



Intervention Strategies to Reduce School Violence in Bhekulwandle Rural Community

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis herewith submitted for the PhD 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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We agree to the submission of this thesis for examination

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving husband, Sifiso Mlambo, my daughter Siphokazi Mlambo for their unfailing support. A special dedication to my late parents, Reverend Norman Mqadi and Zodwa Mqadi (MaDlamini) for introducing me to God and instilling in me love for peacebuilding and education, my maternal great-grandmother (MaZulu who died a decade before I was born). MaZulu was nicknamed **“Peace Be Still”** because of her love for promoting peace in her family and neighborhood. She was instrumental in teaching my mother about the unconditional love of God and also led by example. These are the same values and principles my mother lived by and also instilled in me and to my six siblings.

ABSTRACT

Given the extent of violence in South Africa, it is not surprising that its schools are also venues where various forms of violence are common. Since 1994, in the pursuit of ending violence in schools, attention has been given to ending corporal punishment and reducing other forms of violence; most of these efforts have emphasized retributive discipline methods. This research adopted a restorative approach to violence in one high school, with a focus on grade nine learners in 2019 who would be entering grade 10 in 2020.

An action research approach and a mixed methods research design were employed. Quantitative data from learners was collected via survey questionnaires, and this was supplemented by focus group discussions and interviews with learners, teachers, and other stakeholders. The main finding was that restorative interventions, such as peacemaking circles, together with transformative learning – covering both the curriculum and pedagogy – contributed to building a culture of peace in this high school.

Keywords: school violence, restorative justice, conflict transformation, action research

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MHS	Mbambangwe High School
SHS	Siyabonga High School
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
DV	Dating Violence
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAC	Violence Against Children
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
SEL	Social Emotional Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
ICTs	Information Communication Tools
SRGBV	School-Related Gender-Based Violence
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SMTs	School Management Teams
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
ATCP	Alternatives to Corporal Punishment
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SGB	School Governing Body
CPF	Community Policing Forum
LO	Life Orientation
SAPS	South African Police Service

1 CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The high level of violence that the South African democratic state inherited from the previous regime has resulted in the breakdown of a number of social systems, such as schools, families, and communities, along with some of the highest rates of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in the world; this has been a major contribution to high levels of violence in areas such as Bhekulwandle (Le Mottee and Kelly 2017: 3). The root causes and historical background of violence are important factors when exploring young people's involvement in violence. It follows, then, that the hostile environment prior to 1994 has contributed to the violence currently experienced in schools. Because of the violent system that was in place in South Africa, it became easier for parents in families and teachers in schools to use corporal punishment in schools, firstly because the system allowed it and secondly because the system itself was violent.

A study conducted by Burton and Leoschut (2013: 22) in the Western Cape found that, from all the nine provinces in South Africa, the Western Cape had the highest rate of school violence at 18.5% and KwaZulu-Natal came fourth at 11.3%. In the same study, the rate of corporal punishment ranged from 22.4% to 73.7% with KwaZulu-Natal having the highest rate. Burton and Leoschut (2013: 1) further explained that violence within schools will not be effectively addressed without dealing with the various environments and contexts in which children live and develop. Since people are not inherently violent, there is a possibility for teachers, learners, parents, and the community to unlearn what has been learned in the past and relearn new ways of resolving conflict.

South Africa is a diverse country with a substantial socioeconomic gap between the rich and the poor, and the area where the school in this study is located is inhabited

by one of the poorest communities. Mestry (2015: 656) stated that the “cause of the upsurge in school-based violence is attributed to numerous social ills that filter into school premises, corporal punishment, including family and community violence, cultural influences, drug and substance abuse, absent parents, socio-economic imbalances and poverty”. Wadhwa (2016: 7) observed that in the most distressed, poorer communities, teachers, guidance counselors, and principals are left to deal with learners and respond to a host of social ills and inequities that undermine their daily efforts to educate learners. A complex interaction of factors, including the individual, family, socioeconomic and cultural factors, school, and community, may play an important role in adolescent violence (Andreou 2015: 390).

