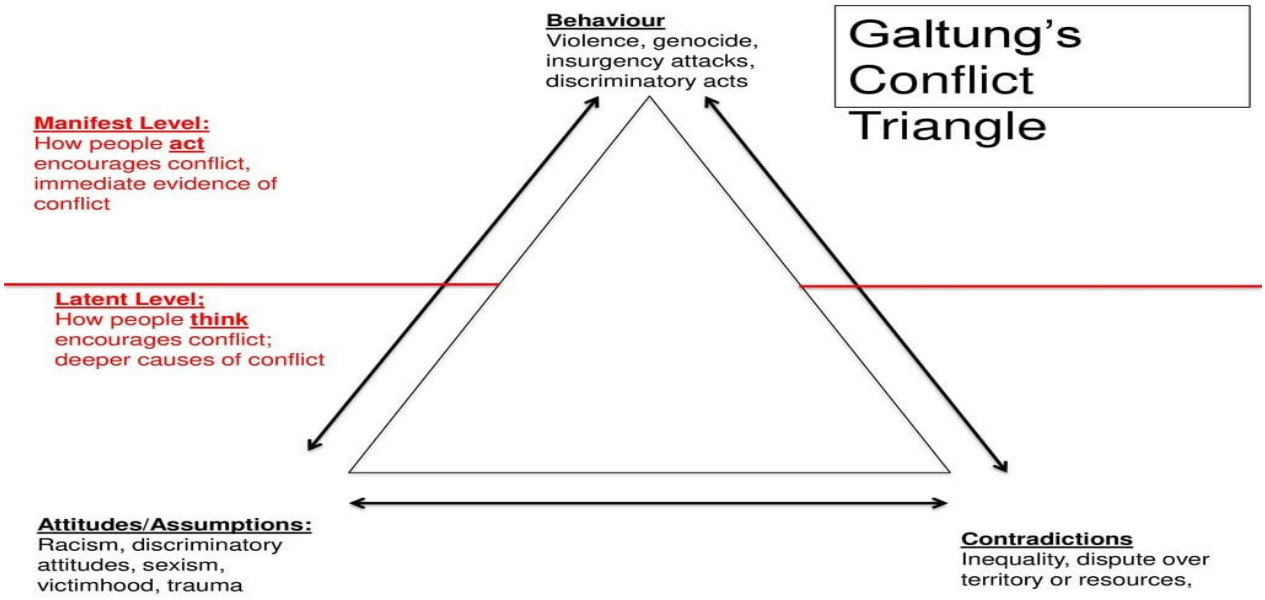

Figure 2.1: The Conflict Triangle (Schlenker and Goldman: 1978)

The triangle in Figure 2.1 illustrates a conflict's logical lifecycle. According to the conflict triangle, all, or groups in society, possess their goals and desires. When these are incompatible, such as a dispute over certain resources where one party is threatened by another party from obtaining what they desire, they lead to contradictions (point C). When contradictions arise, they lead to frustration. When frustrations arise, they could turn inward, resulting in changes in attitude (point A), such as bitterness, apathy, and/or distrust. Moreover, the frustration may turn outward causing changes in behaviour (point B), which can involve verbal or physical violence. In this case, the more blocked the goals of one group or individual are, the more likely that the conflict will become violent. To that end, the conflict triangle is illustrative of how individuals or groups can enter into conflict out of the desire to accomplish a certain goal sometime in the future. In this case, violent conflict remains the only logical option available to create change when all other options seem to be impossible. Galtung (1996) stressed that the need to end violence needs to begin by addressing the universal desire possessed by groups and individuals to control their own future. More so, once the failure to resolve conflict degenerates into violence, it becomes more difficult to end the violence because of myopic and narrow behavioural modelling.

In the conflict triangle, there are two levels of how to see and understand conflict. These are the latent and manifest levels. The manifest level is located on the upper part of the triangle and falls under the “Behaviour” point of the triangle. The manifest level refers to the observed, empirical, and conscious behaviour of the parties that are pushing a particular goal. Moreover, the manifest level also describes the extent to which people’s or groups’ acts affect and encourage conflict. This is the immediate cause of conflict. Factors that fall within the manifest level of the conflict triangle involve “the complaints, the accusations and hurtful comments, and the negotiations” (Wallensteen 2018: 38). On the other hand, the latent level is located in the bottom half of the triangle. It speaks to the inferred and subconscious behaviour of the players. The latent level of conflict can also be described as the deeper causes of conflict.

Ramsbotham, Miall and Woodhouse (2011: 9) defined *conflict* as a situation where one party believes that they have incompatible goals with the other party. Smith and Ellison (2012: 10) saw this view as the negative side of conflict. Furthermore, they acknowledged that conflict can have a positive side as it gives an opportunity for parties to discover that, as individuals, they might have different views and goals from others, and, therefore, they may embrace this difference. Del Felice and Wisler (2007: 6) believed that people embracing the fact that they are different gives an opportunity for change and growth. With the view that conflicts have a positive side and a negative side, based on how parties in conflict perceive each other’s views, conflicts can, therefore, have constructive (positive) or destructive (negative) results. Conflicts become constructive when they provide solutions to a problem, lead to unity, bring social change, and build understanding among people (Kriesberg 2008). Conflict, therefore, becomes destructive when it does not give solutions but instead deepens misunderstandings between people. Unresolved conflicts can have negative effects on the youth, including strained relationships with adults and peer groups, which can sometimes result in violence. Garaigordobil and Martínez-Valderrey (2015: 229) similarly agreed that peer violence is often a result of failing to resolve conflicts constructively.

With the view that people will generally have different views concerning different matters, conflict is not something that can easily be avoided. Galtung (2000 cited in Del Felice and Wisler 2007: 6) viewed conflict simply as a normal and natural part of life and relationships. This, however, does not take away that conflict has damaging and undesirable consequences for people and society. It is therefore necessary to seek ways to deal with conflict effectively. Three ways of dealing with conflict include conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation.

2.2.1. Conflict Management

The concept of conflict management does not necessarily end conflict but is concerned with how conflict must be handled to avoid damaging results to conflicting parties. According to Miall (2004: 3), "theories of conflict management perceive violent conflicts as the result of differences in viewpoints, values, ideas, and beliefs between communities". In Miall's view, resolving such conflicts is, therefore, understood to be unrealistic, and, therefore, conflict management serves as a strategy to manage and contain conflict. Conflict management is defined as follows:

> [Conflict management is] the constructive and positive management of difference and divergence. Rather than advocating methods for resolving conflict, [it] addresses the more practical question of managing conflict: how to deal with it constructively, how to bring opposing sides together in a cooperative process, and how to design a practical, achievable, cooperative system for the constructive management of difference (Miall 2004 cited in Bloomfield and Reilly 1998: 18).

2.2.2. Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution seeks to explore and address underlying causes of conflict and then to find solutions that will assist all parties involved in a conflict. According to Miall (2004: 3), conflict resolution theorists believe that if parties involved can be assisted in exploring, examining, and reinterpreting their viewpoints, they can easily transcend conflicts. To achieve this, Miall explained that conflict resolution focuses on third-party interventions, such as engaging with parties in conflict to investigate the fundamental causes of conflict, finding creative solutions, fostering new ideas, and forming new

partnerships. Conflict resolution is concerned with how parties in conflict, assisted by a third party through intervention, move away from being unwilling to compromise and being inflexible towards positive outcomes to ensure that parties rebuild their relationships (Miall 2004: 3).

2.2.3. Conflict Transformation

The fundamental principle of conflict transformation seeks to transform conflict from its root causes instead of managing and resolving conflict events. Conflict transformation focuses on restoring and rebuilding good relations between parties in conflict; therefore, it goes beyond conflict management and conflict resolution. The theory of conflict transformation is elaborated upon in the theoretical framework (Chapter Three) because of its ability to build relationships for youth in conflict situations. Miall (2004: 4) defined conflict transformation as a process of "engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict".

The Conflict Resolution Handbook addresses social and psychological processes pertaining to conflict situations and develops an understanding of these processes. The following four areas, namely, power, culture, personality, and communication, were highlighted in the handbook to understand the role that each plays in producing conflicts in relation to youth (Deutsch *et al.* 2011: 8-10).

2.2.4. Power

Deutsch *et al.* (2011: 121) defined *power* as the capability to bring about desired outcomes. They stated that the majority of conflicts are, directly or indirectly, influenced by power. Conflict is often used as a means of maintaining the balance or imbalance of power in relationships; therefore, most people commonly use power to influence conflict situations or as leverage for achieving their goals. Deutsch *et al.* continued to mention that power influences the type of conflicts to which people from different levels of power are likely to be exposed and the availability of processes and strategies to be employed. This can lead one to conclude that power has an advantage

to determine what is important, fair, and just in most conflict settings. The youth must be equipped with the necessary skills to understand how power influences conflict processes. This will help the youth to reflect on their behaviours when in positions of high or low power. It can also help the youth understand how to use power effectively in conflict situations while avoiding damaging the image of others.

Krauss (2021: 167) argued that “power is an elusive concept because it has so many manifestations.” This is so because every individual or group in society has a potential source of power of which they might be conscious or unconscious. Some power has no element of conflict while some can escalate or become diminished during conflict.

Structural power is derived from the resources that people bring to a conflict, whether they are legal or political realities. Personal power, on the other hand, is inherent in an individual’s personal attributes and traits, such as determination and perseverance, in order to equalise personal power imbalances. Han (2017: 69-70) argued that “changes in structural power usually require systemic fixes.”

Fairholm (1993) argued that conflict is a result of power and status imbalances. In the same manner, Rummel (1991: 88) stressed that these “power and status imbalances lead to conflict resolution which is the balancing of individual interests, capabilities, and wills.” Most research has revealed that in situations where power is relatively balanced, parties in conflict can best manage their conflict (Donohue and Kolt: 1992). Moreover, researchers such as Folger, Poole and Stutman (1984) established that if there is an imbalance in power, the chances of a constructive conflict resolution are dashed. An appropriate example of how imbalances lead to conflict can be drawn from pre-democracy South Africa. Before the 1994 elections took place, certain racial groups had no right to vote. Efforts to resolve these power imbalances that existed between the citizens and the government of that time resulted in one of the worst forms of destructive conflict, violence, and killings. In an organisational context, the same power imbalance led to the mine violence in the 1920s. The violent mine protests led to the conception of formal labour. To illustrate, a research study conducted by Pruitt and Rubin (1986) showed that the proper application of authority and power promotes

harmonisation and, as a result, reduces conflict; contrarily, the disproportionate measure of authority and power of a group with less influence could give rise to conflict. Based on the foregoing discussion, one can deduce that while power can lead to conflict, it is also an instrument for resolving conflict.

2.2.5. Culture

Every culture has its own core beliefs, values, and principles that are distinct from those of other cultures. According to Deutsch *et al.* (2011: 9), the culture in which individuals are embedded influences their experiences and behaviours in a conflict situation. Hofstede (1980: 25) stated that culture "sets the basic values and norms for a society." According to this scholar, the concept of culture involves five cultural dimensions (individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, power and distance, uncertainty and avoidance, and short-term versus long-term orientation) that could be used to differentiate between cultures. The argument here is that when individuals are dealing with conflict, they choose a conflict-handling technique that suits their cultural beliefs.

Koster and Gutauskaite (2019) argued that a culture fit is important in understanding why some management techniques are more effective than others in terms of employee work-related outcomes if these methods match the employees' cultural values. Similarly, Ng and Clercq (2021) established that in a conflict context, if the management practices available are not compatible with the cultures of the parties in conflict, the parties are likely to be dissatisfied and, as a result, become less likely to participate. Moreover, the notion of culture is imperative in that "adopting this fit logic we expect individuals to prefer conflict handling styles that allow these individuals to act in a way that is consistent with their cultural values and therewith within the respective cultural norms" (Moss and Ngu 2006: 75). Kok, Bakker and Groenewegen (2019: 1496) illustrated that if people do not perform according to their culture's mutual expectations and related preferred practices and cultural standards, these individuals could experience discomfort. Thus, to that end, the notion of culture in conflict resolution suggests that "individuals in general will prefer conflict handling styles that

are consistent with their cultural values" (Kok, Bakker and Groenewegen 2019: 1496). Since cultural backgrounds somehow influence how an individual views a certain situation, it is, therefore, important to understand different cultural perspectives. Isfahani, Teimouri and Abzari (2019: 266) found that "individuals in intercultural interaction are motivated to display preferences and behaviours that are consistent with their culture." When the youth try to understand the cultures that they interface with, they can identify where intercultural conflicts are most likely to happen and make efforts to ensure that this is managed positively. The youth also need training in cultural awareness to avoid cultural barriers that can create conflicts. This will also help the youth since, at some point, they will be expected to work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

2.2.6. Personality

People's personalities make them unique individuals. A set of different characteristics that people possess as individuals is what makes their personalities distinct and different from each other. Personality is another factor that gives rise to conflict. For the youth, this is particularly observed during the adolescence period. McLeod and Erikson (2008: 1) stated that during adolescence, youth search for their individuality and personal identity. They continued to state that during this period, adolescents become more independent. This independence means that one naturally separates from one's parents and develops one's own distinct personality. As the adolescent pushes for more individuality and independence, there is a possibility of a personality clash within the family system. This is mainly because the surrounding family environment, including the parents and the adolescent, might not always hold the same belief of what is appropriate and inappropriate. An example can be seen when adolescents begin to identify with their own personality and feel the urge to look and act differently. This change also usually causes a conflict of personality differences within the family system due to differences in opinions. The adolescence period, therefore, becomes an important stage since this is where the youth discover their distinct personalities and learn that other people have different personalities. It also helps them learn that depending on their personality traits, people differ in the way that

they view and handle conflicts. Deutsch *et al.* (2011: 353) stated that being aware of one's personality-driven behaviour tendencies is important such that a person can learn to control them in conflict situations when they are inappropriate.

Previous research has depended on the Big Five model of personality dimensions to investigate the impact of personality on conflict management styles. For instance, Caber *et al.* (2019) argued that personality characteristics are one of the drivers that determine one's conflict management style. To illustrate, these scholars used the Big Five model of personality dimensions to explain how personality traits influence management style. Moss and Ngu (2006: 76) found that "there is a clear relationship between the big five personality traits and how a person behaves and manages relations with others." The Big Five model of personality dimensions is shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Big Five model

The Big Five personality traits involve five traits: "Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Openness to experience, Emotional stability, and Conscientiousness" (Robbins *et al.* 2008: 98). Extroversion is a personality trait that describes someone who is friendly, sociable, and self-confident. Agreeableness is a personality trait that describes an individual who is "good-natured, cooperative and trusting." Conscientiousness is "a personality dimension that describes someone who is responsible, dependable, persistent, and organized". Emotional stability characterises a person as calm and self-confident (positive) as opposed to nervous and unsure (negative). Openness is "a

personality dimension that characterizes someone in terms of imagination, sensitivity, and curiosity." There is an agreement among researchers that the Big Five model of personality dimensions influences their choice of conflict-handling style alternatives. Antonioni (1998: 365) found that "Extroversion, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness, are positively related with integrating (collaborating) style of conflict handling." Additionally, Park and Antonioni (2007) found that "personality traits like extraversion and agreeableness are having significant relation with conflict handling style." Moreover, Ahmed *et al.* (2010) investigated the connection between personality dimensions and preferred conflict management styles. Their study found that there is a significant relationship between personality traits and conflict-handling styles chosen by individuals.

2.2.7. Communication

Most conflicts in people's lives come because of how people, directly or indirectly, communicate with others. Deutsch *et al.* (2011: 144) stated that whenever there is conflict, the prevailing view is that communication is always the correct way to proceed in order to establish understanding between parties in conflict. Although it is often not always guaranteed that good communication resolves conflicts, poor communication deepens misunderstandings and gives rise to conflicts. As noted with personality and conflict when the adolescent pushes for more individuality and independence, there is a possibility of a personality clash within their surrounding environment. When this happens, communication also becomes more complicated, which leads to conflict. This is due to the adolescent feeling the need to be recognised as an adult and ready to make their own decisions. The youth need to learn how to use good and effective communication skills in every situation that they encounter. Good communication skills assist the youth to express their opinions and ideas while considering the feelings of others.

2.3. Concept of Violence

2.3.1 Common Approaches to Defining Violence

In literature, there are three well-known approaches to defining the concept of violence. The exemplar approach, the social psychology approach, and the public health approach. Each approach present its own strengths and limitations. Despite the weaknesses and strengths found in each, components of all approaches are required for a complete, viable, functional scientific description.

2.3.1.1 Exemplar Approach

Violence is often defined using exemplars. For instance, the American Psychological Association (APA) website stated, “Violence is an extreme form of aggression, such as assault, rape or murder” (American Psychological Association 2020: 1). However, this definition cannot explain the meaning of the term “extreme”, the malevolence of the intent, the magnitude of the harm, whether it is murder, and if it includes or excludes manslaughter. Likewise, the most recent review in the media journal provided a bewildering range of exemplars: “The terms rape, sexual violence, and sexual abuse encompass many forms of violence, including sexual harassment and sexual trafficking” (Abrahams *et al*. 2014: 1648). From this definition, it is difficult to ascertain whether sexual harassment qualifies as rape or whether rape, sexual abuse, sexual violence are synonyms. Linville and Fischer (1993: 93) argued that the strength of the exemplar approach is that it implies a varied range of “acts that should be considered violence, and by inference might suggest some shared characteristics”. Nonetheless, the exemplar approach is the weakest of the approaches and is incapable of completely establishing limits around this phenomenon.

2.3.1.2 Social Psychology Approach

Another dominant definition of violence is the one found in social psychology and related disciplines which use the term “aggression” over and above “violence” (Parrot and Giancola 2007). The social psychology approach builds on the exemplar approach, but it does so with problematic elements. DeWell and other scholars provided an emblematic type of this approach and a popular difference between

violence and aggression. According to Anderson and Bushman (2002), aggression is "any behaviour intended to harm another person who does not want to be harmed," and they defined *violence* "as any aggressive act that has as its goal extreme physical harm, such as injury or death." To illustrate, the previous definition was proposed with an intention to advance Buss' (1961: 1) definition of violence as "a response that delivers noxious stimuli to another organism". However, advances in literature have since indicated that Buss' definition was not satisfactory. This is because the definition "could not exclude accidents or prosocial acts, such as the dentist causing mild pain to promote better long-term health" (Hamby 2017: 169). Parrot and Giancola (2007: 57) argued that "the strength of the social psychology approach is that, it presents some version of three of four key elements: intent, unwontedness, and harm". One significant limitation of the social psychological approach is linked to its reliance on "malicious intent"— that individuals intend to cause harm rather than simply act. Moreover, the social psychology approach has three main limitations: "(i) it draws the line between harm and extreme harm only by exemplars, leaving it undefined; (ii) it appears to be limited to physical harm; and (iii) it suggests a focus on immediate consequences". The majority of the harmful effects of violence, however, are usually long-term.

2.3.1.3 Public Health Approach

One of the most famous definitions of violence comes from the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO described 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" (Krug *et al.* 2002: 5). This description denotes the necessity to "include violence that does not necessarily result in injury or death, but that nonetheless poses a substantial burden on individuals, families, communities and health care systems worldwide." The strength of this definition lies in view of the fact that it clearly demonstrates harmful health impacts as an essential fundamental definition or element without emphasising one type of health impact over another. The WHO definition also circumvents the use of exemplars and

recognises the probabilistic nature of the link between the behaviour and the outcome of harm. Mercy (2003: 34) argued that:

> It is important that the WHO definition also refers to intentional acts that result in harm, and they clarify in the text that excludes accidents (tripping and falling onto someone is not violence) but includes reckless or negligent acts (such as shaking a baby, in their example), regardless of whether harming the baby was specifically intended.

However, one of the challenges with the WHO definition is that it suggests that only making use of physical force or power can result in violence. Krug et al. (2002) argued that the addition of "power" to the phrase "use of physical force" by WHO expands the nature and type of violent act and broadens the traditional understanding of violence to include acts emanating from a power relationship, such as threats and intimidation. Garofalo and Sigurvinsdóttir (2020) emphasized that the "use of power" includes both acts of omission or neglect and more clearly violent acts.

Dahlberg added that WHO furthermore classified violence into three related but different categories, namely, self-directed violence, interpersonal violence, and collective violence (Dahlberg 2007: 467):

- Self-directed violence: This category relates to violence directed towards oneself. It includes suicidal behaviour and self-abuse. Suicidal behaviour includes suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and completed suicides. Self-abuse involves a person harming themselves through substance abuse and engaging in violent activities and risky sexual behaviours.
- Interpersonal violence (IPV): This category relates to a person inflicting violence on another person. IPV is divided into two subcategories: (i) it can take place in an intimate relationship between intimate partners or between family members, and (ii) community violence that is violence by individuals who are not related to each other. IPV includes family violence, violence against women and children, abuse of the elderly, rape, and sexual assault by strangers. According to Krug *et al.* (2015: 1), IPV is the most prevalent cause of death among young people. They added that being exposed to IPV is closely linked with increased

health problems, that is, mental health, physical health, and reproductive health problems.

- Collective violence: This is a form of violence by a group such as nations, states, and organised political groups. It can either be violence in social, political, or economic forms. Political violence includes war and state violence committed by larger groups. Economic violence is an act of imposing economic restrictions or limiting access to crucial human services or creating and building economic divisions. This type of violence is influenced by economic gain with the purpose of disrupting economic activities.

Galtung's work has also been particularly useful in understanding violence. Galtung (1969) differentiated between two major types of violence, namely, direct violence and structural violence. Galtung later added cultural violence as the third type:

- *Direct or personal violence* is mostly understood as physical violence. This type of violence has an actor or perpetrator who can be identified. It is called personal violence because actors or perpetrators are human beings (Galtung 1969: 170). Self-directed violence, IPV, and collective violence can also be understood as direct violence.
- *Structural or indirect violence* has no actor, and, instead, the violence is built in the structures of society, thus preventing people from meeting their basic needs and perpetuating unequal life opportunities, for example, poverty, racism, sexism, and discrimination (Galtung 1969: 170-171). The apartheid system is an example of structural violence where policies gave advantages to one group over others, causing harm and even death. The apartheid government had structures in place to justify racial segregation and racial hierarchy that gave preference to the interests of people of a different colour.
- *Cultural violence* consists of the elements of culture that are accustomed to legitimising direct or structural violence. Religion, ideology, art, and law exemplify these aspects (Galtung 1990: 291).

2.3.2 Understanding Youth and Violent Behaviour

Del Felice and Wisler (2007: 9-10) argued that the youth can either be perceived as victims or perpetrators of violence. This section explores youth as victims and/or perpetrators of violence. The section also considers the factors that increase or decrease young people's likelihood to become victims and perpetrators of violence.

2.3.2.1 Youth as Victims of Violence

Youth victimisation is linked to various factors. The common risk factors, according to Leoschut and Burton (2006: 7), include harsh parenting practices, poverty, and poor health, absenteeism from school, association or affiliation with delinquent peers, poor education, and unemployment. They also added that family composition has been identified as a contributing factor to youth victimisation; that is, youth raised by single parents are significantly more likely to be victims. Burton (2007: 2) also mentioned that the youth's exposure to violence from a young age is another risk factor for youth victimisation. Youth who have been exposed to violence from an early age are more prone to become involved in violent cycles. Leoschut (2006: 10) agreed that youth who are exposed to violence are not only at risk of violent victimisation but also that this results in a number of other victimisations. Burton (2007: 47) stated that in schools, youth are victims of physical and sexual assaults, theft, bullying, cyberbullying stabbings, gangsterism, and drug and human trafficking. The school is not, however, the only place where youth face violence incidents. According to the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) 2005 National Youth Victimization study, youth have been victims of assault, robbery, threats, and theft in their residential areas and at home (Pelser 2008: 3). In addition, the youth in most communities often become victims of many forms of sexual assaults and intimate partner violence. Youth orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS often find themselves heading families when they are still physically and psychologically incapable to do so. This causes major disruptions in their lives and sometimes leads to them being without formal education and having few opportunities to take care of their families; thus, they ultimately become involved in crime and violent activities.

2.3.2.2 Youth as Perpetrators of Violence

During the apartheid era, violence was a common feature in society. According to Leoschut (2006: 9), the legacy of apartheid has led many South African families to use physical violence when solving conflicts in their homes. The history of violence is well documented. According to the 2018 Global Peace Index, South Africa is among one of the most violent, dangerous, and risky places on the planet. The nation ranks high in this regard owing to its past that has been characterised by spates of direct and structural violence. Structural violence in South Africa was used as a tool of power and governance by the apartheid government to repress and control the Black population. Maphumulo and Bhengu (2019) stressed that the apartheid government used violence from 1948 as part of its repertoire to achieve and maintain social and political control. The culture of violence initiated by the apartheid government has not waned away because of the coming of democracy in 1994. To illustrate, Boonzaier (2018) argued that the culture of violence is difficult to stop in South Africa, particularly because it has been legitimised and institutionalised by the apartheid government as a form of coercion.

This could imply that many young people are being raised in circumstances where violence is considered normal. When youth are socialised in an environment where violence is the norm, they find it easy to resort to violence when in conflict situations (Leoschut 2006: 10). According to Sellevold (2012: 21), it is common for youth who are school dropouts and unemployed to resort to criminal activities, including drugs and violence. This is because they find themselves without opportunities and few positive activities available to them. Del Felice and Wisler (2007: 10) agreed that "studies suggest that when youth—particularly young men—are uprooted, unemployed, and with few opportunities for positive engagement, they represent a ready pool of recruits for groups seeking to activate violence". They further stated that gangsters are the most common in countries where there are high unemployment rates, as their means of obtaining income is mostly from illegal activities (Del Felice and Wisler 2007: 11).

2.3.3 Factors Influencing Violence

According to Krug *et al.* (2002: 1085), there is no single reason that explains why violence occurs, and, notably, there are multiple factors that give rise to violence, each occurring at different levels. They used the four levels of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model representing this complexity, namely, individual, familial, communal, and societal factors. These four factors influence the behaviour to commit or not commit violence. The model is applied to violence to understand risk and resilience factors. Risk factors compromise a young person's right to safety while resilience factors interact with risk factors to influence their behaviour and decrease their likelihood to become perpetrators of violence (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 5).

2.3.3.1 Individual Factors

The individual factors involve biological and personal factors that impact a person's behaviour and raise their chances of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. This level includes impulsivity, gender, age, low education and income, a history of familial substance abuse, and a history of violence and abuse in the family (Dahlberg 2007: 477).

Familial drug use is also a contributing factor for youth substance use in the future (Kilpatrick *et al.* 2000: 8). Drug and alcohol use increases impulsivity and decreases self-control. Drugs are believed to change a person's perception about right and wrong. Research has indicated that when under the influence of drugs, some people can act in ways that they would not when sober (Burton, Leoschut and Bonora 2009: 96). Therefore, this means that the young person's ability to make sound decisions when under the influence of drugs or alcohol is affected. This is particularly observed where it becomes easier for youth under the influence of drugs to resort to violent behaviours to resolve conflicts. In using the 2010 report by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA), the WHO global status report on violence prevention, 2014, indicated that four out of every five youths in juvenile prisons had committed violent crimes while they were under the influence of drugs. The 2012 UNICEF report titled *Violence against children in South Africa* indicated that age and gender are other factors that are likely to make youth become vulnerable to violence.

With less capacity to protect themselves from adults, youth are usually at a greater risk of physical violence as compared to young adults. With regard to gender, girls experience higher levels of sexual abuse and harmful cultural practices, whereas boys are more likely to experience physical abuse. (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 6).

2.3.3.2 Relational Level

The relational level focuses on close relationships, such as those among family members, peers, and intimate partners. The social environment in which children are raised has a significant impact on their behavioural development over the years (Burton, Leoschut and Bonora 2009: 96). In living arrangements where children have little contact with parents or where they live in unstable homes and are left in the care of people who mistreat them, the children are also likely to become victims or perpetrators of violence (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 7). Burton (2007: 91) stated that according to developmental psychologists, exposure to such environments where role models and caregivers perform violent acts on children affects the person's development, including their violence behavioural patterns. According to Xia, Li and Liu (2018: 4), youth develop multifaceted relationships at various levels of the social systems during the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood. This includes relationships with their family, peers and their community. The type of environment that youth are exposed to when growing up direct them to develop certain behaviours. Growing up in a violent environment can be a determining factor that contributes to youth becoming perpetrators of violence and other antisocial behaviours (Burton 2007: 2). When youth are exposed to aggression and their own aggression is accepted and rewarded, their behaviour can slowly shift from being nonviolent to increasingly violent (Burtons 2007: 11). The adolescent, in most cases, struggles with peer acceptance and a desire to fit in. As a result, youth during this stage are likely to engage in self-destructive behaviours and activities with the desire to be accepted by peers. These activities may also include youth belonging to gangs that engage in violent behaviours. As a result, peer relationships that encourage, or involve, violence can significantly increase a young person's risk of becoming personally involved in violence themselves. Violence is also common between intimate partners. According to Lundgren and Amin (2015: S43), youth from teenage hood and early adulthood

onwards can be subjected to intimate partner violence, most often in the context of romantic relationships. This can include physical and sexual assaults and financial and emotional abuse, including controlling behaviours. Since intimate partner violence sometimes includes forced sex, there is an increased risk of exposure to, and contraction of, sexually transmitted diseases because partners in abusive relationships are frequently afraid to discuss condom use. Dahlberg (2007: 477) stated that because of the continuing relationship and daily interactions in the case of intimate partner violence, there is a likelihood of repeat abuse to victims.