However, in Africa, the spirit of ubuntu is encouraged. Ubuntu refers to the African cultures of peaceful coexistence, communal conflict resolution processes, and value systems of interdependence and support (John 2018: 70). The spirit of ubuntu in Southern Africa embodies the restorative justice ideology exhibited through traditional ceremonies (Benyera 2015). This promotes communal living and co-existence among community members; in this way, conflict is resolved in a loving and caring manner where dialogues are encouraged. Wadhwa (2016: 10) ascertained that ubuntu is a “restatement of traditional values of balance between those in conflict within their communities, and signifies an approach to crime and conflict that heals parties through embracing them and their place in symbiosis” while simultaneously rejecting the destructive act that has sundered them. The challenge of promoting ubuntu in a violent context – in this case, a high school – provides a background for this thesis.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

South Africa is a very violent country, and its schools are consequently violent places. Violence in school comes in various forms, and it can involve any behavior of the learners, educators, administrators, or non-school persons who attempt to inflict injury on another person or damage school property (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 2-3; Mncube and Harbor 2013: 3). There is a widely held opinion among the public that the outlawing of corporal punishment has resulted in increased assaults on teachers and

poorer academic performance. However, there appears to be no hard evidence for this opinion.

The environment and climate necessary for effective teaching and learning is being increasingly undermined by the culture of school-based violence (South African Human Rights Commission 2006 cited in Mottee and Kelly 2017: 2). Mncube and Steinman (2014: 206) explained that this could lead to problems such as poor concentration, poor academic work and work performance, absenteeism, and depression. Violence in schools leads to the significant and negative effects of trauma, which is seen in children's behavior – where signs of withdrawal, depression, violence, anxiety, or learning disabilities are displayed. Attempts to contain or reduce school violence have largely been retributive and have had little apparent impact on the culture of violence present in schools.

1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the study was to empower members of the school community – teachers, learners, and parents – with knowledge and skills that could help to build a culture of peace in a specific school. The specific objectives were:

- To explore the nature, extent, causes, and effects of violence in two schools in the rural Bhekulwandle community and Lovu Township; and to identify past and present efforts to resolve violence in the schools and to design and implement a program in one school aimed at reducing the level of violence
- To carry out an interim evaluation of the outcome of the program

1.4 CONTEXT

The study was conducted in Mbambangwe High School (MHS) in the rural community of Bhekulwandle, located in the magisterial district of Umbumbulu falling under the Ethekwini Municipality. The Umbumbulu area has had a very long history of violence,

and, during the past few decades, it has been well known for political faction fights. The violence of the 1980s and 1990s in South Africa, and specifically in Umbumbulu, saw local actors being easily moved from their roles as war leaders in local faction fights and freedom fighters participating in political violence to holding leadership positions in the current government (Mathis 2013: 421). Bhekulwandle is a rural community under the traditional leadership of Inkosi Hlengwa. According to the Ethekwini Municipality Framework Planning Report (2010: 12), the area is still underdeveloped, and the issue complicating the many challenges being faced by the residents is the administrative context because the area partly falls under two local municipality wards and also partly within the Traditional Authority Area.

The population comprises 410 households that are estimated to have six people per household (Ethekwini Municipality Framework Planning Report 2010: 23). Functional employment is at 44%, only 16% of people are formally employed, and 80% of households earn below R1,600 per month (Ethekwini Municipality Framework Planning Report 2010: 26). Some people rely on subsistence farming, and the extent of income leakage is reported to be high. According to the school principal, the rate of poverty in the area is high as some children are forced to come to school without food. The rate of drug and alcohol abuse is high. School violence is one of the major challenges with which the school is faced; children are ill-disciplined and only come to classes when they feel the desire to do so, and if they do, the school program becomes disrupted because of learners' violent behavior, which has resulted in some learners losing their lives. Violence shaped South Africa in the colonial and apartheid periods, and it continues to impact deeply on present-day South Africa. John (2018: 56) explained that much of the conflict and violence that dominates South Africa today has its "roots in the brutal and oppressive systems of colonialism and apartheid".