2.3.3.3 Community Level

The community level is the third factor that explores the community context in which social relationships are deeply embedded. These include the school environment, workplace, and neighbourhoods. Dahlberg (2007: 477) stated that communities and neighbourhoods are faced with social issues such as drug trafficking, a high level of residential mobility, poverty, and high levels of unemployment, which often have a high risk of violence. According to Burton (2007: 92), gangsters and drug lords tend to be successful in their communities. Their success attracts the youth to become involved in violent criminal activities to gain power and money. Youth are also exposed to violence in educational settings, such as schools, where the environment tolerates these violent behaviours as part of “the school experience”. These comprise corporal punishment practices, bullying, sexual violence, and gender-based violence (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 7). The school is the environment where youth are supposed to be safe, but, instead, the number of conflicts and violent incidents in schools has increased. The 2012 National School Violence Study (NSVS) results undertaken by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) reveal that 12% of students had been threatened with violence by someone at school, 6% had been assaulted, 5% had been sexually assaulted or raped, and 5% had been robbed at school (Burton and Leoschut 2013). Violence in school has negative effects and can lead to youth engaging in risky behaviours, including drugs and alcohol. As a result of school violence, students may develop psychological issues such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, fear, and hopelessness. Sales of alcohol to underage youth in communities pose risks and have a negative impact on young people's livelihoods.

Difficulty in obtaining and effectively monitoring liquor licenses result in the proliferation of shebeens and other unlicensed liquor outlets, which exposes youth to risky behaviours and associated dangers in their communities (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 7).

2.3.3.4 Societal Level

The societal level examines the wider societal factors that influence whether violence is tolerated or prohibited. These sociocultural determinants include the criminal justice system's responsiveness, social and cultural norms regarding gender roles, the availability of weapons and firearms, the social welfare system's robustness, income inequality, and political instability (Krug *et al.* 2002: 1085).

In many societies, cultural norms about gender roles are learned and taught to a child from an early age. While boys are socialised to be strong, play rough, and be aggressive and dominant, they ultimately engage in violent behaviours to express their masculinity. Müller (2020: 142) stated that since gender roles are sometimes enforced by society, an individual can be compelled to do something not based on their preferences but on what others expect them to do or how to behave. According to Krug *et al.* (2002: 1086), social norms and values can also have an adverse impact on men, as men may perceive that they have a right to use their power to control and victimise women and children. Cultural practices that view children as the property of adults, including child marriage, also present a risk factor for violence, including intimate partner violence and a violation of human rights. Some families do not report child abuse and intimate partner violence as they view and believe that these are private matters only to be discussed privately within the family (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 8).

The influence of the criminal justice system's responsiveness of any country can create favourable/unfavourable environmental circumstances in which violence is accepted or inhibited. Many people believe that the law favours perpetrators over victims, and, in most cases, convictions take a lengthy process, and some do not happen at all. There is also a belief that those who have money can obtain the best

and highest-paid legal teams to ensure that they are not convicted. Without much of a lesson learned from breaking the law, one can continue to engage in more criminal and violent activities.

The availability of firearms is another factor influencing violence and is of great concern in society. Although some argue that they own firearms for self-protection, the availability of firearms in many societies has been linked to acts of violence. Cukier and Eagen (2018: 109) stated that research indicates that the availability of guns and weapons increases the risk of lethal violence, with incidents of attempted suicide more likely to become a success and assaults more likely to become homicides. Stroebe (2016: 1) agreed that the prevalence of guns is closely linked to high homicide rates and added that there is no evidence of a gun owner's protective impact, and, notably, gun owners are more likely to be murdered.

According to Krug *et al.* (2002: 1085-1086), while the above four levels of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model are used to provide a framework that helps to understand youth's risk and resilience factors regarding violence, they can also be applied in violence reduction and prevention. They stated that programmes focusing on the individual level encourage nonviolent behaviour and positive attitudes. Programmes can also include changing the behaviour of individuals who have been perpetrators of violence. Relationship-level approaches can be used to promote healthy relationships and influence interactions between families. Another approach can be of focusing on mentoring where a young person can have a supportive volunteer providing life skills, guidance, and support (Dahlberg 2007: 479). This can also help youth to become positive influences for their peers. Community-based efforts encouraging communities to stand together and fight violence also focus on victim support. Societal approaches focus on cultural and social norms and programmes around masculinity and gender equality. Active societal channels that allow and create channels to report women and children abuse lead to social contexts that are intolerant of violence and considerate towards the victims.

2.4 Understanding Youth Development

Most theories carry different views and analyses on an individual's life events and experiences that shape human behaviour at different levels of life. Several theories have been developed over the years to provide a better understanding of what influences development and what makes people act in specific ways. The objective of Lifespan Developments Theories is to provide an explanation of how an individual develops throughout their lifetime. Although development theories have this objective in common, which is constant, their approach and focus may differ. Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory uses an intrapersonal focus, summarising eight stages of psychosocial development, from infancy to adulthood. At each stage, a developing person encounters a psychosocial crisis that could have positive or negative results for personality development. Bronfenbrenner's ecological stage theory, on the other hand, focuses on the context of the developing person's environment, explaining how everything in their environment affects how they grow and develop. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) uses five sociocultural systems within which a human being interacts, interpersonally, over time. He stated that as a person develops, the interaction within these systems and environmental surroundings becomes more complex (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 7). This complexity can emerge as the child's physical and cognitive structures continue to grow and mature (Ryan 2001: 1). Although Erickson organised his theory with reference to age-related stages, and Bronfenbrenner in systems, both theories provide a broad framework from which to view development throughout the entire lifespan.

The study explores these two theories of human development in relation to youth and their implications, particularly from the perspective of violence. Both these theories help in understanding the different parts of youth development and violent behaviour. According to Härkönen (2001: 5), "development is a series of such processes that intermediate the interaction of the qualities of a person and environment in order to produce permanency and change in a person's qualities in the course of life". According to Bronfenbrenner (1979: 3), development is a lifelong change "in how a person perceives and interacts with" their environment.

2.4.1 Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory

One of the major contributions in understanding human development was by the developmental psychologist Erik H. Erikson (1982). Erikson developed the theory of psychosocial development comprising eight stages. Each stage is defined by psychological needs in conflict with societal needs (McLeod and Erikson 2008: 1). According to Sacco (2013: 140), it is expected that a healthy developing human should advance through all the eight stages. Each stage builds up to a successful completion of the subsequent stage. McLeod and Erikson (2008: 1) stated that the successful completion of each development stage assists in the development of personal and *social capabilities.* They added that the unsuccessful completion of each stage can affect an individual's capability to complete the following stages and, therefore, lead to low self-esteem and feeling unworthy. Understanding the stages of development is essential to help individuals with skills to deal with conflicts associated with their current stage.

McLeod and Erikson (2008: 1-5) outlined the following eight psychosocial developmental stages and ages relating to each stage from infancy to late adulthood, as well as the conflicts or crises associated with each stage: Trust vs. Mistrust (birth–18 months – infancy), Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (18 months–3 years – toddler), Initiative vs. Guilt (3–5 years – preschool), Industry vs. Inferiority (5–13 years – school age), Identity vs. Identity confusion (13–21 years – adolescence), Intimacy vs. Isolation (21–39 years – young adulthood), Generativity vs. Stagnation (40–65 years – middle adulthood), and Integrity vs. Despair (65 years to death). Figure 2.3 shows the stages of the psychosocial crises with the approximate ages.

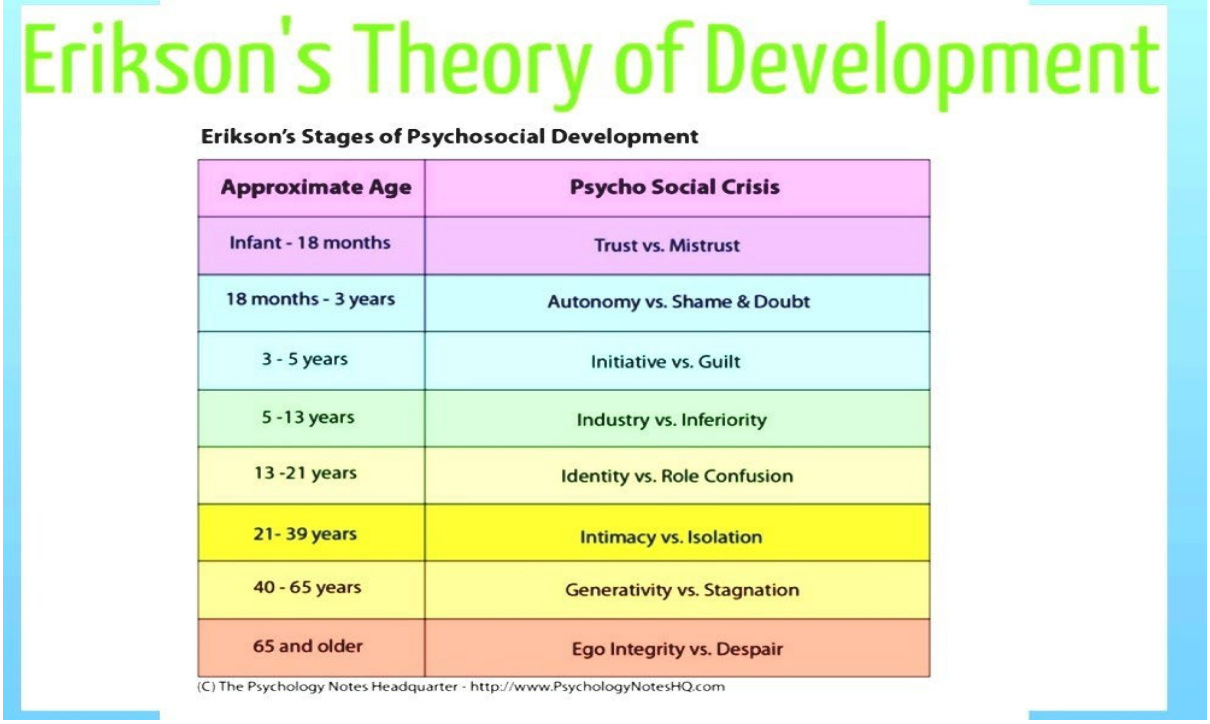

Figure 2.3: Erikson's stages of psychosocial development

Of relevance to this study are stages 5 to 6, characterised by Identity versus Role confusion (13–21 years – adolescence) and Intimacy versus Isolation (21–39 years – young adulthood). During the adolescence stage, youth experience identity roles versus confusion. Although Kemper (2005: 8) defined adolescence as a "period of transition between childhood and adulthood", she also mentioned that for youth, this transition is challenging as it comes with struggles, instability, hopes, and fears (Kemper 2005: 5). During this transition, adolescents discover and form their social identities. While searching for their identity, most adolescents often try to experiment with different lifestyles, which can result in the formation of either negative or positive identities. This can include experimenting with drugs, alcohol, and sex and trying to fit into various social groups, which can influence a young person either negatively or positively. This stage is, therefore, one of the most conflicting stages in human development. An adolescent failing to find and discover their social identity during the adolescence stage can lead to role confusion. Success in this stage leads to finding a stable sense of self and acceptance of others. Young adults experience the desire for intimacy versus isolation. Failure to attain intimacy can sometimes result in disappointment, isolation, or rejection (Arnett 2000: 473). According to Sacco (2013:

140), the degree of resolution (or lack of resolution) for each developmental stage develops one's identity and influences the degree of resolution (or lack of resolution) of other stages later in life. Youth can be either victims or perpetrators of violence or both, depending on their experiences between adolescence and young adulthood. Burton (2007: 1) mentioned that youth between the ages of 12 and 21 form a high percentage of both victims and perpetrators. Understanding this development theory can help youth identify and be familiar with conflicts associated with each developmental stage and, therefore, deal and negotiate challenges arising in the course of their development. This includes the will to be peace agents and forming positive identities that do not promote violence.

2.4.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Development Theory

Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed a framework that focuses on how the environment surrounding the developing person influences and affects their development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979: 3), the ecological environment is viewed as a collection of embedded structures, each one within the next, with the innermost level serving as the developing person's immediate surroundings.

According to Ryan (2001:1), Bronfenbrenner's theory examines a person's "development within the context of the system" of interactions that shape their surroundings. The interaction of various systems and factors in the developing person's body as well as their surrounding environment (family, community, and society) drives and directs their growth.

According to Härkönen (2001: 3), Bronfenbrenner's key understanding is that the "structure of society influences" all elements down to the smallest detail, and it is an important factor that determines a person's growth. Bronfenbrenner defined the theory as progressive throughout the entire existence of a human being (Johnson 2008: 1); therefore, changes to any of the layers will have an effect on all of the other layers (Ryan 2001: 1). The aspects of the environment influencing development include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The

ecological systems theory helps with an understanding of how youth are influenced by their social relationships and the world in which they live.

2.4.2.1 Microsystem

The microsystem comprises the immediate environment, such as family, peers, social groups, work colleagues, and church groups. This level consists of the activities and interpersonal relations that an individual has with these systems. According to Johnson (2008: 2), the microsystem level consists of a set of structures with which a person directly interacts. He added that the connection that lies between the individual and these structures is bidirectional. This can mean that the relationship between a young person and their parents has an impact on both parties. Each can be directly influenced by the other's behaviour. This layer also includes institutions and social groups that have an impact in the development of a young person. According to Peppler (2017), youth who participate in social groups and social activities acquire tools that allow them to develop emotionally and psychologically and, therefore, display positive approaches to life and positive changes in contrast to those who do not participate.

2.4.2.2. Mesosystem

The mesosystem is the link between the microsystems, such as interactions between a developing person's parents and teachers, neighbourhood and surrounding community, educational background and career opportunities, and political and economic environmental systems. Bronfenbrenner (1979: 209) defined the mesosystem as linkages between the microsystems, that is, connections between the surrounding environments in which the developing person resides. He further stated that at the microsystem level, activities are within one setting, whereas in the mesosystem, they take place across settings. The key factor is that what occurs in one microsystem influences what happens in another microsystem (Peppler 2017). An example is the connection between the developing person and their parents. A child who is rejected by their parents may have challenges in the beginning and developing positive relations with peers.

2.4.2.3 Exosystem

The exosystem consists of the settings where an individual is not an active participant but, nonetheless, is influenced by what occurs in that setting (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 237). Johnson's (2008: 3) definition is that the exosystem is constituted of the larger social systems where an individual is not directly involved. For example, youth who are exposed to community violence are more likely to acquire aggressive and violent behaviours.

2.4.2.4 Macrosystem

Macrosystems describe the culture or subculture in which individuals live (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 258). The effects at the macrosystem level impact interactions with the other layers – the microsystems, mesosystems, and exosystem (ibid.). Peppler (2017) stated that the macrosystem comprises the beliefs, values, and norms that influence a person within the environment.

The macrosystem layer is considered the outermost layer in a person's environmental layers (Ryan 2001: 2). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979: 258), macrosystems describe the culture or subculture in which individuals live. Ryan (2001: 2) also added that the outcomes of the microsystem's larger principles have a cascading effect on the other levels' interactions. Ryan gave an example that the cultural notion that parents are completely responsible for parenting their children has an impact on the systems in which parents function. This certainly becomes relevant when a parent's ability or inability to perform that responsibility for their children in the context of the child's microsystem is compromised.

2.4.2.5 Chronosystem

The chronosystem is concerned with historical events that may have an impact on a person's growth across time, such as divorce or death. Johnson (2008: 3) defined the chronosystem level as events that occur over short and long periods of time in a person's life, including any sociohistorical occurrences.

2.5 Concept of Peace

Violence is a major societal problem despite a person's cultural, economic, political, and religious background. Whether the violence occurs at home, in schools, or in the community, in some way or another, it affects the wellbeing of children, youth, families, and the community. The problem of increased youth violence is also a concern, especially when youth in disagreements or arguments learn that violence is an option. Therefore, teaching the youth that there are nonviolent and peaceful ways to resolve conflict is of vital importance. Peace teachings can help to address conflicts and violence issues. Peace has been explained in numerous ways by various authors in various fields. Galtung provides a broad definition, defining peace as the absence/reduction of all forms of violence (Galtung 1996: 9). As noted above, some conflicts can lead to violence. Galtung (1996: 9) gave the second definition that peace is nonviolent and that it creates conflict transformation. Galtung mentioned that to understand peace, it is crucial to know how conflicts can be transformed non-violently. This is useful, especially in youth conflict situations, as it gives guidance in teaching youth not only about the importance of conflict resolution but also about transforming relationships. To further give a more detailed understanding of peace, Galtung's mini peace theory (2007) gives two typologies of peace, namely, positive and negative peace. Negative peace defines peace as the absence of war, with examples being a ceasefire or the absence of direct violence. Direct forms of violence are physical, verbal, or psychological. Negative peace, therefore, means that something undesirable stopped happening, such as keeping parties apart, but there is still an element of fear. Positive peace, on the other hand, is filled with positive content, where social justice issues are addressed and where there is harmony and the restoration of relationships. Grewal (2003) gave the following differences between negative and positive peace:

- Negative peace – pessimistic, curative, peace not always by peaceful means
- Positive peace – structural integration, optimistic, preventive, peace by peaceful means

For negative peace, the pessimistic attitude is characterised by the belief that violence is a common occurrence and that achieving peace will not always occur by peaceful means. The optimistic aspect for positive peace is a nonviolent environment where peace is attained through peaceful means.

Within the peace context, there is the “culture of peace” concept. Peaceful societies are characterised by the culture of peace, which provides an environment where conflicts and misunderstandings are resolved in a constructive manner. The culture of peace brings a state where people feel safe, without fear or the threat of violence, where there is harmony, societal friendship, tolerance, and mutual understanding. Harris (2011: 122) stated that a culture of peace incorporates a set of values, beliefs, and behaviours that disapprove of and avoid violent actions by addressing root causes through negotiations among individuals, groups, nations, and states. On the contrary, the culture of violence brings fear, injustice, hostility, hatred, intolerance, misunderstanding, and the inability to resolve violent conflicts constructively. It is, therefore, a threat to human basic needs. Harris noted that one of the characteristics of a culture of violence is patriarchy, in contrast to the equal rights of women and men in the culture of peace (Harris 2011: 123). This element (male domination) in the culture of violence leads to one of the ordinary types of violence that the youth face, which is dating violence. Male dominion ship influences young men to believe that they have entitlement over their partners in an intimate relationship. The understanding and practices of the culture of peace can ensure behavioural patterns that promote tolerance, respect, gender equality, nonviolence, and peace amongst youth.

Harris (2011: 126-129) identified core tasks important to the development of the culture of peace, namely, conflict resolution skills and institutions, peace education, respectful relationships and friendship, and preventative peacebuilding.

2.5.1 Development of Culture of Peace

a. **Conflict Resolution Skills and Institutions**

Though it is impossible to avoid conflicts, Harris mentioned that people have a choice in how they handle conflicts. He added that there are strategies that may be learned and practised to assist conflicting parties in reaching a mutually acceptable outcome.

b. **Peace Education**

There is a belief that any violent reaction to a conflict situation is a learned behaviour; therefore, it is possible to unlearn this type of behaviour and learn new alternatives. Harris believes that peace education promotes attitudes and knowledge to help society with nonviolent techniques to resolve conflicts.

c. **Respectful Relationships and Friendship**

Respect in any relationship builds a sense of belonging, trust, and wellbeing. Respect also means acknowledging and embracing differences in values and opinions. Harris noted that respectful relationships and friendship reduce violent incidents.

d. **Preventative Peacebuilding**

According to Harris (2011: 127), structural violence interferes with and restricts people from meeting their basic needs and can be much more dangerous than physical violence. This type of violence kills slowly, emanating from the consequences of failing to address poverty issues, insecurity, racism, classism, and sexism. Harris believes that a culture of peace encourages societies to destroy social structures that are unjust and that promote inequalities and help move towards equality and justice for all citizens.

2.5.2 Peacebuilding

According to Herath (2016: 331), peacebuilding first became prominent in the 1970s through the work of Johan Galtung. In his 1976 paper, Galtung proposed three approaches to peace: peacekeeping, peace-making, and peacebuilding. Peace-making involves cooperative processes to stop an ongoing conflict and bring

conflicting parties to an agreement. The focus is that parties in conflict progress to nonviolent dialogue and reach a peaceful resolution (Herath 2016: 332). Peacekeeping involves attempts to enforce peace between groups or nations engaged in conflict, usually by the military forces, to ensure that they are kept away from each other (Galtung 1976: 282). Harris (2011: 128) mentioned that peacekeeping forces render their services to promote peacebuilding by becoming involved in basic construction, although they have received formal training for this work. As a result, Galtung developed a method that would both establish and promote long-term peace. According to Galtung, this entailed peacebuilding systems that addressed “the root causes of conflict” and supported local capacity for “peace management and conflict resolution” (Galtung 1976: 297).

Although Galtung has linked peacebuilding to the other two concepts (peace-making and peacekeeping), peacebuilding is the more relevant concept in this study since its process prevents the recurrence of violence by addressing fundamental causes and creates long-term peace.

According to Lederach (1997: 12), “Peacebuilding is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships”.

Herath (2016: 330) stated that peacebuilding is the development of positive personal and group relations across ethnic groups, religions, class, nationalities, and racial boundaries in order to resolve inequalities in a nonviolent manner and to transform structures in the environment that promote war. Herath (2016) further added that peacebuilding aims at creating an environment that prevents conflict from re-emerging. Herath (2016: 332-334) highlighted three essential dimensions to create such an environment, namely, the structural dimension, the relational dimension, and the personal dimension. All these aspects rely on the following different methods and techniques. Of the three main violence categories, namely, direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence, the structural dimension focuses on the structural

violence category. Since structural violence is built in structures (i.e., social, economic, and political), it is, therefore, important for parties in conflict to tackle the underlying causes of conflict from the structures to establish long-lasting peace. One of the many effects of violent conflict is that it damages relationships. The relational dimension of peacebuilding focuses on repairing and transforming broken relationships through reconciliation, forgiveness, building trust, and future vision. The personal dimension focuses the attention on preferable changes at the individual level after an experience of violence. In most cases, the psychological aspects of experienced violence and its negative consequences are ignored. This can lead sufferers to become victims or perpetrators of future violence. As a result, Herath (2016) stated that peacebuilding initiatives can play a role in providing or supporting peace programmes at various levels and in various areas of society.

In 2016, the United Nations Inter-Agency Network of Youth Development (IANYD) working group developed guiding principles on young people's participation in peacebuilding. The primary objective was to provide formative principles for policymakers to support programmes that encourage youth participation in building peace. Although there has been limited evidence on what is truly effective for youth in peacebuilding, the IANYD working group practice note identified the following programmes – youth leadership, youth organisations and associations, governance, and economy – as guiding principles to ensure meaningful youth participation and recognition in peacebuilding.

a. **Youth Leadership**

Youth leadership focuses on assisting youth to gain and develop skills and leadership competences to influence others and serve as role models. Youth leadership is crucial for the future of the community and the country. The core of youth leadership is to assist youth to respond to challenges they face in their communities. This includes working together with adults to address violence in their communities, and it ultimately prepares them to be change agents. Kress (2006: 51) defined "youth leadership as the involvement of youth in activities that meet their needs, with opportunities for planning and decision-making". Youth leadership programmes teach youth the skills

that they need on a personal level, such as empathy, positive self-esteem, tolerance, conflict resolution, independent thinking, confidence, decision-making, self-awareness, and taking responsibility. It also teaches youth social skills, such as building healthy relationships and the understanding of individual differences in personalities, especially when working in groups. All these skills are important to develop youth to take leadership roles in reducing violence and building peace in their society.

b. Youth Organisations and Associations

According to The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (2016), youth organisations and associations are ideally led by youth, although, in some cases, they are led by adults with youth involvement and participation. They help youth acquire and learn life skills. They also help youth to understand the world around them. In youth organisations and associations, young people are offered a space where they understand their role in the community. This is also a safe space where youth learn and address their common challenges. Since youth organisations and associations are closely connected to communities, they are ideal to be used as safe locations when there are violent conflicts (Herath 2016). Being part of a group helps youth develop holistically and gain self-confidence and self-esteem. The IANYD working group noted that when youth organisations are actively managed by youth without political interference, they become an effective and sustainable space for peacebuilding initiatives. The SOG Youth Programme, where the study was undertaken, is adult led, but youth take an active part in matters that affect them and their community.

c. Governance

Meaningful youth participation means creating a space where youth are offered a space to express their opinion to decision-makers rather than being viewed as victims or perpetrators of violence. Given the recognition and the opportunity to work with local and national governments, youth can play a highly consequential role to advance peacebuilding (Herath 2016). For this to be possible, policymakers need to change the

way that they view youth and recognise them as potential peacebuilders (The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development 2016).

d. **Economy**

The current generation of youth in most countries is particularly concerned about the increasing levels of poverty and unemployment. The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (2016) working group noted that youth in many countries and societies are facing challenges of high levels of unemployment rates due to the unavailability of necessary education and skills; as a result, they find it difficult to afford basic human needs. When youth are in a state where they cannot even afford basic needs, there is a risk for conflicts and violence. Youth are a part of society and, thus, need to be included in economic and social processes (Herath 2016). The IANYD working group concluded that the process of social inclusion for youth in various platforms is vital and can help to change the image of youth from being threats to peace to being positive peacebuilders.

2.5.3 Youth as Peacebuilders

Del Felice and Wisler (2007: 12) mentioned that despite youth commonly being viewed as violent, there is evidence that many of the youth are peaceful and have the potential to be agents of peace. They added that youth are actively involved in their communities, schools and universities, workplaces, sports teams, and youth groups. According to Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010: 100), although strategies that promote youth participation are gaining acknowledgment, the social inclusion of youth contribution is often an exception rather than a rule. In other words, youth research often uses ideas by adults overlooking their perspectives, viewpoints, and real-life experiences of youth. Del Felice and Wisler (2007: 12) suggested that youth should be viewed, studied, and considered as agents of constructive change. Berents and McEvoy-Levy (2015: 9) stated that “conflicts are reproduced through stories but the roles of youth in thinking through and knowledgeably observing and speaking up about peace is under-appreciated”. They also stressed the significance of considering youth an important part of peace studies and questioned engagements that limit the

involvement of youth in building peace. The study aims to reduce violence through the SOG Youth Programme in Empangeni and ultimately hopes that the participants will view themselves as agents of peace and peacebuilders in the community.

2.5.4 Summary and Identification of Gap in the Literature

The chapter looked at the key conceptual issues informing the study. More specifically, the chapter discussed the concepts of conflict, violence and peace. Understanding the different dimensions of conflict is important in order to explore ways of dealing with conflict effectively before it results in violence. Violence was discussed looking at different understandings in the literature, including the exemplar approach, the social psychology approach, and the public health approach. The study used Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model to understand multiple factors that give rise to violence. This theory focuses on how the environment and interactions surrounding the developing person influence, shape and affect their development within the context of the system. The concept of peace was explored using Galtung's two typologies of peace, namely, positive and negative peace. The peace concept also identified core tasks important to the development of the culture of peace, namely, conflict resolution skills and institutions, peace education, respectful relationships and friendship, and preventative peacebuilding.

The chapter ended by looking at the youth as peacebuilders. Youth have been discussed in many settings as victims and perpetrators of violence. Many young people are equally affected by various forms of cultural, direct, and structural violence but choose to act peacefully around those circumstances. There is therefore a gap in literature when it comes to youth who have a potential to affect social change and can be key actors in peacebuilding. When youth are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their willingness and potential through participation they can be become valuable assets in peacebuilding. This study aims to explore and develop this potential.

CHAPTER THREE:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Teaching youth that there are nonviolent and peaceful ways to resolve conflict is of vital importance. This chapter focuses on discussing two key approaches: the conflict transformation theory and the youth participation theory. Lederach (2003) provided the basic tenets of the conflict transformation theory, and this is discussed in so far as it helps in shedding light on how youth can be incorporated into peace initiatives. In addition, this chapter discusses various models that seek to explain youth participation and its relevance to peacebuilding.

3.2 Conflict Transformation Theory

The conflict transformation theory relies on the assumption that conflict is inherent in society. Conflicts arise as a result of the use and management of resources. The goal of conflict transformation is to change the systems, structures, and relationships that lead to violence and injustice.

According to Oxfam (2014: 3), “countries associated with violent conflicts and fragility typically have poor public services, weak and often corrupt or repressive forms of governance and justice as well as politically and economically marginalised communities and groups.” Consequently, the majority of their citizens may question the legitimacy of the state. This may lead to groups retaliating violently against the state’s repression and/or perceived injustice, resulting in social instability. The theory addresses systems and structures that encourage violent political and social conflict.

According to Reich (2006), “conflict transformation is a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to dealing with conflict in all of its forms”. Therefore, the main objective of conflict transformation is to create “lasting peace that is built on

sustainable investments in economic development and institutions as well as societal attitudes that foster peace" (Young 2010: 4).

Miall (2004: 3) contended that positive peace signifies *a continuous change* process in relationships, behavioural practices, characters, attitudes, and structures from the state of negative peace where there is no violence, such as when a ceasefire is enacted. Conflict transformation is, therefore, "a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of conflict" (Miall 2004: 4).

According to Lederach (2003), the conflict transformation theory regards peace as being entirely focused on, and anchored in, the quality and nature of relationships. This makes reference to how a society's social, political, and cultural interactions are structured. Peace, according to this point of view, is a "process-structure," a dynamic and evolving phenomenon. Botes (2003) described "conflict transformation as an intentional effort to address the natural rise of conflict through nonviolent approaches that address concerns and facilitate understanding, equality, and respect in relationships". To improve fairness and justice, youth need to participate in political systems and be afforded unique opportunities and platforms to express their views. This is critical, and particularly crucial and relevant to this study, because it seeks to investigate and explore how SOG youth can be involved in the implementation of peacebuilding projects or programs that will reduce violence in Empangeni.