The first school, MHS, is located in the rural community of Bhekulwandle, and the second, Siyabonga High School (SHS), is located in Lovu Township. The township is fairly new as it was established in the late 1990s. The area where the township is located used to be cane fields for Illovo Mills; hence, the name *Lovu* (isiZulu version)

came from the word *Illovo*. The township is approximately five kilometers away from the Winklespruit shopping centre and Winklespruit motor vehicle testing grounds. On the other hand, MHS is located in the Bhekulwandle area with a mixture of rural and peri-urban communities. The school is approximately two kilometers away from the suburban area of Dooneheights where Dooneheights Primary School and Amanzimtoti High School are located. It is at the border of the two traditional authorities of Inkosi Maphumulo at Bhekulwandle and Inkosi Hlengwa at Kwa-Thoyana. It is a rural area, but currently, there are new developments taking place in this community, leading to the transformation of the area into a peri-urban community and making the current area a mixture of rural and peri-urban communities. The school had approximately 116 grade nine learners when the research was started in 2019.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was a participatory action research (PAR) one, where the mixed methods approach, that is, involving the qualitative and quantitative approaches, was applied. Conducting research involves researchers conscientizing people about their situation, and, in PAR, once people are conscientized, they begin the process of acting upon those conditions in order to bring about positive change (Freire 1973 cited in Glassman and Erdem 2014: 12). According to Glassman and Erdem (2014: 12), the action aspect of PAR contains elements of dynamism and change, reshaping ideas into actions – PAR is an act of engaging, exercising, and practicing. Participants are part of the process from the beginning to the end, and the ultimate purpose of PAR is for a specific action or actions to be taken and owned by the participants.

In PAR, it is difficult to predict the particular interventions that might be made; this means that researchers cannot know, in advance, where the research will lead. Therefore, most of what follows refers to the exploratory phase; however, the likely intervention might include healing or peace-making circles (see Section 3.5.1 in Chapter 3). What the researcher was looking for was the voice of the people, and PAR gave people the confidence to contribute to their own development. This, in return, boosted their self-esteem; brought back their sense of self-worth; and instilled an

initiative spirit in the community, and more so in the learners who had an opportunity of being part of the intervention. In going to the field, the researcher was exploring the nature, extent, causes, and effects of violence.

Together with the participants, the researcher was able to design an intervention program aimed at reducing violence in schools while simultaneously building on the past and present initiatives to resolve school violence. The final stage of the research was an evaluation of the outcome of the intervention. The design of the study involved three components, namely, the exploratory, action research, and evaluation components. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. Purposive sampling was used to obtain a sample of 42 participants in the study at MHS. The Umbumbulu Education Forum was instrumental in identifying and introducing the researcher to schools that were affected by violence. The Forum is structured to combat violence in schools and address the issues of school violence in the area of Umbumbulu. The Forum is composed of various stakeholders, that is, the traditional leadership, school principals, church leaders, a journalist, and local councilors.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The research focused on only two schools in rural KwaZulu-Natal, and an intervention was made in only one of these. The findings are, therefore, specific to that school, and any generalizations must be made with great caution.

The major limitation was the worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19). There were many delays because, in South Africa, as in the rest of the world, populations had to adhere to restrictions concerning the pandemic. On 12 March 2020, the researcher started implementing the program designed to reduce violence at MHS. The implementation was supposed to last 6 months, but 2 weeks after starting the implementation, the Minister of Education announced the closure of schools, and on 27 March 2020, the whole country entered a lockdown. This meant that the movement

of people was limited and restricted. Physical and economic participation was initially placed on hold for 21 days, but the restrictions lasted longer than anticipated because the country remained in lockdown for the remainder of the year. In July 2020, the schools were reopened, but the Department of Education had to limit the number of activities in schools to protect the school communities. In 2021, the commencement of the academic year was postponed by 1 month because of the rife nature of the pandemic. The researcher was only able to return to school for the implementation phase in March 2021. The study sought to establish whether there were any alternatives to violence in a specific area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore, the study only focused on the specific schools in the area and the occurrences inside and outside of those school environments. The results, therefore, cannot be generalized to all of South Africa, although lessons can be learned and applied in other schools with similar challenges.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 explains the research problem and the aim and objectives of the research, presenting the structure of the study and introducing the chapters. This chapter sketches out the background of the area and the location of the research site.

Chapter 2 involves a discussion regarding peace, violence, and conflict and the difference between violence and conflict. The chapter discusses the nature, causes, extent, and effects of violence and also how trauma, anger, and frustration trigger violence because of weak conflict resolution mechanisms.

Chapter 3 is a discussion on the two peace theories framing the study, that is, conflict transformation and restorative justice. The chapter also relays the different emphases of conflict management, conflict resolution, conflict mediation, and conflict

transformation; and presents a discussion on restorative justice, and more specifically, restorative practices, restorative discipline, and restorative approaches in schools.

Chapter 4 examines school violence from an international perspective. The chapter considers the definition of school violence and the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of school violence. Lastly, it discusses attempts made to deal with violence in schools and whether these attempts have been effective.

Chapter 5 examines school violence in South Africa and discusses the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of violence in South African schools, with a specific focus on how the South African government has dealt with school violence. In the discussion of the government's attempts to address school violence, the chapter considers the government policies and how successful the government has been in dealing with violence in schools.

Chapter 6 considers the research problem, questions, approach, and strategy and also how the data was collected and analyzed. Finally, the chapter considers the issues of ethics, reliability, and validity.

Chapter 7 focuses on the research findings at MHS and SHS. The interest was in knowing whether and how the data collected in the two schools corresponded with other studies. The focus was also on comparing and contrasting the two schools to see whether there were any similarities or differences.

Chapter 8 builds from the previous chapters to develop an intervention strategy and explains the step-by-step process followed in implementing the program. The chapter also explains how the program was introduced to grade nine learners in 2019, the implementation process in 2020 for grade 10 learners and 2021 for grade 11 learners, and the design of the program that was used at MHS. The chapter also clarifies the

teachers' role in the implementation process; and the engagement with teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.

Chapter 9 summarizes the research process of the program and evaluation from start to finish and makes recommendations for future studies related to the field of this study.

2 CHAPTER TWO

PEACE CONCEPTS

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 presented the introduction and background to the study and considered the aim and objectives of the study, research problem, and significance of the study. It also introduced the participating schools and their profiles. Chapter 2 presents the literature review and discusses the meanings of peace, violence, and conflict and the difference between violence and conflict. The chapter discusses the nature, causes, extent, and consequences of violence and how unequal power structures such as patriarchy, political power, and economic power can lead to trauma, anger, and frustration, which ultimately lead to violence. The chapter also discusses how trauma, anger, and frustration trigger violence because of weak conflict resolution mechanisms.

2.2 Definition of Peace

Peace is a state of human existence characterized by sustainable levels of human development and healthy processes of societal change (Ricigliano 2015: 15). Galtung (1964 cited in Gleditsch, Nordkvelle and Strand 2014: 149) coined the concept of “negative peace and positive peace.” According to Galtung, negative peace is the absence of war, and positive peace is the integration of human society. Galtung (2011 cited in Wiedemeier 2016: 2) further described negative peace as the absence of direct violence but not of cultural and structural violence. Positive peace is a condition where nonviolence and social justice remove the causes of violence. It is achieved when social institutions of peace are in place that make the idea of using war or other violence unlikely to occur. Where positive peace prevails, there is human security, and the conditions of life are such that human beings are allowed to live satisfying lives and are able to reach their full potential.