The conflict transformation theory is mainly concerned with issues of social justice and identity, as well as wellbeing and political power-sharing, with the long-term goal of institutional and structural changes (Lederach: 2003). Long-term peace is achieved to a greater extent from within society rather than from outside experts, even though the latter may bring much-needed ideas and support. Miall (2004: 4) argued:

> Conflict transformation must actively envision, include, respect, and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting. This involves a new set of lenses through which we do not primarily 'see' the setting and the people in it as the 'problem' and the outsider as the 'answer'.

> Rather, we understand the long-term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting.

The above quote serves to buttress the point that conflict transformation occurs within the setting of conflict. In this case, it is clear that in a society rife with conflict, the best resource to ensure that there is conflict transformation is by utilising the people in the setting and their available avenues of peace. An external resource may be required for moderating and counselling. Lederach (2003: 30) states that processes that create change at an individual, relational, inter-group, and social-structural levels are required. Reich (2006: 10) argued that, for example, guided face-to-face interactions between conflicting particular groups or individuals should be used to facilitate change. This includes understanding and continuing to support youth dialogue as a central focus for effective change (Botes 2003). To illustrate, in conflict transformation processes, it is critical to equip participants with conflict-handling skills. This means that the youth must be taken through training programmes that will empower them with necessary abilities and skills, to understand and sustain dialogue and avoid the latter from deteriorating into another conflict.

To deal with violence, people must be able to dialogue, openly, with each other, to share information, find similar meaning, and establish possible solutions. This is important in peacebuilding in that when there is communication and an exchange of ideas, all parties in the conflict have an opportunity to be heard. When all are heard, there are chances for finding a common ground and ultimately moving towards a solution that may benefit all. Communication is vital so as to be able to keep the existing or alter the society's organisations. Thus, the youth must be involved in all the operations of governance.

Since individuals involved in a misunderstanding have some denial or refusal of feelings between themselves, transformation must first deal with changing behaviours and negative ways of thinking. The opportunity to meet and exchange definitions and ideas allows the parties to understand each other's position and ultimately change the way that they see their foes. When attitudes change, the conflict changes altogether

as a result of a desire to learn, understand, and eliminate the inability to cooperate or live peacefully among them.

The youth's plan of action must put into consideration elements that seek to deal with misunderstandings and conflict at various stages. Rather than simply removing or managing conflict, Lederach (2003) contends that conflict transformation must be identified and truths tested through discussion. Furthermore, it implies that misunderstandings in societies are the result of people's interactions, and that when this occurs, the situations, individuals, and connections that led to the conflict in the first place change. It is concerned with acquiring knowledge, advancement, and safekeeping towards transformation that happens by knowing the possibility of danger, hostility, deep or violent sorrow, and 'unwelcomeness' or difficulty to accept misunderstandings and conflict at an individual level. For conflict transformation to occur, the feelings mentioned above should be considered and openly addressed. When they are alleviated, there is a high possibility that those involved in conflict may alter their hostile perceptions and attitudes towards each other.

Conflict transformation involves a variety of participants, including institutions that enhance people's lives, non-profit organisations that deal with conflict resolution, countries and governments working together, and influential people in conflict-affected areas (Miall 2004). Organisations that care for the wellbeing of people empower people as well as advocate for the resolution of conflicts locally. The functions of countries are that of praising and encouraging the safekeeping of young people in societal groups, creating peace, advocating for conflict control, and educating participants as well as training them. The local youth, since they are the custodians of their local spaces and environment, hold the greatest responsibility, and they have a good chance at transforming their own conflicts.

3.3 Youth Participation Theory

Youth participation is critical to building peace because it gives room for interaction, which might lead to reconciliation, healing, and forgiveness amongst youth who might

have been previously victimised. Youth participation calls for innovative peace mechanisms (peacekeeping and peacebuilding) that promote what Galtung (1990) referred to as a positive culture of peace. According to Fusco and Heathfield (2015: 17), in most societies, youth are rarely given an opportunity to engage in and make decisions on matters that concern their needs, including building peace.

Berents and McEvoy-Levy (2015: 10) similarly argued that the contributions that youth make in peacebuilding are often not taken with serious consideration within the structures of peace. Del Felice and Wisler (2007: 2) also agreed that youth are underestimated as major key players for resolving conflicts by those who plan the course of action as well as professional scholars. Checkoway and Gutiérrez (2006: 2) stated that the media often portray youth as problems of society, associating them with deviance, including breaking the law or being involved in violent activities, being drug and alcohol users, and being school dropouts. Contrary to that view, they mentioned that youth participation views youth as change agents and citizens who are empowered with the proper knowledge to deal with problems in their communities and a duty to serve their communities (Checkoway and Gutiérrez 2006: 3).

Youth participation refers to an active involvement by the youth in matters affecting them and their communities (Checkoway and Guitierrez 2006). To that end, it strengthens personal and social development. This is so because when they are involved in programmes and other activities that are aimed at enhancing their competencies, the youth are equipped with skills and competencies that are needed for societal and personal development. On the other hand, when the youth are not involved and left to be idle, there are high chances of them losing focus. To illustrate, Mude (2014) outlined that the idleness of youth is the leading cause of their manipulation and vulnerable position to be influenced towards acts of violence. Checkoway and Gutiérrez (2006) stated that young people's participation focuses on involving youth attached to organisations that help people to take a certain course of action, which directly impacts on a way of living. This involves youth being given an opportunity to choose and plan local community developmental projects of their choice. They further added that youth institutions should not view young people as

service recipients but instead afford them an opportunity to be influential in decision-making. When youth are recognised and take part in decision-making, it strengthens their commitment to and management of their own affairs. It also enables both adults and youth to learn from each other, which brings effective solutions that benefit the whole community. Earlier declarations on the rights of minors have mostly focused on adults' responsibility to provide youth with the best possible care for their needs and to protect them from harm (Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010). They further added that the status of children and youth was reviewed by recognising them socially, economically, and politically through Article 12 of The Convention on the Rights of the Children. The Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC) asserts that minors and the youth must participate and share some views freely to influence decision-making and that they should have the opportunity to freely express themselves in courts regarding that which they might have problems with. South African authorities also have a legal obligation to actualise what is proper concerning issues affecting the young people, as per the CRC of 1989 (Bray and Moses 2011: 7). It is, therefore, clear that in South Africa, the recognition of rights entails the youth having the right to have access to societal endowments.

Youth participation has different dimensions and aspects for organising engagement efforts. These include youth-led approaches (where youth lead campaigns and look up to adults to provide administrative support), with the youth highlighting the cooperation of young people as well as the elderly as equal partners for building and leading campaigns; and adult-led approaches (where youth execute projects that are generally developed by adults). There are advantages and disadvantages of these two approaches. In youth-led approaches, there are greater levels of possessing the programme as well as decision-making by the youth. Checkoway and Gutierrez (2006: 7-8) argued that "in the youth-driven programmes, the youth experienced ownership and empowerment, and they reported development of leadership and planning skills". On the other hand, in youth–adult partnerships, young people decide on the courses of action to take and do not merely take actions that have been decided for them; what this means is that "youth have the responsibilities and are trusted to make decisions that directly influence team projects and outcomes". The downside of the youth–adult

partnership is that trust and compromise is always a challenge between adults and youths. There is a tendency among the adults to be condescending when they are dealing with the youth. They assume that the youth are children that need complete guidance. Checkoway and Gutiérrez (2006) stated that where adults involve youth in their agencies and form partnerships, the issue should not be whether programmes are facilitated by the young people, the elderly, or people from different generations, but instead that the youth's efforts and contributions are valued. This study adopted the youth–adult partnership approach to conflict resolution.

Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010: 12) provided an outline of various factors that contribute to successful youth participation. They stated that for youth to contribute meaningfully, no information should be withheld from them. They also need to be given the opportunity, safe space, empowerment, and conscientisation for them to be able to speak about the way that they view matters. Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010: 20) further classified youth participation into three levels, namely, being approached to be involved, working together, and involving children. Advice-based involvement mentions that adults initiate and manage projects but consult with youth to obtain their opinions in order to develop a knowledge base and to be aware of their lives and experiences. The collaborative participation level has a greater degree of intergenerational involvement. Youth and adults gain an opportunity for shared decision-making. Finally, the child-led participation level is when youth are provided an opportunity, as individuals or as a group, to identify issues affecting them and their communities to be addressed. Youth also organise and advocate their own community projects and try to raise awareness and find solutions for these themselves. All three levels start from the advice stage and progress to facilitate the situation of the youth being in charge and, thereby, gaining knowledge.

Youth participation can give youth a voice and make them feel valued, respected, appreciated, and part of the community. Hart's (1992) ladder of youth's involvement and Shier's (2001) pathways to participation are discussed in exploring ways of understanding youth participation for this study. Hart's model proposes different strategies to engage youth in all levels of participation and to eliminate or remove non-

participatory practices. This helps to ensure that youth play an important part regarding planning the course of action as well as being given a chance to speak about their views and concerns with regard to society. According to Hart (1992), the ladder of youth participation provides a visual illustration of eight steps. The first three steps are identified as “non-participation” stages as they do not actively engage youth in participation. When one moves from the first three stages, one enters the levels where there is relative participation. The following five steps on the ladder look at how to fully integrate youth into the decision-making process and how to get them actively involved. These steps show the most important stages of being actively involved. The final step of the ladder involves the amalgamation of the previous few steps of the ladder. Youth and adults share the decision-making process, thus leading to an equal partnership (Hart 1992: 8). According to Hart (1992: 8), the highest stages of the ladder are the most desirable in that there is full participation and partnership with all interested stakeholders.

The steps in Hart’s ladder regarding the degrees of participation and non-participation, as outlined in Figure 3.1 from steps 1 to 8, are detailed as follows (Hart 1992: 9-14). The non-participation steps involve manipulation, decoration, and tokenism. Sometimes the youth are manipulated by adults who exploit them to support causes, and the adults pretend that those causes are youth inspired when they are not. Young people can also be used for “decoration” in which there is a semblance of participation. This happens because the leaders and elders want to authenticate the process of participation and present them as credible while they are not. Political leaders also use tokenism when there is an impression that the youth have been given a voice, but when, in the true sense, they have a very minimal chance to express their own opinions about why and how they participate. The participation steps involve (i) assigned but informed, (ii) consulted and informed, (iii) adult-initiated shared decisions with children, (iv) child initiated and directed, and (v) child-initiated shared decisions with adults. In some cases, youth are given the particular duty as well as informed about the level of participation. In other cases, some youth may be approached so as to inform concerning projects or what has been designed as well as run by adults in a decent manner. The “adult-initiated” stage where adults communicate their views

involving minors is viewed by Hart as the first original involvement, although courses of action are spearheaded by the elderly, and then what should be done involves the young people. Some projects or programmes are child initiated and directed, with adults participating as a way of encouragement. The “child-initiated shared decisions with adults” step gives youth room to begin the courses of action as well as to discuss what is to be implemented. Hart (1992) noted that these projects are all rare due to the absence of caring adults taking interest in the youth. He further stressed the great need for adults who are passionate about the youth, giving them the opportunity to be empowered by the elderly.

3.3.1 Model Weaknesses

While Hart’s model of participation has been regarded as a powerful evaluation tool for understanding youth participation, some scholars have criticised the way that it implies but does not express the order of events directly (Pridomore 1998). For instance, the ladder is referred to as a “bestowing of rights to the powerless and passive child by the powerful adult, an outdated model of right” (John 1996: 99). Another weakness is that the model’s organisation suggests how ethics and morals are important (Hart *et al*. 2004: 48). This order of importance will result in the misinterpretation of the active involvement of people at certain stages. Additionally, some authors have also argued how it fails to take the cultural context factor into consideration. To address this weakness, Treseder developed an almost similar model that arranges Hart’s ladder differently, showing that the circles are diverse, as the ways of being actively involved.

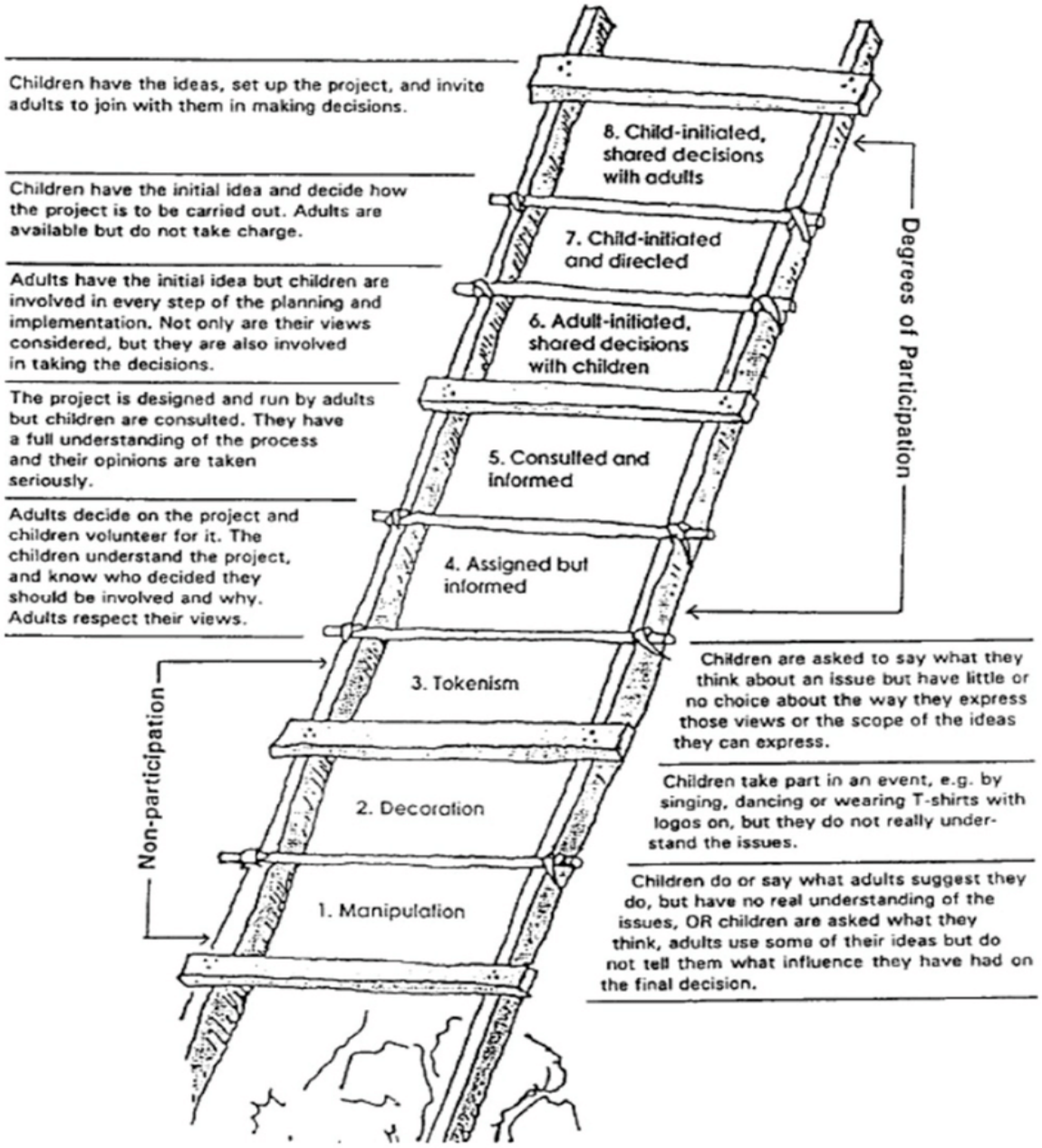

Figure 3.1: Hart's ladder of participation (Hart 1992: 8)

3.3.2 Justification of Hart's Ladder of Participation

Despite the stated weaknesses, this study draws on the work of Hart (1992) to argue that youth need to be involved in freedom building and dealing with misunderstandings by consulting adults. Hart's (1992) emphasis on young people's participation and adults is important for this research study's analysis because there is freedom in analysing how the youth can be effectively integrated into conflict resolutions and

peacebuilding processes with the assistance of adults. To this end, Hart's conceptualisation of the youth–adult partnership is generative for grasping how having clear and open ideas allow people and organizations to structure methods of involving young people. It is also here that Hart emphasises the involvement of youth in leading and initiating actions of value for informing how capacitating and involving youth in conflict resolutions and peacebuilding is of importance in allowing them to reach a common ground and move towards positive peace.

Another theorist concerned with the involvement of young people is Shier, who proposed the approach of roads of involvement. Shier (2001) proposed a model called Shier's pathways to participation. This model highlights the connection between involvement and being aware. This model focuses on the duties of adults when creating spaces where young individuals can actively contribute to decision-making that, directly or indirectly, affects their lives. Shier's framework considers youths to be between the ages of 10 and 24. Figure 3.2 provides a summarised discussion of Shier's (2001) five involvement stages, namely, "(i) youth are listened to, (ii) youth are supported in expressing their views, (iii) youth's views are taken into account, (iv) youth are involved in decision-making processes, and (v) youth share power and responsibility for decision-making". Shier (2001: 110) states that, individuals may display various levels of undertaking authority. It identifies these three degrees starting from the beginning, favourable time, moral pressure, or promise. In the starting degree of commitment, adults recognise the efficacy of youth participation and are, therefore, receptive to the ideas of youth empowerment. Opportunities occur when adults have the necessary funds and skills to empower the youth meaningfully. Obligations are achieved when countries enact laws that empower the youth.

At each level, Shier (2001) raises a question to review the current level of participation and identifies actions that can subsequently be taken into consideration so as to improve the degree of involvement. Shier's framework has been criticised for being "adult centric" because the key questions proposed are built and designed for adult responses, which further perpetuates the adult position of power (Wong, Zimmerman and Parker 2010: 103). This means that it takes away youth agency, in which the youth

themselves are the initiative and rather places the onus on the willingness of the elders to empower the youths.

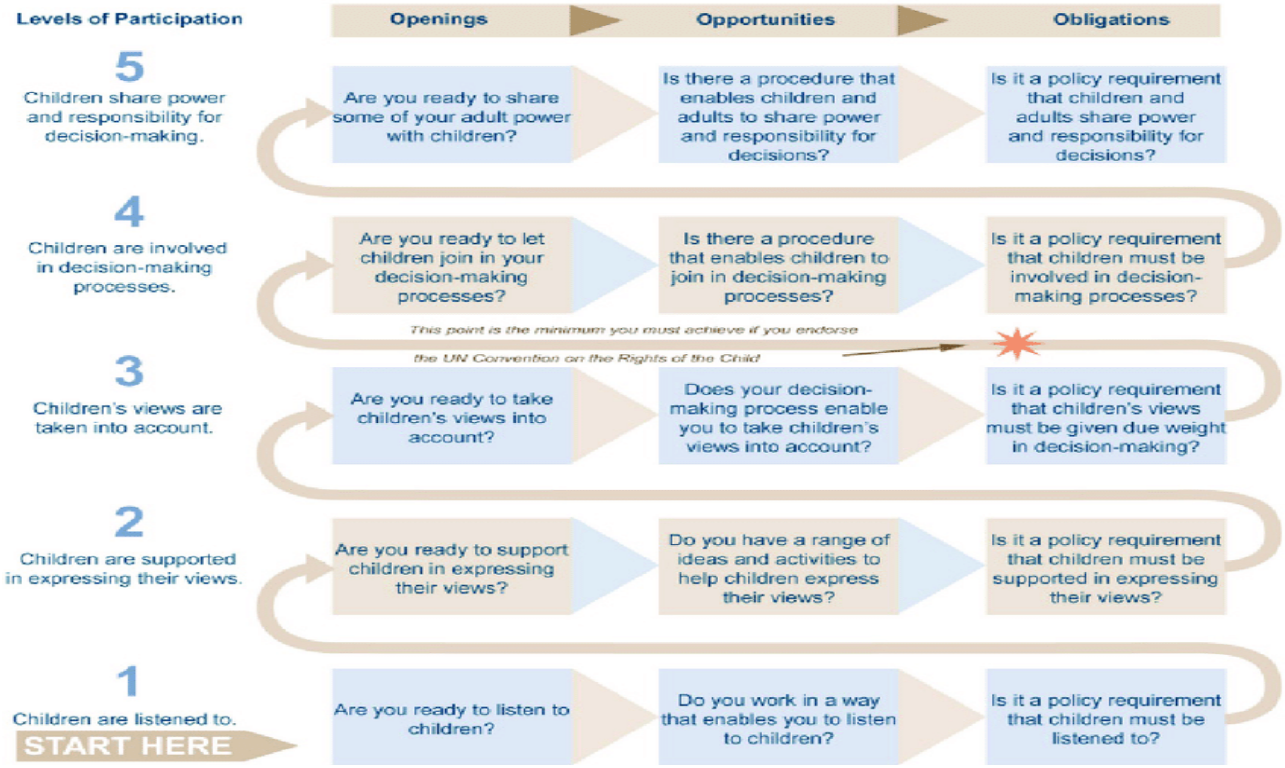

Figure 3.2: Shier's pathways to participation (Shier 2001: 111)

3.3.3 Justification of Shier's Pathways to Participation

Notwithstanding the above-discussed weaknesses, this study draws on the work of Shier to argue that youth involvement in conflict resolution must be guided and mixed with power sharing with the adults. Shier's emphasis on the youth–adult partnership has its strengths regarding the research study's analysis since an individual is given the opportunity to assess how an empowered and equipped youth can be a vehicle of peace and conflict resolution. To this end, Shier's conceptualisation of participation by arguing how the youth needs adults' attention and that they must be decision-makers is generative for grasping how young adults may act as major players, principal agents of change, creating oneness and conflict resolution. It is also here that Shier's attention is drawn to the fact that youth- divide authority is of value so as to inform the extent to

which an empowered but guided youth could resolve peace through self-initiated peacebuilding approaches.

3.4 Conclusion

The chapter discussed two key theories: the conflict transformation theory and the youth participation theory. Teaching youth that there are nonviolent and peaceful ways to resolve conflict is of vital importance. Lederach (2003) provided the basic tenets of the conflict transformation theory, and this was discussed in so far as it helps in shedding light on how youth can be incorporated into peace initiatives. In addition, this chapter discussed various models that seek to explain youth participation and its relevance to peacebuilding.

CHAPTER FOUR:
METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design, sampling and population procedures, methods of data collection, data analysis, and limitations of the study. In addition, due to the sensitivity of the study, ethical considerations that guided how the researcher both designed the study and interacted with the youth who participated in the study are discussed in depth. The aim of the study is to uncover, understand, and respond to experiences of violence that exist amongst the youth of Empangeni in northern KZN by raising awareness of peacebuilding approaches and emphasising how youth involvement in peacebuilding programmes can provide lasting solutions. The study focuses on youth from the SOG Youth Programme and aims to explore their understanding of violence and promote peaceful engagements in this community. This research addresses the following specific research objectives:

(a)To identify the types and causes of violence experienced by the youth in Empangeni

(b)To design and implement a youth awareness programme that will help to reduce youth violence in Empangeni

(c)To evaluate the effectiveness of the awareness programme designed and implemented in reducing violence and provide suggestions for future engagement projects.

4.2 Research Design

Durrheim (2006: 34) defined a research design as a “strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the actual implementation of the research”. Therefore, research design becomes a point where research questions raised are converted into feasible research projects that answer these questions (Hakim 2000). In terms of methodology, when researchers conduct research, they can

either use a qualitative approach, a quantitative approach, or a mix of both. Qualitative research studies often use observations, individual interviews, and focus group discussions (FDA) as a means of obtaining in-depth information, whereas quantitative studies tend to use surveys and questionnaires to obtain data. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout (2014: 175), in order to accomplish the intended goals of the study, researchers must use data collection methods that will allow them to obtain useful findings and appropriate ways to present these findings.

A qualitative research methodology was used to achieve the study's objectives. The ultimate aim for qualitative researchers is to explore, understand, and describe rather than measure and quantify as in the case of quantitative research (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout 2014: 174). According to Creswell (2014: 4), “qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014: 173) stated that the researcher has an advantage of obtaining richness and in-depth data when using a qualitative data collection method. Because this study sought to examine perspectives and experiences of youth on the causes of violence in Empangeni, the qualitative research approach was the most suitable and effective method in drawing out these perceptions and responses from the participants. The qualitative approach assisted the researcher in gaining deep insight and contextual experiences from the youth who were, in one way or another, involved in the violence in Empangeni. Furthermore, the use of a qualitative approach was strategic in answering a critical research question: what types and causes of violence are experienced by Empangeni youth? Answering a question of this nature necessitates deciphering human experiences.

4.2.1 Participatory Action Research Approach (PAR)

The range of qualitative designs available to the researcher are broad. Different qualitative approaches include narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, case studies, and participatory action research (PAR). The broad principles of PAR were used in this study. PAR pays specific attention to the inclusion and participation

of the affected community in the process of conducting research. Because of this, it fits fairly well as a research approach to understand the perceptions and experiences of the youth who have experienced or witnessed violence in Empangeni. The use of PAR in this study allowed for the close and direct participation of youth in the research. According to Foster-Fishman *et al.* (2010: 67), PAR actively involves participants in problem identification, analysis, intervention, and feedback. As a result, PAR serves as the mechanism that enables participation and partnership in addressing root causes of a social problem to ensure positive change (Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk 2009: 132). Rodrígue and Brown (2009: 23) also viewed PAR in similar ways. They mentioned that in PAR, people who are directly affected by the problem are called on to engage in the research process (that includes action or interventions) as core researchers. What is appealing in PAR is that issues raised by the youth are more likely to also be of community concern, and, with young people actively involved in addressing those issues, both the youth and the community are influenced positively (Wong, Zimmerman and Parker 2010: 100).

The use of PAR in this study was motivated by the need to ensure that the methods and findings represent the perspectives, cultures, or challenges of the youth in Empangeni as they relate to violence and interventions to address this violence. Through the researcher's involvement as the founder of the SOG Youth programme, the youth themselves brought up the issue of violence in the community during group discussions and described how they felt that their involvement could effect change and solve this problem.

According to Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010: 100), there has been an interesting development among researchers, where they have slowly moved from seeing youth as a "problem" to instead viewing them now as useful resources in research. They further added that before, young people were rarely involved in research with programmes being designed for them. In contrast, PAR participants actively participate in decision-making throughout the research process with the primary goal of effecting positive social change (MacDonald 2012: 34). While youth from the SOG Youth Programme have, through this programme, been afforded opportunities to voice

out their concerns on social ills affecting youth in the community, they have, however, never been exposed to, or been included in, designing, implementing, and evaluating an intervention programme aimed at bringing about change in their community. Since PAR enables members from the affected communities to be involved directly throughout all phases of the research, this study has allowed young people to contribute meaningfully in all stages of this project. Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010: 101) stated that youth in PAR make valuable contributions to address issues that concern them and bring immediate outcomes that the youth seek. According to Rodrígue and Brown (2009: 23), local actors are the most relevant to provide unique insight into local issues and how these issues can be investigated and addressed. In this study, it has been an advantage that the researcher and the participants reside in Empangeni where the study took place. The sharing of the setting and contextual life experiences between the participants and the researcher enabled the researcher to approach the participants with background and contextual knowledge, both of which are critical elements in PAR research.

4.2.2 Principles of PAR

PAR seeks to identify and address community issues and concerns in collaboration with the community to improve lives and create sustainable change. Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009: 133-135) highlighted principles of PAR to be followed when addressing social issues, drawing on the participation and involvement of the community and the participants in the problem identification and problem-solving process. These principles by Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk are discussed in the following subsections.

4.2.2.1 Partnerships and Collaboration with the Community

PAR aims to facilitate partnerships and collaboration with the community during all phases of research (Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk 2009: 133-135). When the community is involved in all stages of a project, it makes them feel valued, thus ensuring their full involvement in and commitment to the project. From the involvement with the participants, most of them expressed excitement and joy in participating in

and contributing to the study. PAR recognises and builds upon strengths and resources that the community already has. It also promotes the utilisation of local knowledge to execute visions and ideas that will assist achieving lasting change.

4.2.2.2. Sharing of Information, Resources, and Decision-Making Power

In PAR, information sharing, resources, and decision-making power are vital (Rodrígue and Brown 2009: 23). Role players share life experiences, which means that both the researcher and the community learn from each other through the sharing of knowledge in the research process. What is interesting with the PAR process is that while the researcher might be carrying out the project for academic purposes, they ultimately gain more in-depth knowledge and understanding of their community (MacDonald 2012: 34). The community, on the other hand, is introduced to the research process and related concepts and, therefore, gains valuable insights and learning experiences.

4.2.2.3 Partnership Building and the Establishment of Trust

The PAR research process encourages collaboration and the development of trust (Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk 2009: 133-135). Whenever parties work together with a common goal to change lives, room is given to create healthy relations and build strong bonds, which can result in parties developing an elemental trust. From the responses that the researcher received after conducting the study, the participants weighed in on the benefits of PAR. Some of them indicated that their involvement in the study had allowed them to identify people with whom they could partner to deal with and address the challenges of violence in their community. The platform afforded them the opportunity to create networks with like-minded people who had the same agenda to end violence in their communities.

4.2.3 The PAR Cycle

PAR is a form of applied research. This means that PAR seeks to find solutions to everyday problems and issues that have an impact on people's lives (Walker 1993: 3;

Aziz, Shams and Khan 2011: 306). Walker (1993: 3) stated that instead of taking a standard linear model of research, PAR follows a continuous cycle of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and re-planning. Figure 4.1 shows the cyclical mode of PAR.