Positive peace is transformational in that it is a cross-cutting facilitator for improving progress, making it easier for businesses to sell, entrepreneurs and scientists to innovate, individuals to produce, and governments to effectively make regulations. Galtung (2011 cited in Wiedemeier 2016: 2) on the other hand, negative peace is the absence of violence or the fear of violence. Human security encompasses economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security (Gleditsch, Nordkvelle and Strand 2014: 149). Human security means that there is no threat of war or violence, and individuals' needs are met without compromising the needs of future generations. This, therefore, suggests that a peaceful society has the "capacity to meet the basic needs, at one time, of the individuals and groups that does not comprise it and the ability to change and evolve" over time in response to a constantly changing environment (Ricigliano 2016: 15).

2.3 Definition of Violence

Since 1986, the World Health Organization (WHO) has recognized violence as a problem for the criminal justice and defense sectors, and in 1996, a resolution was taken to declare violence as a worldwide health problem (WHO 2014: 3). Violence is a complex, multidimensional, yet contingent and unstable phenomenon (Kilby 2013: 3). The WHO defined violence as the "intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation" (Le Mottee and Kelly 2018: 47). On the other hand, Motz (2016: 1) held the following view:

[Violence is] aggression directed against the body, maybe closely linked to failures to act or think rationally, as the lack of capacity to think about mental states may force individuals to manage thoughts, beliefs, and desires in the physical domain, primarily in the realm of body states and processes.

Violence is understood as “intentionally causing physical or mental harm to people” directly or indirectly, and indirect violence could be through harassment, threats, or attacks (Witte 2014: 11). For the purposes of this study, the researcher has adopted the definition by Becerra, Munoz and Riquelme (2014: 157) who defined violence as a “historical construct associated with dominance, it is a learned behavior based on aggression that occurs mainly due to a lack of social and emotional skills needed to resolve conflict peacefully.”

The cultural and structural forms of violence are central to peace studies. According to Galtung (1990: 291), cultural violence involves those aspects of culture – the symbolic sphere of people’s existence, exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, and empirical science and formal science – that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence. Cultural violence makes direct and structural violence look and even feel right, or at least not wrong. This leads to the internalization and acceptance of violence as being legitimate. Hamer and Lang (2015: 899) defined structural violence as the conditions and arrangements embedded in the political and economic organization of social life that cause injury to individuals and populations or put them in harm’s way. According to Galtung (1990: 294), a violent structure leaves marks not only on the human body but also on the mind and the spirit. Penetration, segmentation, marginalization, and fragmentation are parts of the exploitation and reinforcement of components in the structure. Hamer and Lang (2015: 899) provided examples of structural violence:

[Structural violence includes] the human dislocations caused by economic disinvestment, community displacement, or metropolitan redevelopment; the absence or failure of infrastructure to meet the challenges of natural disaster or disease pandemics; the dangers to the environment and human welfare precipitated by waste dumping, toxic spills, or air pollution. It also includes tax policies that redistribute greater wealth upward to the economically powerful; diminished employment opportunity for working people due to capital flight. Last but not least, structural violence includes the systemic denial of civil and human rights, including quality education and health care, safe and affordable housing, clean water, and nutritious foods; and collective inequalities perpetrated and

experienced on the basis of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, or sexuality.

2.4 Nature of Violence

Violence has many facets and can manifest itself in various forms. It is a societal, community, and school-based problem. Violence can also be seen in gangs, within families, in intimate partnerships, in communities, and in politics. The following sections address various ways in which violence can manifest itself.

2.4.1 Gang Violence

Pyrooz, Sweeten and Piquero (2013: 242) defined *gangs* as some type of deviant social network that can be “characterized by their street orientation, youthfulness, durability across time and group identity that at least partially consists of illegal activity.” In agreement with Pyrooz, Sweeten and Piquero and Beckett (2013: 9) stated that:

[A gang is a] relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves as a discernable group, engaging in a range of criminal activities and violence, identify with or lay claim over territory, have some form of identifying structural feature and in conflict with other similar groups.