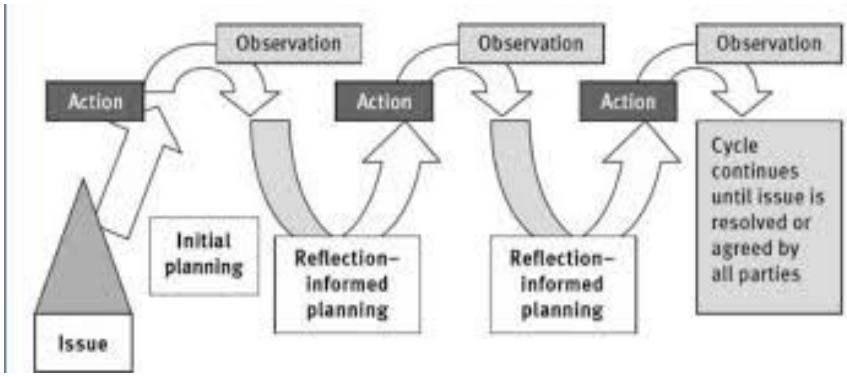

Figure 4.1: The iterative cycle of participatory action research (Canlas and Karpudewan 2020)

Walker (1993: 4) summarised Figure 4.1 and the cyclical mode that it takes in the following steps:

1. *Problem:* The problem to be resolved is identified by the community of research interest.
2. *Planning:* In the planning step, the researcher, in collaboration with the community of research interest, plans how to tackle the problem identified.
3. *Action:* After the planning stage is complete, the developed plan is put into action.
4. *Observation:* The researcher and the community of research interest observe the action and its outcomes.
5. *Reflection:* The final stage in the first cycle involves reflecting on the action and its outcomes.

As with any other project, it is possible that after the reflection stage, the assessment is that the first action step was either effective or ineffective. Walker (1993: 3) mentioned that when the first action step has been successful and effective, the PAR cycle (planning, action, observing, and reflecting) restarts, building upon this initial

success. When the first action step has been ineffective, the possible outcomes are taken into account in planning a new or different cycle (planning, action, observation, reflection, and re-planning).

4.3 Population and Sampling

A population is a “universe of units from which a sample is selected, and a sample is a segment or subset of the population that is selected for investigation” (Bryman *et al.* 2016: 170). This study's population was made up of 60 young individuals who are members of the SOG Youth Programme. Bryman *et al.* (2016: 170) defined a *sample* as “the segment or subset of the population that is selected for investigation”. A sample is used in research since it is not possible to study the whole population. For this study, the researcher used non-probability, purposive sampling. Purposive sampling means that the “researcher uses their own discretion to select population members to participate in research based on a predetermined set of criteria” (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout 2014: 142).

4.3.1 Sample Size

The sample size refers to the actual number of objects or people that will be used to participate in the study. The sample size for this study included n=15 youth who were selected from the SOG Youth Programme. Table 4.1 provides a list of participants who took part in individual interviews and focus groups. All the participants reside in Empangeni.

4.3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

All participants who were chosen to participate in this study were above 18 and below 35 years of age. The reason for selecting those above 18 was that, by law, people who are over 18 are in a position to make independent decisions without their parents’ consent. People who were below 18 years were excluded from the sample. People who were above 35 years were not selected to participate in the study because the National Youth Policy in South Africa defines youth as those individuals under the age

of 35. The researcher stressed that whoever was participating should have, at least, a basic understanding of the violence that was taking place in the Empangeni area. Table 4.1 shows the profile of the participants, where all the names presented are pseudonyms.

Table 4.1: Demographic data of the participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Academic/Career status	Age	Religion	Home Language
Zodwa	Female	Grade 12	19	Christian	Zulu
Sipho	Male	Grade 11	18	Christian	Zulu
Mandla	Male	University Student	21	Christian	Zulu
Zanele	Female	Grade 11	18	Christian	Zulu
Mncedi	Male	Unemployed	22	Christian	Zulu
Sipho	Male	Grade 11	18	Christian	Zulu
Lungile	Female	Employed	22	Christian	Zulu
Zaziwa	Female	University Student	21	Christian	Zulu
Sabelo	Male	University Student	21	Christian	Swazi
Joy	Female	Unemployed	22	Christian	Zulu
Mbali	Female	University Student	21	Christian	Zulu
Thulani	Male	University Student	20	Christian	Zulu
Mlondi	Male	Grade 12	18	Christian	Zulu
Thabo	Male	Employed	22	Christian	Zulu
Lundy	Male	Grade 12	18	Christian	Zulu

4.4 Data Collection and Procedures

The process of data collection follows the identification of the sample population. Individual interviews and focus groups are the most common data collection methods in qualitative research. These two techniques of data collection assist the researcher to gain access to and understand people's ideas, thoughts, beliefs, understandings, experiences, and perceptions that cannot be directly observed. The study used both individual interviews and focus groups as forms of data collection. Since the process of data collection was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher

needed to ensure her own safety, as well as that of the participants', was not compromised. Interviews and focus groups were, therefore, conducted following national regulations, guidelines, and protocols and under the permissible lockdown alert level. The participants were requested, prior to the interviews, to wear their masks on the day of the interviews. The researcher arrived early at the venue to sanitise all the surfaces that were to be used (chairs and a table). On arrival, the participants were requested to use the sanitisers provided, and each participant was screened. The researcher had printed materials on COVID-19 that were handed to the participants regarding the proper use of masks, the importance of sanitising and proper hand washing, the grounds for social distancing, and the reason for cough etiquette.

4.4.1 Data Collection Using Individual Interviews

Interviews can be used to explore individual participants' views, experiences, and beliefs. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014: 188), "interviews are a valuable source of information, and they allow the researcher to understand the meaning of the participants' experiences". Research interviews can be structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. The interview process for this study was guided by semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. Ten interviews were conducted with the participants. The purpose of semi-structured interviews is to ascertain the participants' viewpoints regarding their experiences in relation to the research topic. Furthermore, they are intended to ascertain subjective responses from participants regarding a specific situation that they have experienced (McIntosh and Morse :2015).Semi-structured interviews differ from structured interviews in that structured interviews follow a fixed guide that asks all the participants similar set of questions. On the other hand, with semi-structured interviews, though still following a guide, the questions are more flexible and differ from case to case, allowing for more probing.

An interview guide was used in the process of conducting interviews. The researcher designed an interview guide with seven interview questions. All the questions were followed up by further questions, allowing the participants to clarify their responses.

The questions that formed the interview guide were closely tied to the key research questions that frame this study. Whitehead and Whitehead (2016: 116) stated that semi-structured interviews use an interview guide that provides a set of questions to ensure that the research aims and objectives are covered. They mentioned that although there is a guide, there is, however, freedom for the participants to respond in any way that suits them. The researcher can also ask questions in any order and follow-up questions to seek clarification or elaboration on responses in areas of interest.

The participants' permission to record the interviews was obtained in advance. Before the start of each interview, the researcher went through the printed letter of informed consent with the participants. The objectives and aims of the study were clarified for the participants. It was made clear that participation in this study was entirely voluntary, and that participants could withdraw their consent at any time during the research process. The researcher also addressed the COVID-19 guidelines with each participant. All the conversations were recorded for the researcher to capture important information that could later be analysed. Each interview lasted 30 minutes to an hour. Although the interviews were digitally recorded, the researcher had to occasionally take notes to record emotions, expressions, and the tone of the participants, although this was more challenging with the participants wearing masks.

4.4.2 Data Collection Through Focus Group Interviews

Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014: 183), state that, focus groups are group interviews used to determine the attitudes, behaviours, feelings, experiences, and beliefs of the participants on a research topic. Focus groups, which are typically built around a specific topic, use group dynamics to generate qualitative data and discuss the issue in depth. Grossoehme (2014: 110) stated that “focus groups provide an excellent means to gather data on an entire range of responses to a topic, or on the social interactions between participants or to clarify a process”. Whitehead and Whitehead (2016: 119) mentioned that the main benefit of a focus group discussion is that it generates data from multiple participants, who often constitute a large sample

size as compared to individual interviews. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014: 183) agreed that the participants in focus groups contribute to each other's views, which leads to discussions that would not have occurred in individual interviews. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014: 185) recommended 6 to 12 participants to allow room for a varied number of opinions and viewpoints. They stated that a group of this size is small enough to guide and control.

The researcher had planned to have two focus group discussions, one with men and one with women, and, thereafter, a third group composed of both men and women. If this had happened, the researcher assumed that there would be gender balance in the groups, which would assist in avoiding any gender bias that may have arisen owing to the gender imbalances in the focus groups. Due to the pandemic, it was a challenge to find participants willing to participate in group discussions. As a result, only one focus group was conducted, consisting of six young men and four women, all aged between 18 and 23. The group was composed of young people who knew each other already from the SOG Youth Programme. As the participants arrived, all COVID-19 protocols were observed. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the research process, and their rights regarding their involvement in the research process, prior to the start of the discussions. They were also informed that participation was entirely voluntary, with no incentive provided. With their permission, these discussions were audio recorded, and the participants were guaranteed anonymity. Although the conversations were recorded, brief notes were taken on interesting points. The focus group discussions were very successful. Having a mixed group of males and females worked as an advantage. It presented an opportunity for both genders to argue and challenge the opposite gender's views and beliefs about violence. This caused the discussions to last longer than the 1 hour for which they were scheduled. These discussions yielded positive results, especially when the participants had to reconsider and review their opinions on violence. This also led to the participants becoming more conversant with the concept of violence and looking for ways to change their community situation. Furthermore, the participants had an opportunity to learn from each other, and the researcher also managed to understand the multiple and shifting viewpoints of the participants.

Although focus group discussions allow for shared knowledge and ideas that provide a broader range of information and empower both the researcher and the participants, they also provide some limitations. Bryman *et al.* (2016: 238) pointed out some of the challenges, which include that focus groups are difficult to organise and that there are possible problems of group effects and discomfort to the participants. For this study, not all participants who had agreed and confirmed to be part of the group discussions attended them on the specified days. Some of those who attended arrived very late, forcing the focus group discussions to be delayed. The participants who were outspoken could also be condescending. The researcher had to work diligently to manage the discussions to give the participants who were shy and reserved the chance to participate such that everyone was allowed a fair and equal opportunity. Furthermore, since violence is a sensitive topic, the researcher observed that some participants had discomfort and were hesitant in discussing the intimate details of their lives and their families in the group. When these participants were included for individual interviews, they were more comfortable to share their experiences.

Towards the end of the focus groups, the first stage of PAR (the problem to be resolved is identified by the community of research interest) was completed, and the group moved on to address the subsequent stage of the PAR cycle: planning. Here, the researcher, in collaboration with the community of research interest, planned how to tackle the problem identified. After the completion of the initial focus group discussion, research participants were requested to brainstorm the types of interventions that they could implement to help address the problem, which was to reduce violence in Empangeni. This was also to address the second objective of the study, that is, to design and implement a youth awareness programme that would help to reduce youth violence in Empangeni. Although the objective in line with the study was clear, the researcher did not want to impose it on the participants. The participants had to decide themselves on the type of intervention that would inform the change that they wished to see in their community. All the participants agreed that they had learned much about violence from being part of the focus group discussions and that such a training intervention on violence would be of benefit to them and other young people in their

community. Volunteers were offered and invited to join the action group, to inform education. All the study participants volunteered to be part of the action group. The researcher, together with the volunteers, was responsible for designing and conducting training for the youth in Empangeni. It was agreed that there would have to be another meeting to design a training intervention. The meeting was held on 31 July 2021. The planning, designing, and evaluating of an intervention process are discussed in Chapter Six.

4.5 Data Analysis

After the interviews, all audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. The interview transcriptions were subjected to thematic analysis. Creswell (2013: 179), states that "the process of qualitative data analysis involves organising data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organising themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of themes". Thematic analysis seeks to identify, analyse, and describe patterns or themes in a data set (Bryman et al. 2016: 350). According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 82), "a theme captures significant meanings about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set". Furthermore, sub-themes emerge from themes. Sub-themes give the researcher a more in-depth understanding of the main theme. According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 87), the six steps of thematic analysis are familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. In this study, the six steps of thematic analysis were used and followed, as explained in the subsections that follow.

4.5.1 Become Familiar with Data

In this process, the researcher went through the data with the main aim of familiarising herself with the data collected. The process involved reading and re-reading the transcripts to gain a sense of what the data was concerned with. This process was crucial as it allowed the researcher to note some points and pinpoint early impressions from the data.

4.5.2 Generating Initial Codes

In this process, the researcher organised the data in a systematic way. The coding process enabled the researcher to reduce a massive pool of data into small chunks of meaning. The researcher was concerned with searching for answers that would address the research questions. Thus, this data was approached with the research questions in mind. Given this, the researcher captured anything interesting about the key research questions. The researcher did not code all the text. Instead, an open code approach was utilised, in which codes were created and developed as the researcher progressed through the coding process. When the researcher completed step one of the thematic analysis process, initial codes were established. The researcher went through each transcript individually, coding each transcript as well as every section of text that was relevant to the research questions. When this was completed, the researcher compared the codes and modified them before proceeding to the rest of the transcripts. In the process of reviewing the codes, the researcher generated new codes and, in some cases, modified existing ones. This was done manually by hand, working through hard copies of the transcripts with highlighters and pens.

4.5.3 Search for Themes

A theme is an item that highlights something notable about the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 90), there are no fixed rules about what constitutes a theme, “a theme is characterised by its significance.” In this stage of searching for themes, the researcher closely examined the codes and joined similar or related codes together into a theme. For example, there were numerous codes that related to conflict. The researcher collated the similar codes into an initial theme called factors influencing violence. The codes were organized into broader themes that appeared to be responsive to the research questions at the end of this stage.

4.5.4 Reviewing Themes

During this stage, the researcher reviewed, adapted, and further developed the initial themes identified in Step 3. The purpose of this section was to determine whether the themes made sense and accurately reflected the data gathered. All relevant data for each theme was gathered. The researcher examined the data aligned with each theme to determine whether it truly supported the theme.

4.5.5 Defining Themes

This was the final stage of refining the themes, and the aim was to “identify the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about” (Braun and Clarke 2006: 92). The researcher, in this stage, was interested in addressing the following question: what is the theme saying? One of the themes that emerged from the data was the factors influencing violence. The theme helps one to understand the various factors that contribute to violence from the participants' perspectives.

4.5.6 Writing up

After all the themes and sub-themes had been defined and discussed, the researcher conducted the write up, which can be found in the Data Analysis Chapter (Chapter Five).

4.6 Trustworthiness of the Data

Golafshani (2003: 600) stated that instead of focusing on reliability and validity, qualitative researchers substitute these with data trustworthiness when determining the quality of their research. Trustworthiness involves credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Credibility means that the results of the study are trustworthy and believable. Cope (2014: 89) stated that the researcher enhances the credibility of their study by verifying the research findings with the participants. The credibility of the study was ensured by prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation and member checks.

Transferability refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the results or findings of a qualitative research study can be applied to settings other than those in which they were originally tested. Shenton (2004: 73) added that it is the responsibility of the researcher to allow comparisons to be made and provide evidence that the findings can be transferred outside their own setting. To ensure transferability, the researcher went through a thorough exercise of describing the research context and key assumptions that were central to the research. Some of the youth who participated in the study are university students who are involved in youth organisations that work with similar contexts at university. These students will be able to provide and transfer knowledge to other students in their organisations.

Dependability is the stability or consistency of findings over conditions. This means that the researcher must maintain consistency throughout the research process in order for the findings to be repeatable. According to Cope (2014: 89), a study is considered dependable if its findings have been repeated with similar participants in similar conditions. The findings of this study may be repeatable in students' youth organisations where the participants are involved in high schools, universities, and SOG.

Confirmability is the degree to which the findings of a research study can be confirmed by other researchers. Shenton (2004: 73) stated that to achieve confirmability, the researcher needs to verify that the findings have been derived from the data collected and not their own predispositions. To ensure confirmability in the current study, the researcher made and kept notes documenting all valuable and pertinent information relating to the research process at the end of each day. Furthermore, to also ensure confirmability, records of the raw data generated through interviews, tape recordings, and transcriptions are available for any individual to analyse. More so, the researcher triangulated the data with evidence from previous studies.

4.7 Ethical Issues

Codes of ethics are developed to govern researchers' interactions with the people and fields they intend to study (Allen, Rivkin and Trimble 2021). Ethics requires researchers work hard to avoid causing harm to study participants by respecting and considering their needs and interests (Flick 2014). Therefore, the safety of the participants in a study is a major priority in any research project.

To address ethical considerations, permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Durban University of Technology's Institutional Research Ethics Committee prior to the initiation of the research process. Although the SOG Youth Programme has members from 13 years of age, the study only recruited participants from the group who were over 18. For ethical requirements and by law, these individuals are in a position to make independent decisions without their parents' consent.

Youth participating in the study were requested to sign consent forms. The consent forms had information on the nature of the study and explained that the data collected during the research process would be held in strict confidence, that participation in the study was on a voluntary basis, and that the refusal to participate would not result in any negative consequences. It also stated that participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The consent forms also included the information that the study had confidential information and knowledge that was for sharing and learning in a space within the group and could not be shared outside. To protect the participants, their identity was kept anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. Morse (1998: 301) stated that since it is easy to recognise participants by their names, the use of pseudonyms is the most effective way to protect participants and their identity.

Since violence is a sensitive topic, several measures were taken to uphold the protection of the participants. The researcher ensured that all questions were phrased in a careful and sensitive manner. The researcher paid full attention when the participants were responding to ensure that they felt valued and respected. The participants' reactions were carefully and consistently monitored to ensure that they were comfortable. The researcher had a well-developed resource list for referral

available for the participants. Group debriefing was done with all the participants to explore the participants' experiences of the research process and give them a chance to discuss these feelings in a safe and productive manner.

Since the study was done during the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher had to follow national regulations, guidelines, and protocols. A risk assessment was also conducted, and risk mitigation strategies were adopted. The possible risk of contagion from the use of tables and chairs and the exchange of pens, papers, and any digital devices was identified. The researcher ensured that there was always a COVID-19 researcher toolkit, which included COVID-19 information materials, social distancing floor tapes, extra masks for the participants who might need them, thermometers, sanitisers for surfaces (chairs and tables), alcohol-based hand sanitisers, wet wipes, tissues, and disposal bags.

4.8 Reflections

This section covers the personal reflections of the researcher on conducting interviews and focus group discussions. Using the PAR approach was an incredible and humbling experience for the researcher that is, seeing young people in the community directly affected by violence fully engaged in the research process as core researchers. This collaboration made the youth feel that their views and opinions were valued and subsequently increased their level of involvement in and commitment to the project. Although the researcher was carrying out the project for academic purposes, she also gained valuable in-depth knowledge and understanding of her community, and it was an incredible journey to learn some valuable information from the life lessons and experiences of young people.

The researcher is the founder of (and runs) the SOG Youth Programme. This was an advantage because the participants knew and trusted the researcher, which allowed them to share sensitive information freely. They were also enthusiastic and eager to take part in the action research process. The researcher also noticed that they felt comfortable in raising suggestions. However, this had certain limitations for the study,

including setting the boundary between being a researcher and a mother figure to the participants, as well as boundaries between themselves since most of them had developed strong bonds from the time that they had joined the SOG programme. During the focus groups, they would challenge each other's views based on information that they knew about each other, and arguments ended up taking much time and caused distractions. The researcher had to constantly enforce temporary boundaries and ensure that there were healthy arguments such that the key objectives of the research were met and such that there was room to discover new knowledge. Healthy arguments were also encouraged between the participants, and using conflict-handling strategies when potential conflicts might arise was promoted.

4.9 Summary

This chapter outlined the research design and included a discussion of how data in this study was gathered, organised, and analysed. It also provided motivations for the chosen approaches, highlighting their advantage for this specific study, and details from the information were built up towards planning and designing an intervention.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter provides a thorough analysis of the transcribed interviews and focus group discussions conducted during the research's exploratory phase. The aim was to explore young participants' accounts of the types and causes of violence experienced in Empangeni. The demographic data of the 15 participants who engaged in the individual interviews and focus groups is highlighted in Chapter Four (Table 4.1). All the participants reside in Empangeni. This chapter presents a discussion of each theme and sub-theme which emerged in the analysis. This analysis explores the different types of violence that are experienced by youth in Empangeni. It also explores the possible causes and consequences of the violence that affects youths in this area. The transcripts were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method, which requires an in-depth reading and re-reading of the transcripts, developing a set of data codes, and then organising these different codes into meaningful themes. Based on the study's goals and objectives, thematic categories were identified and discussed in relation to one another. Extracts from interviews and focus group discussions are also presented to substantiate each theme. Each theme's discussion is also linked to current literature and relevant theories discussed in the previous chapters, and the significance of each theme is highlighted.

5.2 Identified Themes

The researcher was able to identify the types of violence experienced by young people in Empangeni, as well as the causes of this violence and its effects on young people, through the analysis of data from interviews and focus group discussions. The results of this analysis indicated that physical violence and gender-based violence were identified as the most prevalent forms of violence in Empangeni. The analysis also showed that substance abuse, peer influence, ongoing exposure to violence and a lack of economic opportunities were identified as the major causes of violence in this

community. In addition, PTSD and depression, development of coping strategies among victims, vigilantism and desensitisation to violence were identified as the major effects of violence in Empangeni.

Table 5:1. Presentation of themes and sub-themes

Main Themes	Sub-Themes
Forms of Violence	• Physical violence • Gender-based violence
Causes of violence	• Substance abuse • Peer influence • Ongoing exposure to violence • Lack of economic opportunities
Perceptions of the effects of violence	• *PTSD and depression* • Coping strategies • Vigilantism • Desensitisation to violence

5.2.1 Theme 1: Youths' experiences of violence in their community

Participants in this study discussed a wide variety of different types of violence experienced in their community. These included physical violence and gender-based violence, which were observed as the most common and widespread forms of violence affecting young people in Empangeni. It was generally agreed that physical and gender-based violence are the two most common and prevalent forms of violence in their community.

5.2.1.1 Physical violence

Physical violence was the most frequently mentioned type of violence. Participants in this study discussed how prevalent physical violence was amongst youth in their community. Physical violence was defined by the participants as the use of physical force to injure or harm another individual or individuals. Their conceptualisations of physical violence were in line with definitions in literature. According to the World

Health Organisation (2002), “physical force is the intentional use of physical force or power, to cause injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation”. Similarly, Vogel (2002), defines physical violence as an act attempting to cause harm, pain, or physical injury to another individual or people. Exploration of this theme will examine some key ways in which physical violence was discussed by participants including beatings, battery, fist fights, knife stabbings and shootings. This theme will also reveal several accounts of incidents of physical violence which these young participants have witnessed, have been victims of, or have been personally involved in. In addition, the use of weapons and other objects in the commission of physical violence will be discussed. This data focusses on answering research objective (a), which was to identify the types and causes of violence experienced by youth in Empangeni. According to SAPS (2020), incidents related to physical violence have increased by at least 15% from 2010 to 2019. Furthermore, over 36% of reports of physical violence in the Empangeni area involve youths and have resulted in serious injury or death. Establishing the types of violence affecting youth in Empangeni was crucial in identifying key areas to address in the design of a youth awareness programme that aimed to reduce youth violence in Empangeni (research objective (b)).

Participants described several instances of physical violence in which they had either witnessed or been personally involved. The following accounts were given by the participants:

> Zaziwa: *One day I came late from school because the bus arrived late to pick us up at school. When I came home I found my mom cooking; she did not even ask why I was late, she just hit me with a wooden spoon she had in her hand. At home we are used to her beatings as a form of discipline when we are wrong. In most cases it has helped me to change my bad behaviour but it’s now getting out of hand because that day I was not wrong.*
>
> *Thobile: No matter how wrong we are parents have no right to hit us; that is abuse.*

Zodwa: *Two girls in my netball team were suspended for three weeks at school because they fought at school. We thought it was a minor thing because one pushed the other to catch the ball during netball practice which was common with players. After we finished practising, they started fighting outside the netball field.*

Lungile: *My older sister and I used to fight a lot when we were growing up. It's normal for siblings to fight; I cannot call it violence.*

Sabelo: *I was provoked by a girl from my neighbourhood; she kept on spreading rumours about me and I was so humiliated. I confronted her, slapped her and we started throwing punches. I wanted to make her listen.*

Thabo: Fist fights are a normal part in initiating boys to be men. We all grew up like that. It's part of making boys stronger.

Mandla: *My friend was stabbed at a party for taking another guy's girlfriend. House parties are commonplace for physical violence in our area: every time there is a party somebody is going to fight.*

Lundy: *I was shot in my leg just last year; I was caught in the crossfire between two rival gangs. There were so many shots fired, it is a miracle I survived.*

Participants discussed incidents of physical violence happening between people who know each other or were related, e.g. parents and siblings. According to participants, incidents can also take place between strangers, like Mandla's friend who was stabbed by a stranger at a party, and Thabani, who was shot in the crossfire between rival gangs. The above extracts also indicate that incidents of physical violence can emerge in various social settings, including schools, neighbourhoods, and house parties and even at home, where parents beat their children and fights occur between siblings.

Participants also discussed the widespread use of weapons during these physical fights as a cause for concern, arguing that it leads to serious injuries and even death.

> Mncedi: *When fights break out, people will rush to grab wooden sticks, stones, bricks and knives. Most fights are bloody and lead to serious injury.*
>
> Sipho: *Especially in fights that happen in parties, night clubs or taverns, people will use anything from chairs, bottles and pocketknives to fight.*
>
> Lungile: *There are a lot of guns in our community and people do not hesitate to use them in fights. Our community is not safe like this. Even young people own guns.*

From these discussions, it is evident that participants believe that whenever people fight they tend to use anything they can find as weapons, which most often leads to serious injuries. Their perceptions that physical violence causes harm are echoed in the WHO's (2002) and Vogel's (2002) definitions of physical violence quoted above. They also coincide to with Bulhan's (1985) definition of physical violence as any act or process by which an individual or a group of people causes severe physical injury and harm to another person or people. Participants also raised concerns about the availability of guns in the community, even amongst youth, with Lungile adding that people who own guns do not hesitate to use them when involved in a fight.

These accounts are significant as they illustrate how physical violence is prevalent in their community and the wide use of weapons in physical violence by perpetrators caused interviewees to express their belief that the use of such weapons leads to serious injury and even death. These findings resonate with existing literature. According to SAPS (2020) reports, most violence amongst youths is physical violence and, in most cases, the perpetrators use some form of weapon to beat, stab or shoot their victims. The SAPS (2020) reports also indicate that, the prevalence of physical violence recorded in South Africa is approximately 43%, and over 50% of these incidents are recorded in poor townships. Moreover, the SAPS recorded at least 38%

incidents of physical violence in the Empangeni area and of these, over 60% involved the use of an object or weapon (SAPS 2020). According to Stats SA (2020), at least 30% of all incidents involving physical violence resulted in serious injury or death. Thus, there is an urgent need to formulate intervention programmes that address and reduce physical violence among young people (Wong, Zimmerman and Parker 2010).

Based on the accounts of the participants, people often fight or use violence in response to what they perceive to be wrongs done to them or for being disrespected. For instance, Sabelo described attacking another person for spreading gossip about him because of the humiliation he suffered. Mandla gave an account of his friend being attacked for approaching somebody's girlfriend. The man might have felt some sort of humiliation that affected his dignity to have his girlfriend taken in his presence. These accounts seem to be very closely linked to disrespect and shame. Gilligan (1996:126) states that although shame is necessary, it is not a sufficient cause of violence'; however, people resort to violence to diminish the heightened emotions of shame while trying as far as possible to replace them with pride.

These accounts are consistent with Galtung's conflict triangle. According to Galtung (1960), every individual has their own goals and desires, and when these are incompatible with others' goals and desires, it leads to conflict. The rise of these conflicts leads to frustrations which may turn outward and manifest in physical violence (Wallensteen 2018). Also focusing on conflict, in attempting to explain the phenomenon of physical violence, Freud suggested that physical violence is a result of the interaction of psychological and sociological drives (Freud 1959). According to Freud, these drives and social circumstances result in conflicts of interest between different people, and physical violence is often drawn on to resolve these conflicts. Freud further proposed that perpetrators of violence may replace physical force with weaponry to cause maximum damage to their opponent (Freud 1959). These theories suggest that the physical violence perpetrated on or by young people arises out of the desire to accomplish desired goals, and these youths see physical violence as the only logical option to create change when they have not been equipped with other tools and options to deal with conflict. This suggests that youth awareness

programmes must include educational material that teaches conflict management or handling skills (Miall 2004).

A crucial approach to understanding physical violence necessitates an understanding of socio-political-historical issues, particularly how South Africa's history of oppression has influenced this form of violence. Bulhan (1985), states that “South Africa is illustrative of a situation of oppression that has resulted in high levels of physical violence within the society”. Physical violence, according to Bulhan, is a direct consequence of aggressive forms of oppression, strongly evident in South Africa's history, and this oppression continues to manifest amongst the "oppressed" (Bulhan 1985). He further argues that when a group of oppressed people lacks awareness and fails to organise to liberate themselves from this oppression, due to feelings of powerlessness, they often end up fighting amongst themselves (Bulhan 1985). This assertion can be supported by apparent high levels of physical violence in communities, such as Empangeni, that have been previously subjected to the oppressive elements of apartheid or have been racially segregated.

5.2.1.2 Gender-based Violence (GBV)

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a broad term that includes domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and sexual violence (Abrahams 2009). Bloom (2008: 14) states that “gender-based violence is a term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, as well as the unequal power relationships between the genders within the context of a specific society”. Similarly, the USAID Strategic Framework (2009: 3) defines GBV as any harmful act committed against a person because of socially-ascribed gender differences. These definitions indicate that gender-based violence involves unequal power dynamics, where those who have power use this against those who lack it. This type of violence is perpetrated in both private and public spaces, and can take a physical, sexual, or psychological form. It tends to occur in the family context and within the broader community. In this theme, participants identified men as the main perpetrators of GBV. In addition, sexual violence and intimate-partner

violence were found to be prevalent among youths in Empangeni and were discussed as sub-themes of GBV. An investigation into the nature of GBV affecting youths in Empangeni was significant to the data, as all participants in the study indicated witnessing or having been involved in GBV. These findings were consistent with literature which indicates that over 50% of South African youth are exposed to GBV at some point in their lives (Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes 2012).

Men were identified as the primary perpetrators of gender-based violence by the majority of study participants, including both girls and boys. This is emphasized in the following excerpts:

> Zanele*: Men do this. They are hitting women.*
> Lungile*: It's men that abuse women all the time.*
> Thabo: *It is always the men attacking women.*

The above extracts indicate that the participants perceive GBV as violence that is mainly instigated by men, where women are often the recipients of this violent behaviour. Of 15 participants who were involved in this study, 14 believed that men were largely involved in gender violence against women. These perceptions of the association between men and GBV are strongly supported in literature. According to Carrillo (2000: 11), gender-based violence involves the perpetration of violent behaviour towards women and children by males. Gender-based violence against women is more than 30% prevalent, and while there are cases where women may inflict violence on their intimate partners, it is often women who suffer the most (Jewkes et al. 2010). According to Gender Links (2012), 76% of men in Gauteng, 48% in Limpopo and 41% in KwaZulu-Natal admitted to perpetrating GBV. Since participants understood men as perpetrators of GBV, it allowed the researcher to look at formulating awareness programmes that engage young men, encourage significant changes in their attitudes and influence behavioural change.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was also highlighted by the participants as another highly prevalent form of violence experienced in their community. Sexual violence is described as “forced or coerced sexual intercourse, including the obtaining of sex without the consent of the person being violated” (WHO 2012). Gender Matters (2019: 26) similarly defines sexual violence as "intentionally or recklessly engaging in a sexual act, whether or not it involves penetration of the vagina by the penis, without the victim's consent." In this sub-theme participants provided their understandings of sexual violence and described different instances of sexual violence they have either witnessed or have been involved in. Their perceptions indicated high- levels of sexual violence in the community. The Optimus Study SA (2018) shows that sexual violence on young people is widespread with 36.8% of boys and 33.9% of girls reporting several forms of sexual violence and abuse. This gives an overall average of 35.4%, which means one in every three young person in South Africa has reported having been subjected to sexual violence at a certain point in their lives (Ward et al. 2018). Leoschut and Burton (2007) argue that the incidence of sexual violence may even be higher due to high levels of underreporting amongst victims. Given these high levels of sexual violence, an investigation into the data on sexual violence affecting young people in Empangeni informed the design of a youth awareness programme to reduce violence among youth in Empangeni (research objective (b)).

The participants described how this sexual violence occurs within the home/family, communal and educational settings. Participants shared some of their personal experiences in the following extracts:

> Joy: *Rape and sexual violence occur at home; I know of someone who was raped by her cousin and was scared to report it because she was being threatening by the cousin*.

> Lungile: *My brother and sister were molested by my uncle. My mother left them at his place; she works long hours and needed someone to take care of them while she is not around*

Mbali: *My stepfather raped me and my little sister 15 years ago. Luckily, he was arrested. We have undergone counselling but the flashbacks do come back sometimes.*

Mlondi: *Two of my friends in high school were raped; they were raped by one of our teachers who was also our coach.*

Zaziwa: *It's not safe to walk alone here because many people, both boys and girls, have been subjected to rape especially by drug addicts using Whoonga*.

From these extracts, participants define sexual violence as unwanted sexual acts or sexual acts that are forced on them. Most participants believe that this coercion into sexual acts is a form of violence, and their accounts indicate the high prevalence of this sexual violence in their communities. The participants' understanding and conceptualisations are in line with authors' definitions in the literature. According to Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes (2012: 276), "sexual violence is often defined in terms of sexual assault as a form of unwanted sexual acts, which encompasses both non-penetrative and non-aggressive acts and penetrative and extremely physically aggressive acts". The Criminal Law Amendment Act No. 32 of 2007, which was passed in South Africa in December 2007, employs the term sexual assault to describe criminal acts that may include any of the several forms of non-penetrative actions that are committed under certain circumstances. Sexual violence occurs when an individual engages in non-consensual vaginal, anal or oral penetration with another person, or coerces another person or people to engage in non-consensual sexual acts. Participants gave several accounts of sexual violence that they have observed and been involved in, both as perpetrators and as victims of violence. Their narratives show that sexual violence is rampant in their society. These perceptions coincide with the literature. According to Nicholson and Jones (2013), sexual assault is reported to the South African Police Service (SAPS) by approximately 144 women every day. This equates to approximately six cases of rape being handled every hour. According to Stats SA (2020), the rate of sexual violence in South African communities is over 30%.

At least 46% of South African youth have been victims of non-aggressive or physical sexual assault (Child Care Unit 2018). In addition, a study undertaken by Gender Links (2012) found sexual violence rates of over 77% amongst women in Limpopo, 51% in Gauteng, 45% in the Western Cape and 36% in KwaZulu-Natal. In their study, Abrahams et al. (2009) found that 24.7 per 100 000 women were affected by sex-related violence, which is considerably higher than the global indication of 4 per 100 000. Leoschut and Burton (2007) are of the opinion that these numbers are lower than what is actually occurring due to the sensitivity of the subject and the consequent underreporting of sexual violence by victims.

Intimate partner violence

Most participants discussed GBV in the context of intimate partner relationships. Intimate partner violence (IPV) refers to any type of violence occurring in close relationships where the couple are dating, married, or cohabiting (Kelly and Johnson 2008). Collins (2003) defines IPV as an "incident or incidents that involve controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse toward intimate partners or family members of any gender". According to the Council of Europe (2011: 8), IPV involves "various acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence" that take place within or outside the family environment or domestic spaces between current or former spouses. Jewkes' (2002: 1423) definition also highlights that IPV is not only limited to violence by the current partner, but also by an ex-partner. This sub-theme discussed the several accounts of IPV that the participants have either been involved in or witnessed. According to Miller and McCaw (2019: 850), while intimate partner violence occurs at all ages, its prevalence is higher in young adults (18 to 24 years of age) when compared to other age cohorts. Most participants in this study are within this age group and IPV was revealed as prevalent amongst participants. Twelve of the fifteen participants in this study discussed being involved in some form of intimate partner violence. According to Collins (2003), over 76% of young people are involved in some form of intimate relationship and more than half of these experience intimate partner violence within these relationships. Furthermore, almost 60% of young people in South Africa are affected by IPV within their homes. The responses below reflect

the views of participants and their experiences in homes and communities where IPV is prevalent.

> Lundy*: My late father was physically abusive toward my mother. I remember when my mother reported him to the family, our grandmother told us she felt sad that my father is doing the same thing our grandfather used to do.*
>
> Zanele: *I'm from the township and in the township it's normal to beat up women.*
>
> Mncedi*: My parents used to argue and fight a lot. Since they are my role models I grew up with that mentality that the only way to solve problems is through violence.*
>
> Sipho: *I know a lot of people who have been brought up in very bad situations. Your upbringing is not excuse. We all have a choice in life, guys.*
>
> Mandla: *I also grew up in a home where there were always fights because my stepfather was abusive. For me that was a very destructive environment, and I made a decision that I will make sure my family will not experience the same. So I will never understand when someone says he is abusive because his father was abusive. You can't repeat the same mistakes. It doesn't make sense.*
>
> Thulani*: My sister got married very young because she fell pregnant while doing grade 11. Her husband was very abusive because she did not finish school and was not working. Whenever she came home to report her husband my aunt would always send her back, mentioning that it is the nature of a man to behave that way, and she should be submissive and try to be a good wife because her husband is providing for her.*

In the above extracts some of the participants viewed IPV as a learned behaviour .There was an indication that since parents serve as role models, where parents use violence to resolve issues, children tend to believe violence is the acceptable way to resolve problems. Jewkes (2002:1426) states that intimate partner violence has been

discussed as a learned behaviour both for men and women. Jewkes continues that childhood home experiences of violence teach children to normalise violence, thus "increasing the likelihood of male perpetration and women's acceptance and tolerance" of abusive behaviour (Jewkes 2002: 1427). On the other hand, Sipho held a different opinion, stating that he knew many people who had been raised in very bad circumstances and that one's upbringing should not be used as an excuse. Mandla added that, for him, growing up in a destructive environment where his parents fought made him to take the decision that his family would not experience the same. The socioeconomic setting, such as being uneducated and unemployed, also put women in a position of being vulnerable to abuse, like Thulani's sister who was expected to stay in an abusive marriage because she was not working and dependant on her husband. Jewkes concurs with this by stating that the adverse effects of poverty and economic inequality have an impact on women's ability to end and leave abusive relationships (Jewkes 2002: 1426).

Participants shared their views on how men are positioned to have authority over their partners.

> Sabelo: *On my first year at varsity before I got accommodation in res, I used to live with my uncle and my aunt. My uncle would always tell my aunt in front of us that he is the head of this family and his word is final. One day I witnessed my uncle slapping my aunt because she attended a friend's birthday when he had instructed her not to go.*
>
> Zazizwa: *In my culture men see themselves as superior to women. I have observed how men in my family talk harshly towards their wives and girlfriends when there are family gatherings.*
> Thabo*: I believe some cultures teach men that they are "obliged" to beat up their partners if they do not follow their wishes or desires.*
>
> Mncedi*: I think the reason why there is intimate partner violence is because there are African cultures where men are dominant, and the culture is tolerant*

towards abuse in such a way that it acceptable for men to beat up women to meet all their needs.

Sabelo*: Society needs to change its view that a woman's place is in the kitchen.*

The excerpts above indicate that participants believed that IPV is shaped by a culture that perceives men as being superior to women; thus, they hold powers to use violence as a disciplinary or corrective mechanism. As a result, participants described how men often describe themselves as "obliged" to use violence if their wishes or desires were not followed by women. Participants highlighted that the general societal belief that men are the heads of their families and that a woman's place is 'in the kitchen' enabled men to have superiority over women.

Since the study participants are young people, it was important not only to get their views about IPV but also to compare how girls and boys discussed this particular issue. The following extracts reflect how girls and boys discussed the issue of IPV.

Thabo: *I feel that girls talk non-stop, shout and complain too much and because we as man cannot shout back, that is why most men end up hitting their girlfriends.*

Sipho*: I think girls are extremely jealous and controlling. They want to monitor our social contacts, who you can be friends with and even check our phones. No men can stand that, that's how sometimes the arguments start.*

Joy: *My friend in varsity had an abusing boyfriend. She would tell us he is also very aggressive in bed and when she complains the guy gets mad and she has since become tolerant to this behaviour because she fears if she always complains it will end up ruining things between them. I expected her to find it easy to leave the abusive relationship. I mean, we have all sorts of awareness campaigns about GBV and IPV on campus. The guy is also educated and as someone who is educated, he is supposed to know better about these things.*

Thulani*: Women can be very abusive. My ex-girlfriend would always provoke me by starting unnecessary arguments that lasted for hours. It was worse when she was drunk. Even when I locked myself in the bathroom, she would stand outside the door, harassing me. I knew she wanted me to hit her so that she would report me. I do not believe in hitting women and I was not brought up like that. I ended that relationship.*

Mlondi: *Men are also abused by women in relationships, but they often do not report or tell anyone because being abused by a woman might be seen as a major weakness and most men have a fear of losing their dignity.*

Mbali*: When men hit us women, they believe it is to make us behave. I think they will never understand the emotional effect it has on us as women.*
Lungile: *Boys think that putting pressure on their girlfriends to have sex when in a relationship is okay. For me that is rape.*

Zanele: *I used to argue a lot with my boyfriend when he was drunk: he would call me all sort of names. The next day he would often apologise and say that he was deeply sorry. One night he slapped me when he came from partying drunk. I knew that was the point of no return and ended things with him.*

Boys' attitudes towards IPV were more supportive than girl's. They mention that it is the girl's behaviour (like talking too much, jealousy and being controlling) that cause boys to end up being abusive towards girls. Thulani, however, believes men are not allowed to hit women because that is what he was taught when growing up. Although most girls seemed intolerant towards IPV, it was clear that some would choose not to complain about such behaviours due to the fear of "ruining the relationship". Young people are under intense pressure to conform to social norms, and they may feel obliged to stay in a harmful relationship in order to avoid social exclusion or disdain (Smith and Donnelly 2000; Sousa 1999). Participants expected educated women to be able to leave abusive partners more easily because they had access to information.

It was also clear that participants also expected educated men to know better about IPV – but noticeably some are perpetrators of IPV. According to Connell (2005: 1811), some men accept change in theory but continue to behave in a manner that maintains male dominance due to patriarchy and the threat to identity that change brings. Connelly adds that this is primarily because women's professional advancement makes men appear less worthy of respect if social definitions of masculinity include male supremacy and being strong.

As male participants emphasized that women abuse men, a discussion about women being abusive arose. Thulani mentioned that his ex-girlfriend would always provoke him by starting arguments that lasted for hours. Participants mentioned that women misuse the system by provoking men to violence, then threaten to report them. Participants noted that men do not normally report such incidents because they want to protect their dignity and do want be judged as being less manly than others. Participants associated alcohol or heavy drinking with IPV, mentioning that alcohol normally increases levels of aggression and might be a source of argument in relationships. Jewkes (2002: 1426) concurs with this, mentioning that alcohol contributes to intimate partner violence both in men and women. This is primarily because alcohol is believed to lower self-control, impair judgment, and undermine one's ability to appropriately recognise social cues. Zanele mentioned that her partner would call her names when drunk and later apologise. Miller and McCaw (2019: 850) state that intimate partners who are violent when under the influence of alcohol use this to subdue and control their partners or as a control mechanism.

Participants discussed IPV as a systematic pattern of dominance and control towards a person. According to Jewkes and Morrell (2010), the dominant ideal of South African masculinity is physical strength, toughness, power, and sexual prowess. They argue that because violence is frequently used as a means of control, and where there is a gender power imbalance, masculinity is demonstrated by controlling women and can thus be regarded as a significant contributor to IPV. According to Heise and Fulu (2014: 11), most societies continue to be mostly patriarchal, and as a result men are accorded greater value and privileges than women, including entitlement and control

over women's behaviour. They go on to say that research with violent men demonstrates that the risk of partner violence is greatest when narratives concerning what it signifies to be an ideal man “in a society are linked to toughness, male control”, authority over women, and the man as the primary breadwinner.

According to O'Neil (1981: 61), men who commonly hold firm views and beliefs in relation to masculine gender norms, in particular when it comes to supporting and providing for families, are much more likely to resort to violence if they believe these norms are being violated. Jewkes (2002: 1424) agrees by stating that male identity is associated with power experiences, and when men fail to exercise power, it becomes a threat to their masculine identity; as a result, they use violence against women as an expression of power that was denied to them. Thompson Jr (1991) states that the stereotype of male violence holds that men choose to use abusive and violent behaviour to solve conflicts with intimate partners, and that the more violent men are, the more masculine they are perceived to be. According to Smith and Donnelly (2000), “gender roles that promote male dominance and female subordination may be more prevalent in young people, potentially making young women more vulnerable to victimisation”.

The findings of this study show that patriarchy has a large influence on young people's construction of gender roles. Society strongly shapes the roles that men and women play in intimate relationships. These findings were also observed in previous studies. Barkhuizen’s (2013) study of IPV among female university students revealed that men were expected to be assertive, powerful and dominant, while their female counterparts were expected to be submissive and satisfy the men’s sexual desires in the relationship. According to Jewkes (2002), failure to conform to these norms may lead in the perpetration of violence or the victimization of women.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Causes of violence

Participants in this study identified substance abuse, peer influence, ongoing exposure to violence, and lack of economic opportunities as the main causes of violence within the Empangeni community. Participants' exploration of the various causes of violence demonstrates a multifaceted understanding of violence, highlighting how various influencing factors all work together to perpetuate violent systems. These perceptions can be linked to several theories of violence. Bronfenbrenner's work on ecological systems stands out as significant in that it highlights how several factors in the micro-, macro- and meso-environments of an individual may interact and influence the behaviour of young people and other individuals, shaping experiences of violence more specifically (Krug et al. 2002: 1085). Participants believed that there were several possible reasons for youth to engage in and commit violent acts. The explanations of violence provided by these participants varied across the multiple discussions. These different ideas can be linked to different theories, including Bandura's (1965) social learning theory as well as psychoanalytic theories (Mizen 2003: 285). These will be each be explored in more detail below.

5.2.2.1 Substance abuse

The most discussed cause of violence among youths was substance abuse. Participants reported particularly high drug and other substance use, including dagga, glue, alcohol, heroin, and Whoonga (a blend of dagga, rat poison and anti-retroviral pills). Substance abuse is understood as the misuse of any form of substance to cause intoxication (Maree 2008: 60). In this theme, participants indicated that these high levels of substance abuse within their community were seen to be a major cause of violence in Empangeni. A total of 12 out of the 15 participants held strong beliefs that using intoxicating substances had a strong connection with and a direct influence on the violent actions committed by them or by others in their community. These sentiments are echoed in the literature. According to Schreiner (2004: 62), "the relationship between substance abuse and subsequent aggression is complex", and although drugs and other intoxicants cannot be said to be the sole cause of violent

behaviour, they have been proven to reduce a person's ability to regulate antisocial behaviour. In addition, individuals who consistently consume illicit substances tend to be more likely to participate in risk-taking behaviour (Maderthaner 2005: 235). This mainly because substance abuse clouds an individual's judgment in such a way that what a person knows is wrong when sober may not seem so bad when high (Masiko and Xinwa 2017). Weldon (2013: 154) also agrees that drug abuse alters the way the brain functions, causing users to respond differently to the world. Weldon adds that this affects one's behaviour, resulting in drug abusers exposing themselves to risks they may not even have imagined**.** According to the WHO report on substance use in Southern Africa (2003), negative impacts are common characteristics of substance use; these include: neglect of social responsibilities, sexual violence, physical violence, injury and loss of life.

The majority of participants cited substance misuse, such as drug and alcohol usage, as a major influence of youth violence in their community. According to Wijnberg (2012), the majority of young people that perpetrate violence are under the influence of drugs. He adds that young people use substances such as drugs to conceal their feelings of guilt, fear, and shame before engaging in illegal activity. Participants in this study agreed, explaining that substance addiction frequently leads to youths participating in violence.

> Thabo*: There are known spots where young people in our area buy drugs. I will however not mention those spots here.*
>
> Lundy*: I think Whoonga is worse than all other drugs. When my brother started to use it, he started stealing at home and later we heard he was amongst the boys who are breaking into people's houses and mugging people on the street. Even today we do not know where he is because he ran away from home to be on the streets.*
>
> Sipho*: I was once told Whoonga is cheap, though I am not sure how much. I think that is why most youth use it, because they think it's affordable.*

Mandla*: Maybe why Whoonga is so common is because they say it's easy to make. One needs only ARV's and Rattex. What is sad is users break into clinics to steal and sometimes beat security guards to gain access to clinics.*

Mncedi: *I drink most of the time. I once beat my friend in the head with a bottle. I would not have done what I did without alcohol. I had also taken some dagga and heroin.*

Thulani: *My brother starts fights when he is drunk or high on heroin. When he is sober, he is no trouble at all… as soon as he starts drinking and taking drugs he becomes a violent person.*

Zaziwa: *I know several people who use drugs, they are very quiet when they are sober. As soon as they take drugs, they start causing a lot of violence.*

Most participants confirmed that there is a substantial link between substance abuse and increased levels of violence in their community. They indicated that substances such alcohol and Whoonga are commonly consumed by youth because they are easily accessible in the area .Although participants did not want to mention specific areas where drugs are sold, they mentioned that most people know spots where drugs are sold. With special reference to Whoonga, participants mentioned that this type of drug is very common because it is much cheaper compared to other drugs and is easy to make. As evidence that violent behaviour was directly linked to substance abuse, Thabo admitted that he frequently drinks, and he would not have hit his friend on the head with a bottle if he was not intoxicated. He also admitted to smoking dagga and heroin before attacking his friend. Thulani also emphasized the impact of substance use on antisocial behaviour, claiming that his brother becomes violent after drinking alcohol and using drugs. He also believes that substance abuse is the most dangerous risk factor for violence because it makes you want to fight with others. Zaziwa also strongly believed that violent behaviour emanated from abuse of substances such as drugs. These perceptions are supported in literature. According to Borowsky et al.

(1997:10), alcohol and other illicit substance are risk-factors as they make it easier for the individual to perpetrate violence. They argue that behaviours such as aggression or impulsivity increase under the influence of alcohol and most illicit substances (Borowsky et al.1997: 10). Thus, alcohol and drugs reduce a person's internal inhibitions to violence. According to Gannon et al. (2004: 38) aggression in young people should be inhibited; however, any negative influence, such as the intake of alcohol or drug substances, can prevent this inhibition from occurring, resulting in a proclivity for aggressive behaviour.

5.2.2.2 Peer Influence

Peer influence was also identified by the majority of participants as one of the factors contributing to violence among young people in the Empangeni community. According to Andrews, Foulkes and Blakemore (2020), “young people are often associated with increased risk-taking behaviours, an increased need for peer acceptance, and a heightened sensitivity to peer influence”. They further add that young people look up to their peer groups as a means of understanding social norms and therefore act according to the norms of the group to which they wish to belong. This sometimes means engaging in risky behaviours to avoid being excluded. Santor, Messervey and Kusumakar (2000) state that “peer influence is the pressure exerted by friends or close associates on an individual’s attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviour”. According to Baumeister (1991), peer influence is a social psychology practice in which people feel obliged to conform to the norms and perceived perceptions of the group to which they belong. Peer influence was discussed often in the current study, with 11 of 15 participants indicating that their peer network had a direct or indirect influence on their violent behaviour or the violent behaviour of others around them. This theme discusses how youths perceived their friends and immediate social groups to be influential in perpetrating violence and engaging in violent behaviour. The participant’s perceptions are consistent with the research literature. Marcus (1996: 145) claims that peer relationships influence young people's behaviour and that their peer networks can influence them to “engage in either pro-social or antisocial behaviour”. Marcus (1996: 145) adds that to conform to peer values and behaviour, youth may even tailor

their appearance or dress to fit that of their peers. Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory stage 5 is used in this study and describes how identity vs confusion forms the young person's social identity and development of peer networks. These social networks may either encourage youth to make positive choices or discourage them from making harmful choices, or persuade them to take negative decisions including engaging in violent behaviour. Erikson (1959: 131) defines negative identity formation in young people as "the construction of one's sense of identity out of deviant or antisocial behaviour". The responses below indicate how peers can influence the behaviour of young people.

> Thulani: *My two friends who are also my neighbours are known to be troublesome in our street. Whenever my parents warn me about them they use the words, "birds of a feather flock together Thulani. " I must admit sometimes I do get involved in the bad things they do.*
>
> Sabelo: *The main cause is friends: most of the mischief and fights I got into in school was because of my friends. If I had well-behaved friends maybe I would have done something different.*
> Thabo**:** *I can say I have always been lucky to be surrounded by friends with whom I share common values and beliefs. My friends have played a very important role in ensuring the decisions I make do not impact my life negatively.*

These findings show that peer influence is a contributory factor in young people's decisions either to engage in violence, or not. Thulani and Sabelo's behaviour indicated that their negative behaviour was influenced by friends to some extent. Thabo, however, acknowledged that having friends who share common values and beliefs played an important role for him in taking positive decisions.

There was an acknowledgement from the extracts below that most young people engage in negative and violent behaviours to be accepted by a peer group or to "fit in".

Zaziwa: *You see your friends bullying and beating others and you also want to do it. You must, otherwise you are out of the group.*

Joy: *The friends, they all talk about girlfriends and sex, and you want to talk too, so you do it too. Someone will then end up harassing girls to be part of the group*.

Sipho: *You want to be part of the fun with the friends, so you do everything, even if they tell you to "para" (rob, mug) people, you do it.*

From the participants' discussion below, there was also a link between a link between substance abuse and peer influence.

Sabelo: *The first time I tasted alcohol was when we went to a club with my varsity friends, although I cannot say they made me do it – but, if I was alone, I would never have drunk that night.*

Zanele: *I have regularly found myself doing negative things with my friends, like taking drugs just to fit in and have a sense of belonging.*

All the above excerpts indicate that youth conform to peer behaviour or peer values to fit that of their peers. Research gives an indication that a peer network influences both negative (such as delinquency, substance abuse and bullying) and positive (such as student achievement and physical activity) youth behaviours (Reynolds and Crea 2015). Dishion and Tipsord (2011) are also of the same view: they state that "youths' peer groups form an important context for healthy or unhealthy development, such that problem behaviours, including aggression and drug use, can spread throughout the peer group by means of influence processes". According to the information in the excerpts above, participants believe that peers have a significant impact in influencing one's behaviour, either positively or negatively. Similarly, the National Research Council (2001: 80) argues that lengthy attachment to these peer groups, peer networks' approval of deviant behaviours and the belief that aggression increases self-

esteem within the groups increases the pathways to violence in young people. Malamuth (2003) concurs with this and states that youth are often attracted to other peers that emulate, imitate or approve violent behaviours. According to Shreiner (2004: 48), peer pressure plays a key role in shaping negative attitudes about women, gender-based violence and physical violence.

5.2.2.3 Ongoing exposure to violence

Most participants also identified high levels of exposure to violence among Empangeni youths as one of the major causes of violence in their community. According to Maree (2008: 65), South African townships are characterized by a high rate of violence, which young people face on a daily basis. In this theme, participants provided strong perceptions that the violence witnessed or observed by young people in their community and within their homes increased the likelihood of youths in Empangeni adopting and replicating the same deviant and violent behaviour. According to the National Child Unit (2018), youths are continuously exposed to harmful violence in their community, including in schools, homes, and neighbourhoods. This was significant to the data as it identified possible areas that need to be addressed urgently through interventions such as a youth awareness programme.

> Zodwa: *The majority of young people in our community come from violent homes and neighbourhoods where there is a lot of violence. As they grow up, they become violent as well.*

> Mandla: *I only joined the gang because my brother and cousins were already in it.*

> Thulani: *Most of these people are now complaining that youths are causing problems, but we grow up seeing them fighting, shooting, and killing each other. They made us this way.*

Sabelo: *I beat my girlfriend because my father always hit my mother to make her listen.*

In the above extracts, participants gave different accounts of how they had experienced violence in their households and community. These participants believe that individuals who grew up in a violent environment are often more likely to become violent themselves in the future. They linked the individual's exposure to or witnessing of violence as an influence on violent behaviour. The majority of participants believed that people raised in homes where there is family violence are more likely to adopt the same violent behaviour. Participants reported that their exposure to violence in their homes included witnessing their parents or guardians fight. These perspectives are supported in literature and resonate with the Social Learning Theory. The Social Learning Theory explains aggression and violent behaviour. According to DeLamater and Myers (2007), an individual's cognitive and behavioural skills are shaped by their social relationships, the interactions within these relationships, and their environment. DeLamater and Myers (2007) stress that the cognitive and behavioural skills of an infant are drawn from the environment in which they live, and how they perceive themselves may change according to the feedback continuously received from others. Margolin and Gordis (2004) agree with these assertions and further posit that young people may learn from violent and aggressive models in their environment. According to DeLamater and Myers (2007), young people may adopt aggressive behaviour through an observational learning process or imitation. Young people shape their attitudes and behaviours in intimate or social relationships according to their observations of how parents and others within their environment behaved in similar relationships (DeLamater and Myers 2007). Therefore, young people learn the meanings of the actions of their caregivers and their parents, and caregivers and significant others provide the initial learning of behavioural alternatives which they may come to perceive as appropriate in their own intimate or social relationships (DeLamater and Myers 2007). Hence, a young individual's acceptance of certain types of behaviour increases as they are continuously exposed to that particular type of conduct, and these experiences mould their behaviour later in life (Margolin and Gordis 2004). This implies that when young people live in environments where parents

or caregivers regularly use violence to resolve conflict, they perceive this as an efficient method and will also use violence to resolve conflict in their own lives. According to Leoschut (2006), children who are raised in households where they constantly witness or are frequently exposed to violence are more likely copy and replicate similar patterns of violence and aggression later in their lives Leoschut and Burton (2006) posit that since a family is a socializing agent where one learns what is acceptable and unacceptable, if adults resort to violent ways to resolve conflict, young people view violence an appropriate and inevitable means of conflict resolution. The conclusion can then be drawn that violent communities or environments are a reflection of the interpretation that communities have associated with violence and exemplified for others (DeLamater and Myers 2007).

The findings of this study show that participants believe that violence in young people occurs due to previous incidents that they have been exposed to from their childhood, both within their home and out in the community. From the responses collected from these participants, it may be deduced that young people who have been exposed to violence in their developmental stages are more likely to become violent themselves in their later life.