Hennigan and Sloane (2013: 7) averred that street gangs played a major role in the “socialization” of youth. Gang members gain their reputation through violent behavior and, by doing so, they are more valued and respected by other gang members. In most instances, young people are forced to join gangs in order to protect themselves due to feeling unsafe at school or in the neighborhood (Voisin, Motton and Neilands 2014: 1515). Melde and Esbensen (2013: 146) observed that when young people are engaged in gangsterism, they are expected to show their willingness to engage in

violent behavior in order to have the requisite respect to be involved with the group and as a mechanism to build a valued reputation within the group.

Violence is used to protect gang members, and to ensure the security and control of a gang's territory, gang members also use violence as a mechanism of social control and protection. In 2008, in the United States (US), 27,000 gangs were reported with a membership of 774,000 (Hennigan and Sloane 2012: 7-8). A revelation by the Office of the England Children's Commissioner was that girls who are associated with gangs can be "treated as objects to be used, abused and discarded" while, at the same time, they are victims of severe sexual abuse (Beckett *et al.* 2013: 1).

2.4.2 Community Violence

Community violence can be defined as instances of interpersonal harm or threats of harm within one's neighborhood or community (Kennedy and Ceballo 2014: 70). Warren (2018: 6) asserted that, in some instances, minor disputes can be manipulated by political movements to escalate into communal conflict as part of the process through which groups compete for status and resources. Kennedy and Ceballo (2014: 69) stated that instances of exposure to community violence are suggested as potential factors that may each, individually and in interaction with each other, differently impact adolescents' well-being. According to So *et al.* (2018: 735), exposure to community violence is the frequent and continuous exposure to the use of guns, knives, drugs, and random violence. Low and Espelage (2014: 1) argued that exposure to community violence increases the risk of engaging in and being a victim of interpersonal violence.

Exposure to violence is linked with the high possibility of tobacco, alcohol, and drug abuse and the perpetration of violence (Fagan, Wright and Pinchevsky 2014: 1498). So *et al.* (2018: 735) stated that exposure to community violence is associated with aggressiveness and deviant and externalizing behavior among children, adolescents, and young adults. According to Busby, Lambert and Lalongo (2013: 250), African

American adolescents are disproportionately exposed to community violence, especially those from a low socioeconomic background and communities with high levels of poverty, crime, and unemployment. A clear link between the prevalence of school-related violence and high crime levels in communities was also found (Zuze *et al.* 2016: 1). Voisin, Motton and Neilands (2014: 1515) were of the view that community violence also contributes to the high level of absenteeism at school, which is mainly caused by learners “feeling unsafe” to move around the neighborhood. Kennedy and Ceballo (2014: 74) postulated that community violence can be a threat to individuals’ belongings or their lives and can inflict physical or emotional harm. Some studies have shown that the social disorganization of neighborhoods, specifically the lack of social cohesion among neighbors and social capital, may impact community members (Rendon 2014: 64). Social capital is a combination of interpersonal generalized trust and networks based on reciprocity (Rothstein 2013: 1009).

2.4.3 Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) and dating violence (DV) are seen as the exertion of “power and control” by men over women in relationships within broader social and institutional contexts of gender inequality (Dardis *et al.* 2015: 140). Another component of IPV and DV is sexual violence, and this could be any behavior that is perceived to be of a sexual nature and that is unwanted or that takes place without consent or understanding (Beckett *et al.* 2013: 10). Van Parys *et al.* (2014: 1) alluded to the fact that IPV affects women and men from all backgrounds, regardless of age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or religion. Similarly, Vagi *et al.* (2013: 633) stated that DV “affects both males and females,” and the aggression can take different forms such as physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual violence. According to Lundgren and Amin (2015: S43), IPV includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling behavior, and it mainly takes place among adolescents, young adults, and older ages and more so in marriages and cohabitation setups. Therefore, sexual violence, IPV, and DV are understood to be about power and control in a relationship, where the powerful partner exerts power over the weaker partner.