5.2.2.4 Lack of economic opportunities

Most participants identified the lack of economic opportunities and associated hardships in trying to get some form of income to support themselves as another factor motivating youth in Empangeni to perpetrate violence. According to the JSE index (2020), at 44%, South Africa has one of the highest recorded rates of unemployment in the world. Furthermore, more than 36% of South African youth are either uneducated or lack formal or informal occupational skills and thus do not have access to employment. At least 13 out of 15 participants in this study perceived a lack of economic opportunities as directly linked to violent attitudes within their communities. In this theme, participants discussed economic frustration and how this poses a risk factor for violence within Empangeni. Participants in this study provided the following comments:

Mandla: *Most people involved in violence are unemployed. They go around robbing people at gunpoint.*

Mlondi: *Myself, I was robbing people before, with guns and knives to take their money. Things are hard, we don't have any other means to survive.*

Zaziwa: *We can't get an education or a job, so what must we do? That's why there is all this violence, you see?*

According to these findings, young people use violence for economic gain and to escape poverty and unemployment. In these extracts, participants acknowledged that young people engage in crime and violence as an option to deal with poverty. They described this violence as including armed robberies and gang violence. The majority of participants believe that lack of economic opportunities, such as employment, motivates young people to engage in violent behaviour. The perception of participants is supported in literature. According to Stats SA (2020), more than 26% of South Africans live below the poverty line. The country also has one of the poorest literacy rates and poor educational indicators, which implies a low level of skills and competencies within the population and labour market (Krug et al 2012). The South African Budget report (2020) also found that over 44% of the population are unemployed or do not have access to jobs.

Peppler (2017) states that the economy influences the macro-system of an individual's environment. This macro-system, according to ecological systems theory, is the environment in which youth grow up and consists of social norms and beliefs, cultural values, and a society's socioeconomic structures (Peppler 2017). Furthermore, the micro-system influences interconnections with both the mezzo- and macro-systems, whereas the macro-system, in turn, influences interconnections with the mezzo- and micro-systems (Peppler 2017). Cooper and Ward (2012), state that in an environment where poverty and unemployment are prevalent, youth violence, criminality, and substance misuse are all possible outcomes. Limited ability to access

social service facilities and corrupt government structures can also lead to young people resorting to violence as a stress-and-conflict-management strategy (Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes 2012). The majority of participants discussed how resource constraints were critical factors in their society which contributed to young people becoming vulnerable to violence. South Africa's unemployment rate has increased by almost 15% according to Statistics South Africa (2020). Bayat et al. (2014) stress that “youth unemployment is a severe socioeconomic issue that exposes youth to the benefits of violence, such as gang affiliation, physical assault during robberies, and sexual assault”. Findings of this study and accounts from participants show that when young people are challenged by unemployment and entrepreneurial opportunities, they are often more likely to engage in violent behaviour for economic gain. Therefore, youths living in impoverished communities are more likely to instigate criminal and violent behaviour such as burglaries and robberies in gangs.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Perceptions of the effects of violence

The youth participants in this study provided strong opinions and perceptions on violent events and how this violence has its effects, particularly on being victimized. The participants' accounts of being subjected to violence support the claim that young people are significantly more vulnerable and at risk of being victims than perpetrators of violence and that this victimisation has significant effects for these victims (Children's Institute 2003). The participants in this study focused primarily on their personal victimization. This section provides their perspectives on the effects of violence that they witnessed or experienced (Leoschut and Burton 2006). Participants identified post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, adoption of coping strategies, vigilantism and desensitisation to violence as some of the major effects of violence.

5.2.3.1. PTSD and depression

The majority of participants in this study identified post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as one of the effects of violence among young people. According to the American Psychological Association (APA) (2000), PTSD includes symptoms of re-experiencing traumatic events (through memories, intrusive images, nightmares, and anxiety reactions when confronted with reminders of the trauma), attempts to avoid reminders of the trauma (such as places similar to that where the trauma occurred), emotional numbing, and persistent physiological hyperarousal (being constantly on guard, over-reacting to potential threats, a reduced ability to concentrate on tasks, and sleep disturbances), all of these symptoms last for more than four weeks after the trauma and impair daily functioning at home, school, work, or socially. Most participants in this study viewed PTSD and depression as the most major effects of violence experienced in their community. At least 10 out of the 15 participants in this study reported having PTSD or depression as a result of previous experiences with violence, either perpetrated or experienced/witnessed. An investigation of effects was significant, as they illustrated the severity of the damage and harm that violence has caused young people in Empangeni and also highlighted the urgent need for interventions to reduce high levels of violence within these communities. Participants discussed PTSD and depression in relation to violence they have witnessed or experienced as follows:

> Lundy: *I used to like going to play in the park in my leisure time but ever since I was robbed at knife point there…. eehhy, I don't think I can go back there. I am afraid of what will happen next*
>
> Joy: *I was sexually assaulted when I was very young; even now I find it hard to sleep. I feel dirty, I can smell him as if it happened yesterday. I am always sad.*
>
> Thabo: *Both my mother and brother were robbed in the street and stabbed. I am afraid to walk [there].*

The findings of this study indicate considerable levels of rates of PTSD in victims of violence. These high rates are supported in other literature. According to Nadasen and Pierce (2008), studies exploring the impact of exposure to violence in young people in South Africa indicated psychological distress in children and adolescents as one of the serious impacts of violence. A study conducted by Suliman et al. (2009) found that 23.6% of the respondents under study exhibited symptoms that suggested a possible diagnosis of PTSD. According to Nadasen and Pierce (2008), the level of psychological distress increases as the level of exposure to violence increases. This was evidenced in a study done by Suliman et al. (2009) with adolescents in Cape Town, which showed that children that have been exposed to high levels of violence for lengthy periods of time, showed high levels of PTSD and depression. In this study, adolescents that had experienced more incidents of violence exhibited severe symptoms of PTSD and depression. Buckner et al. (2004) support these findings and further posit that when young people are exposed to violence, they may develop traumatic effects comparable to those described by the study participants. According to Carey et al (2008), PTSD and depression are the most common psychological effects of childhood sexual abuse and rape. Exposure to other forms of violence, such as IPV, have also been linked with the development of PTSD and depression in young victims (Breslau et al. 1998). Furthermore, this PTSD and depression may manifest together with behaviours like smoking, drug and alcohol addiction, and suicidal behaviour (Wolitzky-Taylor et al. 2008).

Participants described the emotional effects of the violence they witnessed with words like “fear”, “sad”, and “scared”. The above extracts show how violent experiences affect young people throughout their lives, even after the violent act has ceased. Participants’ responses illustrate how violent experiences shape the victims’ behaviour in the long-term. Participants reported that they avoid going into areas where they were victimised, for fear that they may be attacked again. Other participants also showed how violence and abuse in their early lives is now affecting routine activity such as sleep, how these traumatic experiences continue to replay in their minds and how they are now forced to carry weapons such as pocketknives to protect themselves. These symptoms resonate with the basic definitions of PTSD and

depression. According to APA (2000), PTSD consists of symptoms where the victim re-experiences traumatic events through nightmares, and remembering the traumatic event or nervous reactions if they come across reminders of the trauma. Symptoms of PTSD may also include efforts to suppress emotions, hyper-arousal, and evasiveness towards potential reminders of the trauma, such as the vicinity where the event occurred (APA 2000). These symptoms may be experienced for longer than four weeks after the trauma was experienced and affect the usual daily routines of the victim at home, school, socially or at work. From the responses of the participants in this study, it may be deduced that victims of violence or perpetrators of violence are at a very high risk of suffering from PTSD and depression.

5.2.3.2. Coping strategies

Most participants in this study also highlighted how they have had to develop strategies to cope with violence around them. Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes (2012) define coping strategies in relation to violence as changes in behaviour, attitudes, or routines in response to, in fear of or to avoid experience of previous violence or trauma. This definition interprets the descriptions of various strategies discussed by young people in this study as ways to protect themselves against violent crimes in their community, which range from travelling or walking in groups, carrying tasers, and arming themselves with handheld weapons like pocketknives.

Ward (2007) claims that young people frequently use personal safety measures to protect themselves. Youth who participated in this study illustrated that they have learnt and understand different warning signs of violence and are prepared in case someone attempts to harm or steal from them.

> Lungile: *Usually when the thieves come for robbing, they ask for change or time. If someone comes, just say you don't have and walk away. If you take out your wallet or show them the time, they will rob you.*

Thulani: *When I walk at night, I always keep a knife or a taser on me because there's always people like druggies or something and they always come to rob the people. My knife is my protection. Sometimes when I have to walk at night, I take my dog with me.*

Thabo: *Walking with friends in groups will keep you safe, especially at night. Walk in a group, never walk alone!*
Mbali: *Come in and go out at a certain time. Even down the road and make sure to avoid dark alleys and dark places.*

These statements show that participants have studied the dangers of violence in their community and have adopted mechanisms to protect themselves (Leoschut 2006). These mechanisms or coping strategies mainly involve carrying light handheld weapons and always staying alert, or travelling with others in groups with the belief that they may have a chance to fend off perpetrators. These young people's exposure to and experience of violence has allowed them to become acquainted with several methods for avoiding it (Burton 2007). These participants indicate that, in addition to serving as insurance strategies, they have found themselves in a position to use these weapons. However, not everyone simply avoided certain areas or walked around carrying a weapon. The following sub-theme demonstrates how these youths retaliated as well.

5.2.3.3. Taking the law into their own hands (vigilantism)

Most participants in the study also identified vigilantism as one of the effects of violence in their community. According to Leoschut (2006), vigilantism involves the carriage of justice by individuals in the society other than law enforcement on people that are perceived to have wronged or disadvantaged the vigilante. These acts of vigilantism usually involve group beatings, lashing, battery and "neck-lacing" which may result in death (Burton 2007). Participants felt compelled to take the law into their own hands due to the frequency with which these youths are subjected to community

violence and the perception that the authorities are failing to fulfil their responsibilities. These points of view are supported by the following participant accounts:

> Joy: *That's why lots of people have their own guns also. It is an "eye for an eye" here, you have to take the law into your own hands sometimes. It is called self-defence; the police won't help.*
>
> Thabo: *The police mustn't just arrest the people. They should give them to us so that we can beat them a little so that they can also feel how it feels to hurt somebody.*
> Zaziwa: *Not to me man. If you must rob me now, I'll make sure I get you one day. Sorry. I will take my revenge.*
>
> Sipho: *They must cut their flesh off*.

The emerging trend from most participants in this study was that of revenge. Participants believe that they are entitled to seek violent retaliatory measures against perpetrators of violence or criminals who have stolen from them or caused them distress. This intergroup conflict dynamic manifests itself when victims of crime or violence decide to retaliate against those who commit the crime or violence. The extracts from the participants show that not only did these young people retaliate against perpetrators, but they also felt that violent forms of punishment must be administered for people who commit violence and crime, instead of just simply sending them to prison. The participants spoke passionately about this idea of extreme and extra-judicial means of punishment, which include shooting people on site, cutting flesh from criminals and burning them in tyres. These findings are consistent with literature. Funk et al. (2004) define vigilantism as a subtle process that can arise in an individual or individuals through desensitisation and normalisation of violence due to repeated exposure to violence. These excerpts demonstrate that young people lack sympathy or empathy for perpetrators of violence. According to Funk et al. (2004), aggressive behaviour may become accepted and logical as a way to resolve conflicts and achieve goals. Statistics indicate high levels of vigilantism among South African

youth. According to the Medical Research Council's 2008 Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (Medical Research Council 2008), 35% of male youth in the Western Cape carried some form of weapon, 22% carried a gun, and 34% carried a knife. In addition, over 26% of vigilantism that occurs within South African townships involves young people (National Child Unit 2018).

Most participants in this study believe that perpetrators of violence should be punished in ways that are equivalent to the pain that they have inflicted on their victims. In their understanding of violence and the need for vigilantism, they used words like "revenge" and "eye-for-an-eye," emphasizing that severe forms of justice other than the soft touch of police arrests should be employed.

5.2.3.4. Desensitisation to violence

Desensitisation to violence was identified as another effect of violence among youth in Empangeni. Most participants discussed violence in a way that has been described in the literature as desensitisation or a normalised construction of violence. According to Funk et al. (2004), desensitisation is a process where perpetrators and victims begin to accept violence as normal due to repeated exposure to real-life violence. Although participants reported the effects of violence they have previously experienced, they also seem to have normalised these effects.
Participants made the following statements:

> Mncedi: *It is always going to be violent like this. There is no changing it…so, what is the point?*

> Lundy: *Where I come from if we find you trying to steal… we will beat you to death.*

> Thabo: *Once we find the thief there is no time for sorry, we will beat you very hard. Teach you a lesson.*

Sipho: *Especially rapists. If I had a gun, I would shoot them on site.*

The use of phrases such as “So, what's the point?” and “nothing new” several times during the discussion, lends credence to the notion that young people have become desensitised to violence as a result of their ongoing experiences. These youth participants speak in a manner which suggests that they have been desensitised to violence. These excerpts demonstrate that young people have no sympathy for those who commit crimes or perpetrate violence. However, one participant's viewpoint on this issue contradicts Funk et al. (2004) assertions. Although violence has the effect of desensitising youth, there are other young people who remain empathetic to perpetrators of violence. Participants also displayed this dynamic of normalisation or desensitisation when discussing gangsterism in their communities (Leoschut and Burton: 2007). They distinguished between two categories of gangsters: good and bad. Participants made the following statements:

Zaziwa: *They are not all bad. Some of them will see people robbing and they will help. They will stand up for the people. Now that’s the people with good understanding.*

Sabelo: *Yes man, there’s the bad who will like … rob the people and then the good ones they see the people rob the people and then they will try and assist.*
Thabo: *Say like you’re the person that was robbed. They will help you get your stuff.*

This evidence further suggests desensitisation: because of prior violence they have experienced, young people feel that it is normal to associate with these gangs and view them as their “guardian angels’’ for providing protection (Leoschut 2006). As a result of this desensitisation, young people end up promoting and justifying violent behaviour, as long as it can be defended as a form of justice (Funk et al. 2004). Statements made by participants on this subject represented noticeable levels of aggression. These findings resonate with existing literature. According to Funk et al.

(2004), this is a process of desensitisation where victims begin to perceive and accept violence as normal due to repeated exposure. According to Funk et al. (2004), desensitisation is a phase that can occur as a result of repeated and continuous exposure to violence. Therefore, youth that are subjected to high exposure to violence in their everyday lives may adopt and normalise aggressive behaviour (Funk et al. 2004). According to Leoschut (2006), these young people may begin to perceive violence as acceptable and the appropriate remedy for dealing with conflicts and achieving their goals. In addition, national statistics indicate that the normalisation of violence and criminality is already entrenched among South African youth. In the Medical Research Council's 2008 Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (Medical Research Council, 2008), 35% of male youth in the Western Cape carried some form of weapon, 22% carried a gun, and 34% carried a knife. Leoschut (2006) supports Funk et al.'s (2004) assertions and contends that desensitisation often leads to aggression. The findings of this study resonate with Leoschut (2006), who claim that when young people are subjected to high levels of violence, they become normalised to violence which may lead to aggression in later stages of their lives. Furthermore, the social learning theory supports this viewpoint, stating that if violence is viewed as the appropriate method to resolve conflict, these beliefs and perceptions may become entrenched in the minds of the youth who may end up using this violence as a response to conflict. The findings of this study also support Bulhan's (1985) theory on violence which emphasises the critical role of social processes in the development of violent behaviour and violence. He argues that "if violence is seen at a vertical level, particularly at the home and community level, it will inevitably travel to a more horizontal violence, wherein victims normalise violence and become perpetrators of violence themselves" (Bulhan 1985).

From the findings of this study and the responses gathered from participants, it may be deduced that repetitive exposure to violence may lead to normalisation or desensitisation to this violence in young people. As evidenced in the extracts from the participants, this desensitisation often serves the cycle of violence, as victims of previous violence become perpetrators of violence for retaliatory purposes and to regain power and control.

5.3 Discussion

The study's findings show that young people's attitudes and perceptions of violence are closely related to their views on and acceptance of violence. Such attitudes and perceptions are influenced by their own personal experiences of violence and observations, as well as by values and social norms that have been taught to them from childhood. The majority of the young people in this study acknowledged living in a society where patriarchal attitudes are taught in the family and community through the socialisation process, which separates the boy child from the girl child from an early age. Girls are taught and expected to be submissive to men and not strive for equal decision-making power. Men are positioned to have authority and are expected to be aggressive, protect and provide for, and exercise power and control. These norms are founded on shared beliefs and expectations about how men and women should conduct themselves. Kambarami (2006: 2) states that “the family, as a social institution, is a brewery for patriarchal practices by socializing young people to accept sexually differentiated roles”. It was clear from participant discussions in this study that creating stereotypes about men holding superior positions to women put a lot of pressure on men to conform to societal expectations. In addition, if women resist or disobey these social norms and expectations, they may face punishment or discipline, leading to violence being perpetrated against them. Sundaram’s (2013) study revealed that gender norms constitute young people’s perceived acceptability of violence, and this therefore shapes their understandings of appropriate and normative gender behaviour. The acceptance of violence was observed in the way young people spoke of how fist fights between siblings initiate boys into being strong men and is part of growing up. This indicates that violence was acceptable because its use was understood as determining and shaping expected masculine gender behaviour. Reyes et al. (2016: 12) also argue that “traditional gender roles and attitudes increase the risk of the perpetration of violence and acceptance of violence”. What is concerning is that these social norms related to gender roles and socialisation instil patriarchal practices

within young people which do not end within the family but also spread out to other social relationships and reinforce these ideas within society.

The study revealed that there were mixed beliefs about whether parents using corporal punishment as a means of discipline can be regarded as violence. Although some participants in the study mentioned that corporal punishment is not always bad, because it improves and changes “bad” behaviour, it was however noted that corporal punishment results in the acceptance and normalisation of violence. Lansford and Dodge (2008: 6) argue that “frequent use of corporal punishment contributes to a social climate in which corporal punishment is acceptable leading to increasing societal rates of violence”. The WHO (2009: 3) also note that “social tolerance of violent behaviour is likely learned in childhood, through the use of corporal punishment, in the family” and other settings. Abrahams and Jewkes (2005) mention that this is because the environment teaches young people that violence is normal. This tends to shape their ideas regarding the use of violence, specifically emphasising that some forms of violence are acceptable.

Although most young people spoke negatively about violence, there was however an indication of widespread attitudes of acceptance of violence for some young people in this study. By highlighting the views, beliefs and attitudes young people hold about violence from a young age, this study highlights the importance of preventing violent behaviours and attitudes which lead to the normalisation of violence. According to the WHO (2009) cultural and social norms have a strong influence on violent behaviour. As a result, if initiatives aimed at reducing and preventing violence are to be effective, they must take into account how social pressures and cultural expectations impact personal behaviour. According to McCarry and Lombard (2016), challenging norms that favour violence is a top priority in its prevention. Reyes et al. (2016:12) also agree that targeting “injunctive norms and gender role attitudes may be an effective prevention approach”. According to Chandra-Mouli et al. (2013), approaches that are focused on challenging stereotypes, building and promoting positive norms, and specifically those that involve young people, have shown promise in violence reduction

and prevention. Challenging behaviours and attitudes that lead to normalisation of violence will also help young people not to reproduce systems of violence themselves.

5.4 Conclusion

The findings from the exploratory data collected for this study through individual interviews and focus group discussion are presented in this chapter. Thematic analysis was used to generate themes, which were then presented in accordance with the study's goal and objectives. Themes identified themes and sub-themes are shown in Table 2:1 above. According to the responses of participants, youth in Empangeni face a variety of challenges related to violence. The findings reveal that the main forms of violence youth are experiencing in Empangeni are physical violence and gender-based violence. The main causes of violence were found to be substance abuse, peer influence, ongoing exposure to violence and lack of economic opportunities. Findings also identified PTSD and depression, coping strategies, vigilantism and desensitisation to violence as the main effects of this violence. Although in most cases violence was discussed as a conflict-solving technique and something used in self-defence, findings suggest that gender roles, gender norms and stereotypes all have intricately shaped participants' understandings of what constitutes violence and also led to acceptance and tolerance of certain forms of violence. Young people's expressions of violence painted a picture which indicates that, generally, both boys and girls conformed to normative gender roles. Gender norms, particularly constraining ideas of masculinity and femininity, have potential risks of reproducing gender and power inequalities. Given the findings relating to the prevalence, underlying causes, and resulting implications of violence in Empangeni as illustrated in this chapter, it is clear that engaged and effective interventions are needed. The next chapter looks at addressing the study's second research question by outlining the design and implementation of an intervention aimed at reducing youth violence in Empangeni.

CHAPTER SIX:
PLANNING, DESIGNING AND EVALUATING AND INTERVENTION:

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses planning, designing, and evaluating an intervention, which is based on the following two research objectives:

(a) To design and implement youth awareness programmes that will help to reduce youth violence in Empangeni
(b) To evaluate the effectiveness of the designed and implemented awareness programmes to reduce violence

6.2 Planning and Designing an Intervention

The planning and designing process was done with the action team, which is a group of youth who volunteered to be part of this action group during the data collection stage. With the study drawing upon the principles of PAR, their involvement in the planning and designing process was critical. The planning and designing process took place during level 3 lockdown on 31 July 2021. Even though the action group comprised of a small number of participants, it was critical for the researcher to make sure that they had limited exposure to COVID-19 by wearing masks and adhering to all health protocols. The planning process involved a number of activities based on information gathered during the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. Since experiences in terms of gender are sometimes not the same, the idea was to have an equal number of male and female members to balance ideas and opinions. When the day for the meeting arrived, other participants who had indicated their interest to be part of the action group were unavailable to attend, and, as a result, the action group ended up having five male and three female participants in total. Table 6.1 presents the profile of the action team at the planning meeting.

Table 6.1: Profile of the action team at the planning meeting

Participant	Gender	Academic/Career status	Age	Religion	Home Language
Mlondi	Male	Grade 12	19	Christian	Zulu
Sipho	Male	Grade 11	18	Christian	Zulu
Joy	Female	Unemployed	22	Christian	Zulu
Zaziwa	Female	University Student	21	Christian	Zulu
Thabo	Male	Employed	22	Christian	Zulu
Zodwa	Female	Grade 12	19	Christian	Zulu
Sisipho	Male	Grade 11	18	Christian	Zulu
Mandla	Male	University Student	21	Christian	Zulu

In the planning and designing session, the researcher shared findings from individual interviews and focus group discussions with the team and requested ideas on what type of intervention would lead to achieving the research aim of reducing violence in Empangeni. Due to a number of different ideas presented, the researcher gave the group an exercise to assist them in developing the final idea that would be beneficial to all youth. The interventions suggested to reduce violence included a community awareness campaign on violence, a school-based awareness campaign, training on violence prevention, involvement of relevant government departments, and a social media awareness campaign. Some of these interventions were also suggested by the youth during the interviews and focus groups. Although all suggested that interventions were important, some were, however, not going to be feasible due to lockdown regulations. The action group finally decided and agreed on the youth violence prevention training workshop as a form of intervention.

In deciding the content of an intervention, it was suggested that most young people lack effective communication skills, which often leads to misunderstandings and conflict, resulting in violence. The training programme was designed to take communication and conflict-handling skills into account. One of the other causes of violence that most participants were concerned about and felt needed urgent attention

was the issue substance abuse. Participants highlighted that substance abuse was increasing in the area, and that it affects not just youth alone, but also families, communities, and the entire country, as a whole. The programme was, therefore, designed to incorporate substance abuse awareness. The training programme was designed to take into account three issues, namely, communication, conflict, and substance abuse.

The participants were given an opportunity to be trained should they have wished to participate in conducting the workshop, but they proposed that the researcher be in charge of determining how the content should be presented, including organising facilitators. The participants, however, recommended role plays to make the process more entertaining while also educational. They indicated that most young people would be willing to act out role plays exploring real-life issues and, most importantly, on how violence affects them, while looking for possible solutions. The researcher added that role plays would also ensure full cooperation and effective participation, which would take into account the principles of the PAR approach. The researcher and action group designed the programme in a way to allow a participatory approach to learning, which emphasises interaction between the facilitators and the participants. Discussions in smaller groups were also highlighted as an important method. The aim of these was to allow all group members to share their views and opinions in a comfortable space and to promote discussion amongst the participants. The action group also suggested a WhatsApp group to communicate further before the intervention. Figure 6.1 shows a group of 8 members of the action team who attended the meeting.

Figure 6.1: Action team during the planning meeting

6.3 Youth Violence Prevention Training Workshop

The training workshop was held on 9 August 2021 at Holy Name Anglican Church in Ngwelezane Township in Empangeni. Since it was held during lockdown level 3, which

limits gatherings to 50 people, the researcher was responsible for ensuring that the number of attendees at the training workshop did not exceed 50. As with all other interactions held throughout the study, the researcher had to ensure her own safety as well as the safety of the participants. Prior to the event, the participants were requested to wear their masks on the day of the training workshop. All surfaces (chairs and a table) were sanitised before the start of the training workshop. Sanitiser stands were available at the entrance door, and the participants were requested to sanitise their hands prior to proceeding to the screening table. The researcher had ensured that there were enough printed materials of COVID-19 protocols and materials for the training such that the participants would not need to share. The chairs where the participants were seated in the venue were marked to keep a safe distance of at least one and a half metres from each other. Figure 6.1 presents the training programme designed with the action group.

Welcome, introduction and ground rules
Session 1: Conflict-handling skills
Exercise 1.1: Scenario – A conflict resolved non-violently
Session 2: Conflict-handling skills
Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory
Session 3: Substance abuse awareness
Evaluation on an intervention

Figure 6.2: The Youth Violence Prevention Training Workshop Program

The workshop was delivered to 22 young people ranging in age from 15 to 23, from both rural and urban areas around Empangeni. The group comprised 18 young people who were still attending schools and universities, with 13 in high school and five at university. The remaining four had one employed youth and three unemployed. Figure 6.2 shows a group of 22 participants who attended the training workshop.

Figure 6.3: Participants (attending the training workshop) with messages on violence and substance abuse

6.3.1 Welcome, Introduction, and House Rules

Before the start, the researcher welcomed the participants and introduced herself. A brief background about peacebuilding was given to the participants and also the study's aim and objectives. The researcher introduced the facilitator from the non-governmental organisation (NGO) who was going to do the substance abuse awareness programme and gave a brief introduction of action group members who had assisted in organising the workshop. On the printed programme handed to the participants, there was an attachment that outlined the ground rules that would guide the workshop. Since the study was participatory, it was important that the participants also developed ground rules that they felt were important to guide the workshop such that they felt that they owned the intervention process. This also helped in another way: since most of the ground rules had come from them, they had an obligation to respect and honour the rules. Harper-Whalen and Morris (2007) stated that when people meet, it is important to develop guidelines (ground rules) to create a safe

learning environment and positive participation. Morris added that a list of ground rules should be discussed and mutually agreed upon by all participants. This gives the participants a voice and allows them to take ownership, which ensures and promotes active engagement. Figure 6.3 shows the agreed-upon ground rules that guided the training workshop.

Guiding Ground Rules
❖ Sign the attendance register ❖ Treat other members with respect, even in the face of disagreement ❖ Respect time and good time keeping when returning after breaks ❖ Raise your hand to speak ❖ Participate in discussions ❖ Ask questions ❖ Respect the person speaking ❖ Turn off cellular phones ❖ Respect for each other's opinions ❖ Listen to each other ❖ Don't laugh at other people's responses ❖ Speak loudly ❖ Everyone is equal in the group ❖ Freedom to ask questions without fear ❖ Confidentiality

Figure 6.4: Training workshop agreed-upon ground rules

Ground rules were used to effectively communicate a set of rules on how the participants were expected to interact and conduct themselves during the workshop. Ground rules also create a respectful environment and ensure that the participants are given an opportunity to participate, share their opinions meaningfully, and contribute freely without fear. Since PAR calls for the involvement of participants in all stages of

the research, when participants are free to participate, they feel that they are fully involved and valued.

During the planning phase with the action team, role plays and discussions in groups were highlighted as methods that would ensure the full cooperation of all the participants while giving an element of entertainment. After finishing the ground rules exercise, the participants were divided into four groups. Group members were to work together as a team in all activities for the day. It was emphasised that they all had equal rights in the project and that no one was superior to another. Whenever there was an exercise that required group work, the participants were required to brainstorm and thereafter choose either to report back as a whole group or nominate members who would report. In the same way, when there were scenarios that required participants to act out role plays, as a group, they would choose who would act in the role plays. This was to allow the participants to take decisions on their own and ensure the effective participation of all group members.

6.3.2 Session 1: Communication

The aim of the communication session was to allow an open discussion on conflict dynamics and to empower the participants with basic practical communication skills that they could use in their everyday life to help them resolve disputes more peacefully.

The communication exercise was performed via discussions in groups after which they were required to act out role plays. Of the four groups formed, two groups were to develop a scenario of a conflict that had not been resolved due to miscommunication, and the other two groups' scenario was a conflict resolved non-violently due to effective communication. This exercise would assist the participants to see that where there is effective communication, parties in conflict can resolve the conflict in a nonviolent manner. This was also to raise awareness that nonviolent solutions are possible and can be practised. It was going to be impossible for all four groups to present at once due to time constraints. Therefore, one group from the scenario of a conflict unresolved due to miscommunication and another group from the scenario of

a conflict resolved non-violently due to effective communication were nominated to present. Although only two groups were nominated to present, the researcher had to ensure that the other groups were given an opportunity to perform in other sessions.

Group 1 of the communication scenario presented a conflict between a teacher and a student who had come back late after a lunch break. The teacher started shouting and swearing at the student, and the student started shouting back. This conflict was not resolved because the student felt that the teacher was supposed to speak to her in a respectful manner and not shout at her in front of the class. Group 2 presented a conflict between a teller and a customer. The customer took an item from a shelf because it was marked on sale. When the teller scanned the item at the till point, it had a different price from that on the shelf. The customer mentioned that she was not impressed and that she felt that the store had poor service. When the teller realised that the customer was becoming annoyed, he called the manager to clarify the situation for the customer. The manager came and explained that the price had increased and that they had forgotten to remove the sale price. The manager, however, agreed that the customer could take the item at the sale price. The photos in Figure 6.4 (teacher and a student) and Figure 6.5 (teller and a customer) were taken during the role plays.

Figure 6.5: Communication role play – Group 1 (student and a teacher)

Figure 6.6: Communication role play – Group 2 (customer and teller)

After the presentations, the participants were requested to comment on what they felt the barriers of communication were where the conflict had not been resolved and what they thought were effective communication skills that would lead to a conflict being resolved non-violently. The participants' responses on the barriers to communication were as follows:

> Zola: I feel the language a teacher use when talking to the student was not right.
>
> Zama: Sir was violent towards the student.
>
> Lihle: Adults should learn to respect us. I did not understand why the teacher was shouting.
>
> Zandile: This could have been solved if the teacher took time to listen and get reasons why the student was late instead of assuming.
>
> Mandla: The teacher did what most adults do to us; they never listen to us.
>
> Sipho: All I can say is this is the reality of our lives; as young people, we are taken for granted.
>
> Thabo: Maybe the student should have been considerate as well and not shout back.

The participants' responses on strategies for effective communication were as follows:

> Zama: It helped that the teller was considerate of the customer's feelings and called the manager to explain when she noticed that the customer was getting irritated.
>
> Mandisa: I like the listening skills the manager showed. He allowed the customer to explain her side without interruption.
>
> Mandla: I liked the fact that the manager showed professionalism.
>
> Zuzi: The manager was very friendly and empathetic.
>
> Liz: Both the manager and the teller did not intimidate the customer.
>
> Thabo: If the store manager did not acknowledge and apologise, the conflict was going to be destructive.

The participants' responses above show that when a person is inconsiderate and not willing to listen, the situation can cause conflicts to escalate. In addition, the use of language that shows disrespect (shouting or swearing) can lead to unresolved conflicts. On the other hand, when one is considerate, friendly, and shows empathy and respect, the result is effective communication, thus avoiding conflict becoming violent. It is also important to allow a person to speak without being interrupted and to acknowledge a mistake and apologise.

6.3.3 Session 2: Conflict Handling

In the subsequent session, the Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory, developed by Ron Kraybill, was used to introduce the participants to different conflict-handling styles. This framework states that different people deal with *conflict* in different ways. According to this inventory, the term *conflict handling* refers to the various techniques that individuals choose to handle conflicts and how they decide to behave or act in situations of conflict. The use of the Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory in this training was useful as it allowed the participants to take time to reflect more deeply about their own conflict styles and to equip themselves with a broader range of conflict-handling skills to use when in conflict situations. Gunkel, Schlaegel and Taras (2016: 569) stated that people deal with *conflict* in different ways and that the term *conflict handling*, in their understanding, best demonstrated the techniques that individuals choose to handle conflicts and how they decide to behave in conflict situations. Conflict-handling skills are essential to maintain almost all human relationships, in either their personal or professional lives (Montes, Rodríguez and Serrano 2012: 7).

Howell (2014: 17) stated that the Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory is classified into two categories: calm and storm. The calm category addresses conflict management styles that are common in the early stages of a conflict when feelings have not yet escalated. The storm category refers to the period after the conflict has intensified and tensions have increased. The Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory approach was chosen specifically to allow youth to differentiate their preferred conflict-handling styles under both the calm and storm situations. The Kraybill approach presents five styles of handling

conflict: directing, harmonizing, compromising, cooperating, and avoiding (Kraybill 2013).

The researcher had printed copies of the Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory diagram, which were distributed to all the participants. The different conflict-handling styles, as depicted by Kraybill, were discussed with the participants. Figure 6.6 shows Kraybill five different styles of or approaches to handling conflicts.

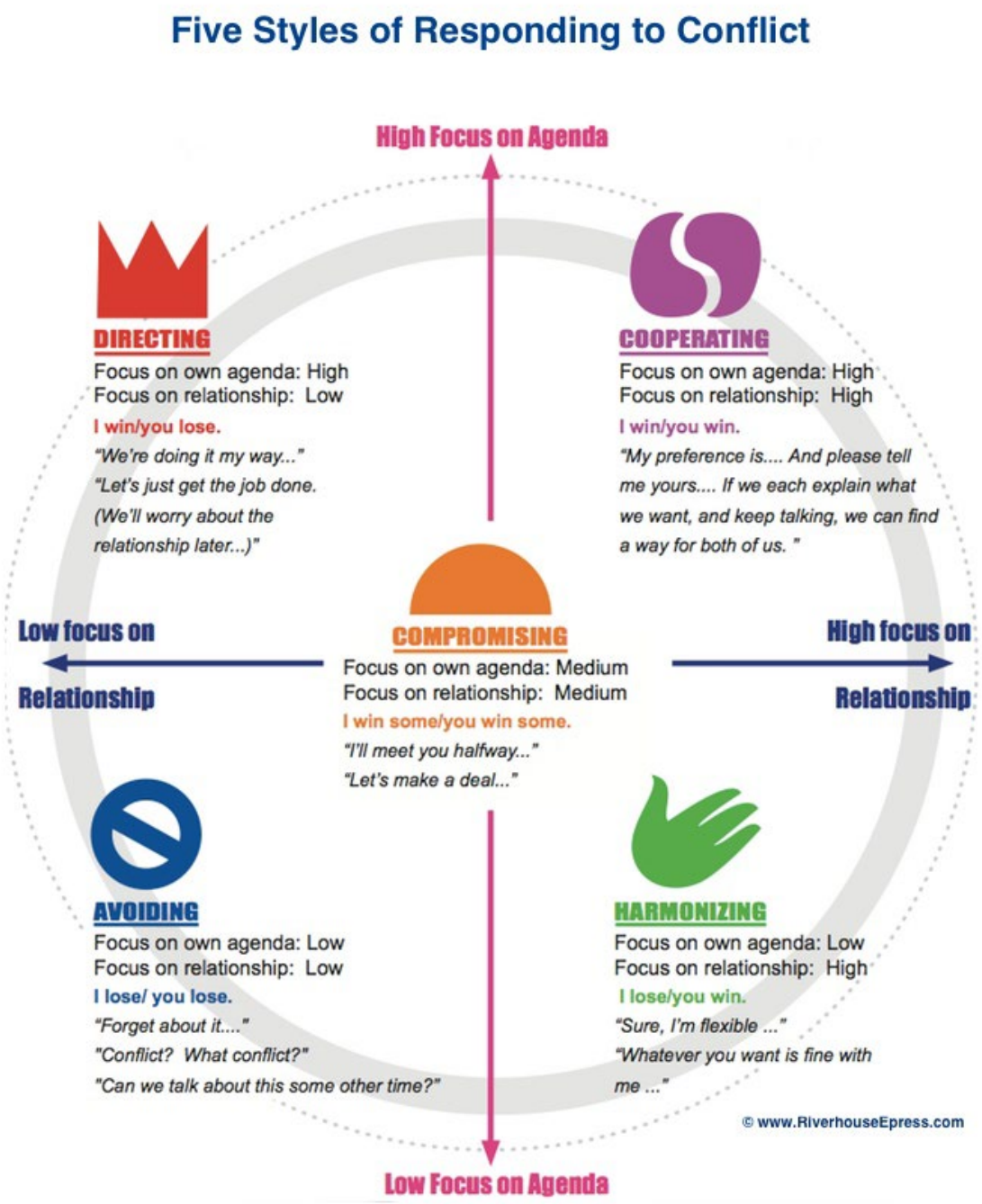

Figure 6.7: The Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory (Kraybill 2013: 11)

The conflict-handling styles of Figure 6.6 used in the training can be summarised as follows:

- A *directing* conflict response has a high focus on one's own agenda (conflict) and a low focus on the relationship with the other party. The directing style is an "I win and you lose" approach.
- A *cooperating* conflict response has a high focus on one's own agenda and relationship with the other party. The directing style is an "I win and you win" approach, meaning that both parties are satisfied because both their needs have been met.
- A *compromising* conflict response has a medium focus on the agenda and relationship with the other party involved in the conflict. The directing style is an "I win some and you lose some" approach.
- An *avoiding* conflict response has a low focus on agenda and relationships. The directing style has a "I lose you lose" approach.
- A *harmonizing* conflict response style has a low focus on agenda and a high focus on relationship. The directing style is a "I lose / you win" approach.

After the training on conflict-handling styles, the participants – in groups, as they were divided earlier – were given one conflict-handling style to discuss further. They were to look at the advantages and disadvantages of the conflict-handling style assigned to the group, after which they would present their points. Although all groups were given the task, only two groups (those that did not present in the communication session) were nominated to present. Group 3 was given the avoiding conflict-handling style and group 4 the collaborating conflict-handling style.

Group 3 decided to act out a role play of siblings who were in conflict about how the household chores were supposed to be distributed amongst them. When their mother saw that the sister was doing much of the household chores, she called both of them to discuss the issue. The sister, instead, decided to avoid the subject, mentioning that she was busy cleaning and that they could perhaps talk about this some other time.

The group leader thereafter presented what they felt were the advantages and disadvantages of the avoiding conflict-management style. Advantages of the avoiding conflict-management style involved the following:

- The participants in group 3 felt that discussing the issue at that time was going to make matters worse since the brother had already shown signs that he was not happy about being called to a meeting. They felt that avoiding helps when there is potential for more misunderstanding.
- They mentioned that it was best that all of them took time to think independently and address the issue when emotions are not high, such that tension could be reduced.
- The participants also mentioned that avoiding conflict helps to reduce unnecessary arguments and confrontations.

Disadvantages of the avoiding conflict-management style involved the following:

- The participants in group 3 mentioned that from the role play, it was evident that by avoiding conflict, the issue was not addressed.
- Avoiding conflict would cause more tension or escalation of an issue since the sister was going to continue doing all the household chores alone.
- Avoiding conflict would delay the solution.
- Avoiding conflict can make someone bottle up feelings of anger, which can later affect one's health.

After group 3 had presented, the participants from the workshop were requested to make comments. The following comments were noted:

> Zama: Disagreements in life are normal; we cannot always agree. For me, avoiding conflict is like saying conflict is bad when at times it is good to disagree to agree.
>
> Lihle: I feel that avoiding conflict only contributes to the problem and prevents it from being resolved.

Zuzi: My younger sister talks nonstop, even over a minor things. To avoid conflict whenever she starts, I just leave the room because she is very manipulative. I always end up being seen as the wrong person.

Mandla: Addressing conflict may cause feeling of embarrassment, especially when you are wrong, but once there is a solution, such feeling soon pass.

Zinhle: When you always avoid conflict, people always say things that upset you knowing you will not say anything.

Sabelo: Personally, I cannot talk when I'm angry, so avoiding conflict by not saying anything works for me.

The comments above imply that people decide to handle conflicts in a way that they feel and think is best for them. Figures 6.7 and 6.8 pertain to group 3's avoiding conflict-management style.

Figure 6.8: Avoiding conflict-handling style – Group 3 discussion

Figure 6.9: Avoiding conflict-handling style – Group 3 role play

Group 4 decided not to do a role play but instead nominated a group leader to explain a scenario; thereafter, he mentioned what the advantages and disadvantages of the collaborating conflict-handling style were. The scenario was of a husband and wife. The husband wanted to go watch soccer with friends, and the wife wanted to go to a church meeting. The problem was that they only had one car. They decided that the husband would first drop the wife off at church, go watch soccer, and later pick her up. Advantages of the collaborating conflict-handling style included the following:

- Both the husband and wife were able to attend to their engagements; thus, they each felt valued in the relationship.
- The collaboration style made the wife feel that she was being respected just as the husband.

- Collaboration makes each party feel that the other party is empathetic towards their needs.
- Collaboration compels parties to listen to each other and fosters understanding. Both the husband and wife took time to listen to and understand each other, leading to a solution that benefited both.
- Collaboration made it possible for both the husband and wife to appreciate each other's perspectives.
- Both the husband and wife were able to obtain what they wanted, and negative feelings were minimised.

Disadvantages of the collaborating conflict-handling style included the following:

- The group mentioned that although both the husband and wife obtained what they wanted, they spent much time and energy trying to reach a mutual agreement.
- It was not very easy to achieve a possible solution; it notably took much effort.
- The process might be tiring; even when both parties ultimately reached an agreement, it was possible that one was no longer too keen to go.

After the presentation for Group 4, participants from the workshop were requested to make comments. The following comments were noted:

> Sipho: I think this style is too close to compromising; what if one were to finish first? It means that the other party will either wait for the other party to finish or cut short his/her engagement.
>
> Zippo: I don't believe someone will just reject getting his needs to be fully met. In my opinion, either the husband or the wife ended up agreeing for the sake of peace.
>
> Zanele: It was really a good thing that both husband and wife assume the responsibility to solve the problem together.
>
> Mandla: All I say is, it is true that "together we stand; divided we fall".

The comments above imply that people will always differ in their opinions regarding the ways that they choose to handle conflicts. Figures 6.9 and 6.10 represent group 4's collaborating conflict-handling style.

Figure 6.10: Collaborating conflict-handling style – Group 4 discussion

Figure 6.11: Collaborating conflict-handling style – Group 4 presentation

6.3.4 Session 3: Substance Abuse

Substance abuse was identified as a significant risk factor in the perpetuation of youth violence. It was, therefore, seen as essential to incorporate substance abuse prevention as part of the training workshop. The key focus in this session was on addressing the presence and impact of substance abuse threatening youth and the community and also to develop solutions that would address the violence inherent in substance abuse. Krug et al. (2002) identified several key strategies for promoting local primary prevention of substance abuse. They suggested that various sectors of society, such as NGOs, government departments, and the private sector, be involved. The researcher requested a social worker from an NGO called Insika Yentsha Foundation to facilitate the session on substance awareness and prevention. The organisation is involved in running substance abuse prevention programmes in schools, churches, and the community. Since the researcher had been involved in substance abuse prevention programmes with the SOG youth, the content to be presented was decided on between the researcher and the facilitator from the NGO before the date of the intervention. Facilitation was, however, conducted by the NGO.

A point of departure in violence prevention and intervention is identifying risk factors and influences, which can inform the types of intervention to address such risk factors. The ecological model for violence, depicted in Figure 6.11, is a multi-level model that outlines the factors that put youth at risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence, as well as those that protect them from experiencing or perpetrating violence (Krug et al. 2002).

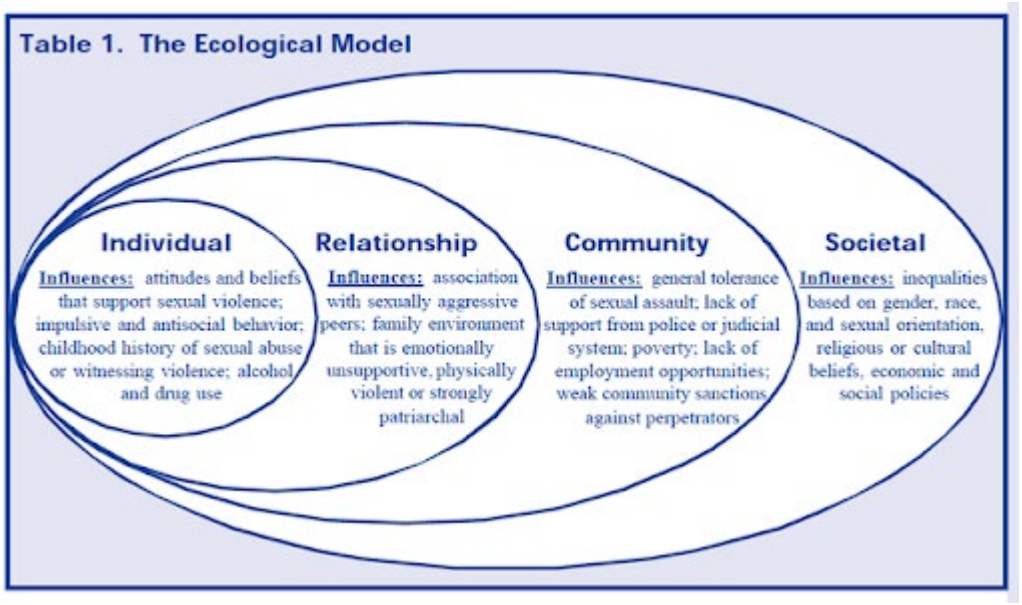

Figure 6.12: The ecological model (Krug *et al.* 2002)

Figure 6.11 from the World Report on Violence and Health by Krug *et al.* (2002) used the ecological model to examine four levels of risk for youth violence, namely, individual factors, relationships, community characteristics, and broader societal factors. Substance abuse is considered a risk factor that may act at, and influence, all levels across the ecological model. The participants were informed that the session was to be conducted using the ecological model to describe several mechanisms of substance abuse and its relationship to violence. Based on Figure 6.11, the ecological levels were discussed as in the following subsections.

6.3.4.1. Individual Level

On an individual level, Figure 6.11 indicates that alcohol and drug use influence the potential for violent behaviour. Where youth witness violence and substance abuse, they can start by using gateway drugs (i.e., alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana) for experimenting, which increases their chances of progressing to more dangerous drugs. Different drugs have varied effects on people regarding violence, with some leading people to have a higher propensity for committing violence.

6.3.4.2. Relationship Level

The state of the family environment has a significant impact on young people's development of violent behaviour and engagement in substance use. Violence and drug abuse in youth tends to be more likely where parents themselves are using drugs, emotionally unsupportive, and physically violent. Having peers who are aggressive and use drugs can also influence one's behaviour in the sense that one might feel left out and feel the need for a sense of belonging.

6.3.4.3. Community Level

People engaging in substance abuse may be involved in drug-related criminal activities, including sexual assaults and other types of violent behaviour while impaired by drugs or alcohol. This is mainly because substance abuse can change one's behaviour and make one act in ways that one would not when sober. The extent to which the law and the police control drug availability and enforce existing laws on violence and the punishment of drug dealers can have a deterrent effect on violence. This is particularly evident with the increase in subsistence use amongst young people.

6.3.4.4. Societal Level

The quality of a country's governance and broader social beliefs can have a direct impact on young people's behaviour, including substance abuse and violence. Shanmugam (2017) stated that social components influencing substance use include tolerance and acceptance, drug-motivating environments, and the availability of the substances in society. Shanmugam (2017) added that societal acceptance of substance use by members of an extended social network, such as adults and peers that young people look up to as role models, have a great influence on their involvement in substance abuse.

Following the presentation on the ecological model of violence, participants were given the chance to make comments and ask questions about substance abuse. The participants had the following to state:

Zinhle: I blame community members for selling drugs to youth, especially “Whoonga”. This leads to an increase in numbers of “Amapara” in our community.

Sihle: In my school, we had more than five students who dropped out and ran away from home due “Whoonga”. What is sad is the way this drug is believed to be addictive; they even steal from their families to get money to buy this drug.

Mandla: The blame should be on elders who are known drug dealers for recruiting and using vulnerable young people to sell drugs for them even in schools.

Zippo: My school has turns to an unsafe and ungovernable environment because students who sell drugs to other students are gang members, and they are being feared even by teachers.

Sizwe: Many adults seem not to care about young people because not much is done.

Mandla: Since I am unemployed, I was once approached by a known drug dealer and convinced me that I can make money by working for him and sell drugs.

Sipho: It is a known fact that drug dealers have money; they own big cars and wear expensive brands. I do understand why many younger people are attracted to their lifestyle.

Zama: Most young people who work for drug dealers carry dangerous weapons and guns. I think this is why there is so much violence in our area.

It was clear that the issue of substance abuse had stimulated the participants' interest. The researcher realised the significance of this topic and the necessity of further sessions in other settings to allow it to be explored further. This is presented and recommended as an area of suggested future research later in the thesis.

6.4 Evaluation

6.4.1 Introduction

This section deals with the evaluation of the intervention (training programme). This is in line with the third objective of this study, which is to evaluate the effectiveness of the awareness programme designed and implemented to reduce violence. The

evaluation process was also going to serve as the short-term impact of the intervention as well as a means of identifying whether the objectives of the intervention had been achieved. It can be noted that although an evaluation was done, which, in this case, was a short-term impact of the intervention, the long-term impact might only become apparent over the years from the changes in young people's attitudes and behaviours. Due to uncertainties regarding lockdown levels, it would have been a challenge to organise a different date for the evaluation process. The evaluation process was carried out immediately after the training workshop.

Several approaches to evaluation were employed. Before the start of the training, the participants were asked to discuss, verbally, their expectations of the workshop. There was also an ongoing process of self-reflection and feedback during the training workshop. After the training workshop, the participants were requested to complete evaluation forms. The purpose of evaluation was explained, and the importance of confidentiality was emphasised. It was explained that participation was voluntary and that the participants were free to withdraw from the process should they have wished to do so. The evaluation form had two parts (Appendix A). The first part was a questionnaire (Part A) with eight questions measuring responses on a 5-point Likert scale, with the possible responses including "strongly agree", "agree", "strongly disagree", "disagree", and "no response". The following were included in the questionnaire part, which was to determine the participants' views on whether the workshop had met their expectations and whether the objectives of the intervention had been achieved:

1. All COVID-19 protocols were observed.
2. The meeting facilities were adequate, safe, and comfortable.
3. The objectives of the training were clear.
4. Participation and interaction were encouraged.
5. The content was organised and easy to follow.
6. The materials distributed were helpful.
7. This training experience will be useful in my life.
8. The facilitators were knowledgeable and well prepared.

Of the 22 participants, 15 participants consented to take part in the evaluation process by completing the evaluation form. Table 6.2 indicates their responses.

Table 6.2: Reviewing Part A of the evaluation responses (N=15)

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**No response**
1. All COVID protocols were observed	15	x	x	x	x
2. The meeting facilities were adequate, safe, and comfortable	11	4	x	x	x
3. The objectives of the training were clear	15	x	x	x	x
4. Participation and interaction were encouraged	15	x	x	x	x
5. The content was organised and easy to follow	13	2	x	x	x
6. The materials distributed were helpful	14	1	x	x	x
7. This training experience will be useful in my life	15	x	x	x	x
8. The facilitators were knowledgeable and well prepared	15	x	x	x	x

All 15 participants who participated in the evaluation strongly agreed that all COVID-19 protocols had been observed. This feedback was very important since the researcher had a role to ensure that all the participants who attended had limited exposure to COVID-19. Out of 15 participants, 11 strongly agreed that facilities were adequate, safe, and comfortable, and the remaining four agreed. During the

introduction, the aim and objective of the study, which is to reduce violence in Empangeni, was presented to the participants. All 15 participants strongly agreed that the workshop objectives had been clearly stated. All 15 participants indicated a strong affirmation regarding participation and interaction during the training, indicating that they were all pleased with the proceedings.

This was also noticeable by their enthusiasm during role plays and discussions in groups. The facilitators had ensured that the participants take ownership of the process by constantly encouraging participation during the intervention. All indicated that the content was organised and easy to follow, with 13 strongly agreeing and two agreeing. Fourteen of the 15 participants indicated that the distributed learning material had been very helpful; they strongly agreed, while the remaining one participant agreed. All 15 participants strongly agreed with the notion that this training experience would be useful in their lives. All 15 participants strongly agreed that the facilitators were knowledgeable and well prepared. This section focuses on the facilitators' knowledge and how they responded to questions from the participants.

6.4.2 Reviewing Part B of the Evaluation Responses

The evaluation form also had the following four open-ended questions that allowed the participants to discuss their experiences and give feedback on the training workshop more fully, highlighting what they had learned (skills and knowledge) and reflecting on what could still be improved:

1. What did you enjoy most about the training workshop?
2. What aspects of the training could be improved?
3. What new skills have you gained in this training workshop?
4. In what ways will the knowledge and skills gained during this workshop help to influence changes in your life and your community?

The participants were asked what they had enjoyed most about the training workshops, and they gave various views about the training. The Part B evaluation

responses are presented as follows, and the responses indicate that the participants enjoyed the training workshop:

> Zinhle: The workshop was not boring because it was not like in a classroom where only the teacher speak. We were given a chance to participate.
>
> Zuzi: This was a great workshop; I enjoyed role plays a lot, and they were fun and interesting.
>
> Thandi: I enjoyed the role plays. Some of the group were so good; it was like they were trained to do acting.
>
> Mandla: Role plays were so real because we were acting roles in our everyday life.
>
> Sizah: I enjoyed the part where we were doing group discussion more because all my group members were understanding each other.
>
> Thabo: I am a very shy person. For me, speaking in a big audience is a challenge. Because were divided in smaller groups, I was able to speak more freely.
>
> Zama: I was given a role of being a director for a role play in our group; dude, I felt so real.
>
> Sihle: Refreshing, fun, exciting, worthwhile, refreshing, entertaining, and educational; that's all I can say.
>
> Sipho: The guy who did substance abuse facilitation was almost our age; I believe most of us could relate to him and understand him better.
>
> Mandy: The list of people we can contact about substance abuse was so useful. I will give to others.
>
> Lindiwe: I was happy to meet new people for a change. We even exchange numbers.

The participants were impressed by being given a chance to actively participate throughout the process. The participants also particularly appreciated a chance to act out real-life experiences through role plays. This made it easier for them to relate to the topics discussed and learn from them more fully. Discussions in small groups gave the participants who were shy the opportunity to express their views. The discussions in groups also indicated that the participants felt honoured to be part of the workshop

as it enabled them to contribute their views freely and participate in issues that were relevant to their everyday lives. The workshop was centred on PAR principles, and the young participants were given opportunities to lead discussions and activities. The participants used words such as “refreshing”, “fun”, “exciting”, “worthwhile”, “entertaining”, “energetic”, and “educational” to describe their experiences of the workshop. The participants mentioned that having a young facilitator on substance abuse was also helpful because they could easily relate to him and since the examples that he used were relevant to their generation. They also liked that he had referrals including himself to help young people and their families who had been affected by substance abuse.

The participants were asked about the extent to which the workshop had contributed to enhancing their knowledge and understanding of communication, conflict, and substance abuse. Their responses included the following:

> Mandla: I would say this workshop has contributed a lot towards me understanding that how we communicate with others is very important.
>
> Sipho: Most the terms used were completely new to me; for example, peacebuilding. I now have a basic understand about it.
>
> Zama: I knew the word conflict, but I had no knowledge of the ways you can use to handle conflict. Peacebuilding I never heard of it. I think I am now more interested in the field. I want to study more because I think it suits my personality.
>
> Zandile: I was not aware there are different ways to handle conflict. The way it was explained, I think I know what method works for me.
>
> Lihle: If I were to rate it, I would say 9 out 10; this is how much this workshop contributed to my understanding, especially to substance abuse.
>
> Thabo: The topic about substance abuse was an eye-opening experience. I wish more young people could have attended.
>
> Zinhle: I think the psychological effects of substance of abuse was a scary part for me.
>
> Mandy: I was not aware that alcohol is also a gateway drug and how experimenting can lead to addiction.

Jabu: I now have a better understanding of conflict.

The participants acknowledged that the workshop had improved their knowledge and understanding of communication, conflict, and substance abuse. Some of the concepts, particularly peacebuilding, were unfamiliar to the majority of them. According to the participants, the intervention provided them with an opportunity to gain knowledge in the field of peacebuilding, particularly for some who were hearing about the concept of peacebuilding for the first time. The participants highlighted that they had learned communication and conflict-handling skills. These skills had not only helped them to understand these two concepts but also helped them to facilitate the change processes in their lives. The participants mentioned that the substance abuse session had been an “eye opener”, especially regarding the psychological effects that substance abuse has on youth.

With regard to the question “what aspect of the training can be improved?” the responses included the following:

> Zama: Maybe next time if the workshop can take two days. I feel it workshop was too long.
>
> Lihle: Time, I fail to understand why youth trainings are not given enough time like for adults.
>
> Mandy: Substance abuse is really bad, we need to talk about it. More time was supposed to be allocated to the topic.
>
> Zinhle: Filling the evaluation forms immediately after the workshop when were already tired did not work. I think that is why many people declined to participate.
>
> Thabo: I once participated in a research program. The researcher promised to come back with answers of some the issues raised, but he never did. Maybe a follow-up after this workshop will show the researcher do care for us.

Almost all the participants raised concerns about time. The issue of time had an impact on the evaluation process. The participants also mentioned that they felt that filling the evaluation form immediately after the workshop had been a little tiring. More people

would have done it if it had been administered at a different time and not immediately after the workshop. Concerns were also raised that programmes that are beneficial to young people are not given sufficient time. The participants indicated that the final session on substance abuse, in particular, probably required a little more time. The discussion was very useful, and more time would have allowed for important issues to be explored more deeply. On reflection, the researcher also realised that this topic had attracted noteworthy interest, become sensitive, and raised mixed feelings, and perhaps further research to explore this topic was needed. The participants also mentioned that when people do research for academic purposes once they have graduated, they never show interest in the participants. Perhaps there should be ongoing engagement to see how young people responded to some of the issues presented during the intervention program. In other words, programmes or interventions should not be “once-off events”. The researcher took note of these concerns raised and realised that these were also going to influence the way that she would run the SOG programme moving forward. There will have to be changes in the way that the programme runs “youth talks”. The programme needs to allow more participation and obtain ideas from young people themselves on the topics that they feel are important to them and that they wish to explore.

The participants were asked “in what ways did the knowledge and skills gained during this workshop help to influence changes in your life and your community?”, and the responses included the following:

> Zama: Knowledge is power. I think this workshop helped to understand I might just have avoided fight we always have with brother if I had knowledge that there are ways to handle conflict.
>
> Thabo: My friends think I talk anyhow. They normally say I have no “filters”. The topic of communication helped me a lot.
>
> Sabelo: Learning that although we cannot always avoid conflict, but we can learn how to behave when in conflict situation is the message I will spread across.
>
> Seth: It’s true that prevention is better than cure. When we share all these things, we learned today with our friends they will help to reduce violence in our community.