Even though women and men are both responsible for acts of physical IPV and emotional abuse, women's physical violence appears to be more of a reaction to the violence initiated by men against them (Hamberger and Larsen 2015: 699). Gracia and Tomas (2014: 28) reported that in a study conducted in 2010 by the European Union on domestic violence in 27 countries, it was revealed that 52% of the respondents concurred with the fact that the provocative behavior of women was the cause of domestic violence against women. In the same study, Sweden scored 59% and Finland 74% for the victim-blaming attitude, despite these countries being among the top countries in the world addressing issues of gender equality (Gracia and Tomas 2014: 28). Gender inequality is recognized as the root cause of IPV (Lundgren Sand Amin 2015: S43). Surprisingly, IPV is more prevalent around the time of pregnancy, with crucial societal and clinical implications (Van Parys *et al.* 2014: 1). Pregnancy can be a time of notable vulnerability to IPV because of the added socioeconomic burden, physical and emotional changes, and the added responsibility of parenthood (Van Parys *et al.* 2014: 1).

According to Koker *et al.* (2014: 4), traditional masculine gender roles, norms, and perspectives on male–female relationships have an impact on the perpetration of IPV, sexual risk behavior, and male sexual entitlement. Koker *et al.* (2014: 4) observed that the main causes of IPV are the gender power inequalities in society and relationships and the normative use of violence, which are notably connected to IPV. Violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC) have been recognized as a human rights challenge insomuch that the WHO has estimated that nearly one-third (30%) of ever-partnered women have experienced physical and sexual abuse (Guedes 2016: 2). IV is a significant problem in today's society and is normative as over 80% of young men and women in the US have inflicted pain or been victims of IPV (Dardris *et al.* 2015: 136). Worldwide, between 4% and 54% of ever-partnered women from 15 to 49 years of age have reported physical and/or sexual IPV in 2013 (Koker *et al.* 2014: 3). Edwards *et al.* (2014: 198) posited that in the US, the rate of IPV was alarmingly high, especially among young adults and adolescents. In the US, it was reported that the percentage of incidents of homicides per 100,000 people among

the African American male youth was 66.4% (Voisin, Hotton and Neilands 2014: 1514). Studies conducted in the US revealed that:

[IPV is] perpetrated by 17% to 48% of young women and 10% to 39% of young men; psychological hurtful comments are perpetrated by 60% to 83% of young women and 55% to 80% of young men. Sexual dating violence is perpetrated by 13% to 37% than young women 3% to 24% (Dardis *et al.* 2015: 139).

A study conducted in South Africa on female homicide reported that South Africa had the highest femicide rate in the world as 8.8% per 100,000 women, and 50% were attributed to IPV (Russell *et al.* 2014: 283). In South Africa, 15% of male high school learners and 12% of females reported IPV perpetration, and 12% of males and 7% of females had forced someone to have sex (Koker *et al.* 2014: 3-4). Abramsky (2014: 2) argued that VAW is recognized as an important public health, social policy, and human rights concern. Abramsky (2014: 2) further stated that then recent global reports had estimated that 30% of women would experience physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

One of the main concerns regarding IPV is that it not only affects the victim but also affects family members as well as community members. According to Dardis *et al.* (2015: 140), the risk factors for the perpetration of DV include the sociocultural intergenerational transmission of violence. The intergenerational transmission of violence in this manner becomes a vicious cycle of trauma and violence, and it then becomes a normal way of life and, therefore, acceptable in communities. Intergenerational theorists have argued that "violence breeds violence" (Dardis *et al.* 2015: 141). Children who grow up in an environment where there is violence have a higher potential of being violent. Dardis *et al.* (2015: 141) further argued that belief systems, such as cultural beliefs, can be "good transmitters of violence which becomes learned behavior through socialization." Gender power dynamics influence

young people's risk of sexual victimization, and in most of the incidents, men are the perpetrators and women are the victims (Beckett *et al.* 2013: 1).