Sabelo: Me and my friend, we do some smoke dagga for fun occasionally, but when the facilitator explain fun can lead to addiction, I realised we are all at risks.

Mandla: My older brother thinks dagga is harmless because it's just herbs. Today, I learned that they now add other ingredients to dagga so that one gets addicted, and it increase their sales. I will surely pass this information to him.

Thobeka: I am involved in student affairs in my school. I will speak to the principal that we invite the NGO who was doing substance abuse facilitation. Many students will benefit; we need this information.

Zama: The way drugs are a problem in our community, I want to do an initiative to raise drug awareness after lockdown.

The participants noted that a lack of effective communication and conflict-handling skills can lead to violence because when people are not aware how to handle conflict, major problems can arise. They also indicated their willingness to inform their peers and families about the effects of substance abuse. The participants mentioned that with the skills learned, they hoped to help their peers and families, which would ultimately help the community.

6.5 Summary

This chapter discussed the design, implementation, and evaluation of the youth violence prevention training workshop. The workshop focused mainly on communication, conflict-handling skills, and substance abuse awareness. The whole process was guided by the principles of PAR methodology. Based on PAR principles, the youth in this study were given an opportunity to choose and plan a local community intervention of their choice that directly impacted their lives. The youth were also given an opportunity to participate throughout the project.

The second section of the chapter focused mainly on evaluating the training intervention. The process of evaluation was in the form of a questionnaire, divided into two sections. Part A consisted of eight quantitative questions that asked participants to rate various aspects of the training intervention, measuring responses on a 5-point

Likert scale with the possible responses including “strongly agree”, “agree”, “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, and “no response”. Part B included four open-ended questions that allowed participants to provide more detailed feedback on the training workshop, highlighting skills and knowledge learned and reflecting on what could still be improved.

Overall, the responses from the participants indicated that they had gained much information and many skills from the workshop, which helped change their mind-sets about different aspects of life. The success of the workshop meant that there was hope that these young people would be agents of change in the community. The evaluation, however, revealed that the participants had concerns about time. They indicated that 1 day had not been enough, and they felt that the session on substance abuse should have been allocated more time because of its sensitivity and impact on youth. Although overall the intervention was a success, which was a short-term impact, since people’s behaviour in general does not change overnight, the long-term impact might only be seen in years to come.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

7.1. Introduction

This chapter of the thesis provides a summary of what was covered in the previous chapters and discusses the study findings in relation to the study objectives. The chapter also presents my personal reflections on the study, recommendations**,** and the conclusion.

7.2 Summary of what was covered in the previous chapters

Chapter One

The first chapter contains the background to the study, highlighting the understanding of violence in South Africa from an apartheid-era historical perspective. Although young people who form part of this study are “born-frees”, born after 1994, and were not directly affected by apartheid, they do however continue to experience apartheid-related conditions that are closely related to, and in some cases constitute, violence. The research motivation included the desire to see youth who are affected by violence getting involved in designing and implementing an intervention programme of their own that is aimed at effecting positive change in the community. This was achieved through the utilisation of a PAR approach which ensured the full inclusion and participation of the affected community in the process of conducting this research. Chapter One also outlines the study limitations, delimitations, and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two

This chapter covers key literature in the research area, specifically in relation to the concepts of conflict, violence, and peace. In trying to understand the concept of conflict, the study used Galtung’s 1996 ABC triangle, where (A) represents Attitudes, (B) Behaviour, and (C) Contradictory Goals. In Galtung’s view, conflict is largely informed by these components, and all three have to be fully present for a conflict to

exist. The chapter also covers three ways of dealing with conflict, namely conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. The study explores the three well-known approaches in defining the concept of violence: the exemplar approach, the social psychology approach, and the public health approach. In understanding the concept of violence, the study furthermore discussed three categories of violence as classified by the WHO: self-directed violence, interpersonal violence, and collective violence, as well Galtung's (1969) three major types of violence, namely, direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence. The section also explores youth as victims and/or perpetrators of violence, taking into account the factors that increase or decrease the likelihood of young people becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. The study used Bronfenbrenner's four-level Ecological Model to understand multiple factors that give rise to violence: individual, familial or relationship, community, and societal level factors. These four factors influence the behaviour to commit or not commit violence. The study furthermore explores two theories of human development in relation to youth, and their implications, particularly from the perspective of violence. Erikson's (1982) Psychosocial Development Theory, which uses an intrapersonal focus, summarising eight stages of psychosocial development, from infancy to adulthood; and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Development Theory, which focuses on how the environment surrounding the developing person influences and affects their development. The ecological systems theory helps with an understanding of how youth are influenced by their social relationships and the world in which they live. To understand the concept of peace, the study use Galtung's Mini Peace Theory (2007) which gives two typologies of peace, namely positive and negative peace, as well as Galtung's (1976) three approaches to peace: peacekeeping, peace-making, and peacebuilding. Finally, the chapter explores the meaning of peacebuilding with reference to the potential of youth as peacebuilders.

Chapter Three

This chapter discusses two key theories guiding the study: the Conflict Transformation Theory and the Youth Participation Theory. The Conflict Transformation Theory is influenced by Lederach (2003), and it considers peace to be centred on and anchored

in the quality and nature of relationships. Its main goal is to transform the systems, structures, and relationships that contribute to violence and injustice. Youth Participation Theory focuses on making youth feel that they are a significant part of the community and aims to give them a voice and make them feel valued, respected, and appreciated. It has different dimensions and aspects for organising engagement efforts. This study adopted the youth–adult partnership approach, where youth and adults work together as equal partners to make suggestions and share decisions on issues affecting the community. The study also discusses Hart's (1992) Ladder of Youth Involvement and Shier's (2001) Pathways to Participation in exploring ways of understanding youth participation. Hart's model proposes different strategies to engage youth in all levels of participation and to eliminate or remove non-participatory practices. This helps to ensure that youth play an important part regarding planning the course of action as well as being given a chance to speak about their views and concerns with regard to society. Shier's (2001) Pathways to Participation Model highlights the connection between involvement and being aware, and therefore focuses on the duties of adults when creating spaces where youth can actively contribute to decision-making that directly or indirectly affects their lives.

Chapter Four

The objective of Chapter Four is to explain the methodology used in the study, outlining the adoption of a qualitative approach. Since this study sought to examine the experiences and perceptions of the youth on the causes of violence in Empangeni, the qualitative research approach was the most suitable and effective method in drawing out in-depth and rich responses from the participants. The qualitative approach assisted the researcher in gaining deep insight and contextual experiences from the youth who were, in one way or another, involved in the violence in Empangeni. Moreover, the use of a qualitative approach allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the types and causes of violence experienced by the youth in Empangeni. This study drew on the broad principles of PAR by paying specific attention to the inclusion and participation of the community, and the research followed a cyclical mode including planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and re-planning. The chapter also discusses population and sampling procedures. The population in this

study consisted of 60 youth who are members of the SOG Youth Programme, and the sample size for this study included n=15 youth above 18 and below 35 years of age who were selected from the SOG Youth Programme. Face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data. These two techniques of data collection allowed the researcher to gain access to and understand people's ideas, thoughts, beliefs, understandings, experiences, and perceptions that cannot be directly observed. Data analysis was performed using Braun and Clarke's 2006 thematic analysis. To address ethical considerations, permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Durban University of Technology's Institutional Research Ethics Committee prior to the initiation of the research process. Finally, the chapter covers the personal reflections of the researcher on conducting interviews and focus group discussions.

Chapters 5 and 6 are discussed below.

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7.3 The Study Objectives:

(a) To identify the types and causes of violence experienced by the youth in Empangeni.

(b) To design and implement a youth awareness programme that will help to reduce youth violence in Empangeni.

(c) To evaluate the effectiveness of the designed and implemented awareness programme in reducing violence.

7.3.1. Summary of the Findings

Objectives of this research and the results for each are summarised below:

Objective 1: To identify types and causes of violence experienced by the youth in Empangeni

The findings for Objective One were presented in Chapter Five of this study. Data was collected using focus group discussions which were followed by individual interviews for further clarification. Both sets of data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's 2006 thematic analysis. The data presented in Chapter Five reflected three major themes and ten sub-themes derived from focus group discussions and interviews.

Amongst the many types of violence, participants identified physical and gender-based violence as being the most prevalent forms of violence encountered by youth in Empangeni. The study revealed that physical violence (in the form of beatings, battery, fist fights, knife stabbings and shootings) is one of the most prevalent forms of violence in this community. Participants gave numerous accounts of incidents of physical violence which they had either witnessed or been personally involved in at home, school or in the neighbourhood. The most important concern raised was how physical violence leads to serious harm, injury or even death, due to employment of dangerous weapons including firearms. A second common experience discussed by participants was gender-based violence. This type of violence was understood as occurring due to unequal power dynamics and gender-specific normative role expectations. The most prevalent forms of GBV experienced by youth in Empangeni are sexual violence and intimate-partner violence (IPV), where men were identified as the most common perpetrators. Sexual violence was found to be common within the home/family environment, as well as in communal and educational settings. The study also revealed that intimate-partner violence was common within or outside family spaces between former or current spouses. Findings revealed that IPV is shaped by cultural norms that consider men as being superior to women.

Participants also engaged in in-depth discussions about the major factors influencing the prevalence of violence. They identified both direct and indirect causes. Some of the causes identified included: substance abuse, peer influence, ongoing exposure to violence, and lack of economic opportunities. Participants argued that there is a substantial link between substance abuse and increased levels of violence in their community. Drugs and substances such as dagga, glue, alcohol, heroin and Whoonga were reported to be commonly consumed by youth and easily accessible in the area.

Peer influence was also identified as a major contributing cause of violence. Youths perceived their immediate social groups as playing a crucial role in them engaging in violent behaviour. This theme explored how displays of violence were commonly used by young community members as a means of gaining acceptance from their peer group. Furthermore, exposure to violence in early developmental stages was commonly discussed as being linked to victimisation or perpetration of violence later in life. The study also revealed that economic frustration due to lack of employment or entrepreneurial opportunities is a risk-factor as participants felt that youth may engage in violent behaviour for economic gain.

The key implications associated with violence explored in this study included poor mental health (post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] and depression), the adoption of coping strategies, vigilantism and desensitisation. Victims of violence are at a very high risk of suffering from PTSD and depression. They also adopt problematic coping strategies to protect themselves from crime and violence, for example carrying light handheld weapons and travelling in groups with the belief that they may have a chance to fight off perpetrators. My concerning finding was the degree to which participants shared these ideas and how they expressed a feeling of revenge and an emphasis on the need for vigilantism, as both of these factors may lead to more violence. It may be deduced that repetitive exposure to violence may lead to normalisation of and desensitisation to violence in young people.

Objective 2: To design and implement a youth awareness programme that will help to reduce youth violence in Empangeni

The second objective was explored in Chapter Six. From the information gathered from participants during individual interviews and focus group discussions, numerous suggestions for possible interventions for reducing youth violence in the community were raised. These suggestions included social media awareness campaigns, community awareness campaigns on violence, a school-based awareness campaign, training on violence prevention, and involvement of relevant government departments in the fight against violence. Unfortunately, due to the lockdown restrictions linked to

the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the suggestions were not feasible. Together with the action group we finally decided and agreed on a youth violence prevention training workshop as the most suitable intervention. In particular, participants identified communication, conflict and substance abuse as the most important themes to be explored. These were concepts identified as needing urgent attention, with youth raising concerns about the increasing levels of substance abuse in the community as well as how a lack of effective communication and conflict handling skills often results in violence. The training workshop incorporated role plays and small group discussions to ensure full co-operation and effective participation of all participants. The training workshop was held on 9 August 2021 at Holy Name Anglican Church, Ngwelezane Township in Empangeni with 22 participants between the ages of 15 and 23 years. This was a diverse group, with attendees from both rural and urban areas around Empangeni, both high school and university students, as well as both employed and unemployed youth.

Objective 3: Evaluate the effectiveness of the awareness programme designed and implemented in reducing violence

After the training workshop, an evaluation was carried out in order to address Objective 3 of study. The evaluation process was conducted in two parts. Part A followed a questionnaire format, requesting that participants rate different aspects of the training intervention. The participants were asked to respond using a 5-point Likert Scale with possible responses comprising strongly agree, agree, no response, disagree and strongly disagree. Part B asked participants to provide more detailed feedback on the training workshop. More specifically, they were asked to highlight the skills and knowledge they learned as well as what could have been improved. Responses from both Part A and Part B suggested that the workshop was successful and informative, with participants indicating how being given a chance to actively participate throughout the process made them feel that their views and opinions were valued. The participants acknowledged that the workshop had contributed to enhancing their knowledge and understanding of how inadequate communication and conflict-handling skills can lead to violence. They also highlighted how the substance

abuse session had been an “eye opener”, especially regarding the psychological effects that substance abuse has on youth.

It was interesting, at the end of the workshop, to hear young people committing to making a difference in their own communities and being agents of social change. Some indicated they will involve local councillors, school principals and local churches to create platforms where they will teach their peers about peacebuilding, communication and conflict handling skills, as well as the dangers and effects of substance abuse. It was a heart-warming experience to hear youth acknowledging that their knowledge before and after the workshops made them realise they could do more to make a difference in their own communities. I felt that the training workshop was an event that raised future leaders and directly contributed to creating safer communities.

7.4. Personal Reflections

When I look back and reflect on the experience of conducting this research project, I have discovered that although this was a long, demanding and lonely venture, the overall experience was intriguing, exciting and most rewarding. The research has been an amazing experience both on a personal and an academic level. I truly enjoyed this process (at least most of it). It was a transformative process and a journey of self-discovery that taught me a lot about perseverance when life-changing events occur. The research process required me to be patient, to revaluate the way I view certain situations and to learn to adapt as contexts change. This became a reality during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic which affected the country at the time I was supposed to start the field work.

The first major challenge posed by the pandemic was the reduction in direct contact with other people. Limiting contact with other people was a big challenge, since my study follows a participatory action research approach. Conducting face-to-face interviews and focus groups requires physical interaction; therefore, the lockdown meant it would not be ethical or safe to allow this field work, at that time. I tried to look

into many alternate methods of data collection including virtual techniques; however, none of these approaches were going to allow me to achieve the research objectives of the study. My other challenge with using a virtual approach was that most of my participants are either students or unemployed. They do not have access to social media platforms or the internet. The only option was to wait and put data collection on hold until the COVID-19 situation stabilised. This was the most challenging decision I had to take, since the academic plan to conclude the study within a specific period was going to be affected and I had to adjust my plans for data collection. The uncertainties of the pandemic created new challenges and made planning for those challenges far more difficult. Even when the lockdown restrictions were relaxed, I still had a challenge with participants who were not comfortable leaving their homes or interacting with others. For those who were willing to participate I had an obligation to ensure that necessary safety precautions were observed in order to protect participants, myself and our families. Taking safety precautions also required substantial protective equipment, none of which had been budgeted for. I was also faced with the challenge of finding a different venue in order to ensure proper social distancing. The pandemic, as a result, made contingency critical to the completion of my research. This experience has however taught me the importance of building flexibility into plans, should unforeseen circumstances occur.

As mentioned in the motivation for the study in Chapter One, the main objective when I started The Seed of Greatness Youth Programme (SOG) in 2016 was to create a space and environment where youth could feel free to share their struggles, challenges, fears, dreams and hopes while being afforded a nurturing environment. The aim was to provide a space that could help them learn new skills and knowledge about how they can build and create a positive sense of self, self-control and positive decision-making skills. The young people who participated in the study acknowledged that taking part in this study afforded a safe space and welcoming environment to contribute their views freely and engage with issues that were relevant to their lives. They were able to meet their peers and have proper conversations with each other and explore life lessons without being judged. This was particularly evident during the substance abuse session, where some young people shared their struggles with

substance abuse without fear of being undermined. Fortunately, the social worker from an NGO who facilitated the session on substance awareness and prevention was able to assist participants with referrals, where needed. This session on substance abuse attracted noteworthy interest, became sensitive, and raised mixed feelings within participants and myself. For me, it became clear that participants who acknowledged that they have experimented with or used illicit substances recreationally were not aware that experimental and recreational usage can lead to addiction**.** Secondly, for regular users, although they acknowledged intense emotional withdrawal symptoms, it was clear that they were not aware of the serious consequences of substance abuse in the long run, including brain damage. Although participants did not want to mention specific places where young people obtain drugs, it was evident that they are easily accessible to young people in my community. All this information was an eye-opener for me and made me realise that, as a community, we need to engage our youth in drug awareness programmes and drug education activities. This will help to educate them about the negative effects of substance abuse and assist them to make healthy and safe choices. Having been engaged with young people in this study and been made aware of how substance abuse is a major challenge in this community, for both youth and the community at large, I believe that education and prevention may not only stop youth from being initiated into drug use in the first place, but it may also help those who are already addicted to reach out for help, overcome addiction and ultimately stop using. I have a huge a concern that if there are no interventions implemented, more and more young people could be initiated into drug use which will, in turn, increase violence in the area. This suggests prevention strategies and interventions should be a priority in this community. A positive outcome of the substance abuse session was the number of young people who were willing to impact change in their community. I am confident that working with them in the SOG programme to organise substance abuse prevention strategies and interventions will make a difference that will yield positive results.

The utilisation of PAR for the study which allowed youth to share their stories and find solutions for challenges themselves helped me to realise the importance of allowing youth to take an active role in addressing the social issues facing the community in

future engagements with my organisation. For instance, I had previously had sessions with SOG youth, before I conducted the study that did not forefront their involvement. In this current study, however, youth were closely involved and actively participated in all stages of the research, from deciding what specific issues they thought needed to be addressed to detailed and meaningful contributions to proposing and implementing solutions. In the process, I also learned valuable skills and lessons about the importance of youth involvement and participation which will help me in running SOG in the future. The discussions during interviews and focus groups allowed me to gain more insight into young people's perspectives on how they see and view certain things through their direct life experiences. As a result of my interactions with participants, I learned to be more open-minded. One thing I learnt from young people is that they have no fear of speaking their minds and showing their creativity by brainstorming the boldest ideas, despite knowing their limitations. This taught me not to adapt to social norms and accepted ways of thinking, or hold back creative ideas because I am convinced that they might not become a reality. I also observed that although I knew most participants personally from SOG, and had some idea of the experiences they had faced, the research process raised more important and complex personal and emotional issues which they were able to share comfortably during the individual interviews. On reflection, it was clear that different parts of the research process became useful in different cases, especially where people needed privacy and a safe space to explore sensitive subjects or share sensitive information. This grew my consciousness on the importance of confidentiality and giving assurance that whatever young people share with me will remain confidential when dealing with some of the issues affecting young people in the future.

Furthermore, the research process has helped me to be aware of my strengths and weaknesses, which may have an impact on other projects I might be engaged in in the future. I consider myself a good listener. This strength was extremely useful during interviews and focus group discussions. In the process, I discovered that my good listening skills allow me to be very observant. It was clear to me when my participants were uncomfortable about talking about something and I was immediately able to try to look for an alternative way of addressing the issue. One of my weaknesses is that

my main method for helping people has tended to involve problem-solving for others, rather than attempting to empower them. Working with youth taught me to make a conscious effort to refrain from suggesting potential solutions, and instead allow young people to reflect and explore alternative strategies in depth for themselves, and let them come up with their own solutions. This demonstrated the effectiveness of participatory action research and highlighted a fundamental change in approach and attitude that I need to undergo when dealing with young people.

7.5. Significance of the research and recommendations for further action

The introduction of Life Orientation in schools has been a huge advance by the Department of Education- (DoE). This subject aims to assist and guide young people in making positive decisions about their health, environment, subject and career choices, as well as to equip them to live meaningful and successful lives in a rapidly changing and transforming society. A recommendation from this study would be for the DoE to include a curriculum from junior phase to tertiary level that deals with conflict, violence, and peace education. This will empower learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, from a very young age, that will ensure that the next generation lives in a safer and more peaceful society. The most important aspects to cover here would include conflict-handling skills, communication skills, anger management and peace education. Another aspect to be covered would be to teach children from a young age what constitutes violence and abuse, how to recognise the signs and how to understand their impact on an individual and society.

One of the study's key findings suggests that young people are exposed to violence within their home environments and are thus having a wide range of different forms of violence modelled from an early age. It is essential that parents commit to being positive role models for youth and helping to create a nonviolent culture within the home environment. This study highlighted how stereotypes, patriarchy, and gender norms (such as harmful notions of masculinity and femininity) increase the risk of the perpetration and acceptance of violence. There is a need for interventions that aim to

transform and address gender norms early, to disrupt the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and promote positive masculinities and femininities. Such interventions will, in turn, assist with behavioural change and can help to reduce and prevent violent behaviour. In addition, this study reveals that most people justify oppression against women by quoting that the Bible says women should be submissive. Faith-based organizations can play a part in educating their members about concepts of the Bible that are misunderstood and wrongly used by people to perpetuate violence. It is recommended that church leaders engage in training that will adequately prepare them to play a part in educating their members on issues of violence. By offering more spiritually-based programmes within the church, these organisations can spread the message against violence and encourage members to strive to promote a peaceful society.

The issue of substance abuse drew a great deal of attention from the participants during the intervention. The topic requires further sessions in other settings to allow it to be explored more fully. There is a need for anti-drug and alcohol abuse campaigns, to raise awareness about the major challenges, and potential health effects, that substance abuse presents to society, especially to the youth.

Furthermore, Objective 3 of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the awareness programme designed and implemented to reduce violence. This was used to assess whether the intervention had had an impact on youth attitudes and behaviours about violence. As highlighted, the study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the uncertainties regarding the lockdown levels, the study evaluation was conducted immediately after the end of the training workshop. As a result only short-term impact could be assessed. Further research that explores the sustainability of such interventions will be beneficial in understanding the efficacy of these approaches. Assessing and evaluating effectiveness can help to better understand why certain approaches are effective and some are not.

Finally, The findings of this study show that participants believe that amongst the other factors, violence in young people occurs due to ongoing exposure to violence,

substance abuse, peer influence, and lack of economic opportunities. Some participants in the study highlighted that there are however young people who do not get involved in violence in those same communities. Further research could help to understand which individual or communal protective factors foster resilience, and how they can be promoted, particularly in youth in violent communities, such as Empangeni. This would contribute to sustained peacebuilding in this community.

7.6. Conclusion

Violence in all forms is a pervasive problem that affects individuals, families and communities at large. In order to implement a suitable intervention to address violence, this study used Conflict Transformation Theory and Youth Participation Theory to enable the engagement of young people in developing solutions to reduce violence in their community. The study provided a detailed account of the types, causes, and implications of violence experienced by youth in Empangeni. Furthermore, in collaboration with the participants, a training workshop aimed at reducing key factors linked to violence was designed, implemented and evaluated. The Participatory Action Research method proved to be an extremely effective approach for this study. The process allowed the youth of Empangeni to be key role players in the research and to participate in all the stages of the research process with the purpose of creating social change. This involvement made youth feel valued which, in turn, yielded positive results as their involvement and participation in the project increased. The insight and experience acquired through the participatory action research process was valuable for both the researcher and youth in that both learned from each other through the sharing of knowledge in the research process. Young people were introduced to the research process as core researchers and got to learn how the research process works from problem identification, through analysis, to intervention implementation and feedback. Through their collaborative involvement, they were able to implement a peacebuilding programme that aimed to create positive change in their community. As the researcher, I gained a better understanding about participatory action research, particularly how programmes that enhance participants' full involvement and engagement can create positive social change.

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Appendices

Appendix A

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study: Reducing violence through the Seed of Greatness Youth Programme in Empangeni

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Mrs Sonto Mthabela

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Simóne Plüg

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: The aim of the study is to uncover, address and respond to violence challenges that exist amongst the youth of Empangeni Northern KZN, by raising awareness of peace and understanding on how their involvement in peace programmes can provide lasting solutions. The study will make use of the youth from The Seed of Greatness Youth Programme to impact change and be social change agents.

Outline of the Procedures: The participants will be required to take part in a pre-intervention focus group, participate in the peace-building intervention and participate in post-intervention interviews. The time required of participant will be during programme meetings.

Risks/ Rewards to the Participant: Participants will be asked to share their personal experiences and opinions on the topic. There will be no adverse consequences for the participant should they choose to withdraw. There is no remuneration for this study. Participants will not be expected to cover any costs towards the study.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality will be maintained through use of pseudonyms

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Researcher: Sonto Mthabela on 083 567 3984

Supervisor: Dr. Simóne Plüg at SimoneP@dut.ac.za

Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. -

Complaints can be reported to the Director of Research and Postgraduate Support, Prof S Moyo on 0313732577 or moyos@dut.ac.za

Appendix B

CONSENT

Full Title of the Study: Reducing violence through the Seed of Greatness Youth Programme in Empangeni

Names of Researcher/s: Mrs Sonto Mthabela

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Sonto Mthabela, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number:
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature / Right Thumbprint

I, (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Full Name of Researcher Date Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) Date Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date Signature

Appendix C

Request for Permission to Conduct Research at Holy Name Anglican Church-Ngwelezane

To the Rector: Revd. S. Ngema

My name is Mrs Sonto Mthabela, a Masters student (Peace Building) student at the Durban University of Technology. The research I wish to conduct for my dissertation (entitled Reducing violence through the Seed of Greatness Youth Programme in Empangeni) involves addressing and responding to violence challenges that exist amongst the youth of Empangeni Northern KZN, by raising awareness of peace and understanding on how their involvement in peace programmes can provide lasting solutions.

I, hereby seek permission to access the church venue, to conduct research.

I have provided you with **Appendix A letter of information from** the Durban University of Technology.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me (Sonto Mthabela) on 083 567 3984 or at MthabeSo@eskom.co.za. Or Research Supervisor/s: Dr. Simóne Plüg.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sonto Mthabela
Durban University of Technology

DIOCESE OF ZULULAND

Holy Name Anglican Church Ngwelezane

200 Zigabise Road Ngwelezane A, Empangeni

15 July 2021

Dear Mrs S. Mthabela

On behalf of Holy Name Anglican Church Ngwelezane , we wish to inform you that your request to conduct research with the youth in our church premises has been granted.

Yours sincerely

The Rector : Revd S. Ngema

083 966 9815

HOLY NAME ANGLICAN
CHURCH
PO BOX 309
EMPANGENI, 3880

Appendix I: Individual Interview guide

Research topic: Reducing Violence through the Seed of Greatness Youth Programme in Empangeni

Biographical-data of participant

1. Age ----------
2. Gender ----------
3. Marital status ----------
4. Nationality----------
5. Academic/Career status ----------
6. Religion----------
7. Home Language----------
8. Number of years spent in Empangeni ----------

Individual Interview question

- What has it been like being a young person growing up in your community?
- How would you describe your relationship with your family? What experiences do you think have impacted your life thus far from your family?
- How would you describe your relationship with your friends? What lessons have you learned from them about choices in life?
- What personal challenges have you faced when growing up? How did you overcome them and what did you learn from them?
- How do youth in your community handle their differences/conflicts? .If they use force/violence what in your view is the cause? How serious are these violent engagements (that is if they exist) and what impact have they had to youth in your community?

- Are you aware of any organisations, government departments, private companies or individuals that are running programmes/projects with youth in your community to reduce violence?

  If YES, what do they do? (What type of activities have been organised and held) and were they useful or not?
  If NO, what in your view has been the reasons for the failure to implement programmes that reduce violence?
- What resources or support can be useful to ensure that programmes and activities aimed at reducing violence and building peace are sustainable?
- What better support do you think can be provided for you and other youth in your community to impact change and become peace building agents?
- What do you think you and youth in your community can do differently to ensure the next generation has better experiences than you had?
- How do you think youth can work collaboratively or collectively with the community to ensure that, peace building programmes that provide lasting solutions are prioritized in order reduce violence and build peace in your community?

Appendix 2: Focus Group guide

Research topic: Reducing Violence through the Seed of Greatness Youth Programme in Empangeni

Biographical-data of participant

1. Age ----------
2. Gender ----------
3. Marital status ----------
4. Nationality----------
5. Academic/Career status ----------
6. Religion----------
7. Home Language----------
8. Number of years spent in Empangeni ----------

Focus Group Discussion question

1 .Understanding Violence: Young people were asked about their understanding of violence in general, as a means of introducing the subject.

- What is your understanding of violence?

2 .To understand their everyday experiences on violence, participants were asked the following questions:

- Do you feel safe in your area?
- What have you seen that made you feel unsafe?
- When are the time where you feel most unsafe?
- Is it okay to use violence, if someone provokes you?

3 .To understand how young people view the role of women and men in violence. Participants were asked the following questions:

- What messages were you told on how young men/women should behave like?
- How do young men/women behave when in conflict situations?
- Are young men more involved in violence than young women?
- Do conflict rise when young men and young women are mixed?
- Should young women endure violence for the sake of the relationship?
- Should a woman like a guy who is in control of the relationship?

4. To understand young people's experience on forms of violence, the participants were asked the following questions:

- What are the common forms of violence experienced by youth?
- Do you know someone who had experienced any form of youth violence?
- Have you ever personally experienced any form of youth violence?

5. To understand the cause of violence experienced by youth, the participants were asked the following question.

- What do you think are the causes of violence in youth?

6. What can be done to reduce youth violence?

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DUT

REDUCING VIOLENCE THROUGH THE SEED OF UMBATHESO YOUTH PROGRAMME IN ESPANGENI

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management Science: Public Management (Peacebuilding) in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology

Sonto Mthabela
Student Number: 21557062

September 2022

Supervisor: Dr Sindiso Ntuli Date: 19 September 2022

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