The United States Centre for Disease Control and Prevention reported that approximately 36% of women and 29% of men in the US have experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Beyer, Wallis and Hamberger 2015: 16). What prolongs IPV is the fact that when the victims disclose information regarding the abuse, they are confronted with blame and disbelief from families and the community (Sylaska and Edwards 2014: 3). According to Lundgren and Amin (2015: S42), research conducted in 81 countries indicated that the lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual IPV among ever-partnered girls (15–19 years) is 29% and 31% among young women (20–40 years).

Similarly, Abramsky (2014: 2) observed that a lower socioeconomic status, unequal access to education, unemployment, and gender inequality are some of the contributing factors to IPV. Reasons given by Edwards *et al.* (2014: 199) for the prevalence of IPV in such communities involve the increased stress level due to the conditions in which people live. Concurring with Edwards *et al.*, Russell *et al.* (2014: 283) stated that there is a great link between poverty, the maintenance of gender inequality, and the reduced quality of life. Similarly, Russell *et al.* (2014: 284) emphasized the fact that what strengthens the risk factors in IPV is often "perpetuated by poverty" where men lacking economic power may seek to compensate for this by exerting power over women, and women cannot leave the abusive relationship because of their economic dependency on the men. The effects of IPV include infections such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), induced abortion, low birth weights, premature births, growth restrictions, alcohol use, depression, suicide, and death from homicide (WHO 2013: 21).

2.4.4 School Violence

Different authors have defined school violence in different ways. Firstly, according to Gopal and Collings (2017: 1), school violence is violence that is related to school attendance, and it occurs as a result of school attendance either at school or while learners are commuting to school. The United States' Center for the Prevention of School Violence has defined school violence as "any behavior that violates schools' educational mission or climate of respect or jeopardizes the intent of the school to be free of aggression against persons or property, drugs, weapons, disruptions and disorder" (Knarich 2015: 2). School violence is any type of violence that hinders learning and teaching processes (Gopal and Collings 2017: 4). Galtung (1969 cited in Gopal and Collings 2017: 5), on the other hand, argued that school violence is embedded into structures and reveals itself as unequal power and, consequently, as unequal life chances. However, a number of teachers have perceived school violence as "rule breaking," "indiscipline," "disruption," a "lack of control," and "being against the norm" (Williams 2013: 50). Williams further stated that school violence occurs when children break the basic rules of the school as far as controlling their behavior is concerned and they become unmanageable.

The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Center for the Prevention of School Violence believes that school violence is "any behavior that violates a school's educational mission or climate of respect" or jeopardizes the intent of the school to be free from aggression against persons or property, drugs, weapons, disruptions, and disorder (Espelage *et al.* 2013: 75). Furthermore, according to Williams (2016: 144):

[School violence involves] any acts, relationships or processes that use power over others, exercised by whatever means, such as structural, social, physical, emotional or psychological, in a school or school-related environment or through the organization of schooling that harm another person or a group of people.

It is very unfortunate that schools are “regular sites of violent conflict” mirroring problems in the wider community (John 2018: 55). Jacobs (2014: 1) opined that what sets school violence apart is the “context of the school, the school’s fundamental purpose,” the educational activities associated with the school, the school community, and the school property. Because of the nature of violence and considering why schools exist, it is not expected for violence to occur in schools.

According to Anderson (2016: 4), school violence includes “vandalism, weapons, offences, substance offences, harassment, intimidation and bullying.” Unfortunately, schools have transformed from the nurturing environment that they used to be into a harmful environment for millions of learners worldwide (Merrill 2018: 1). Finkelhor (2014: 1) reported on the national survey conducted on school violence in the US among children between the ages of 5 and 17 years, and it was established that 48% of learners had been exposed to school violence in the past year, 29% had been bullied, 14% had been assaulted, 13% had witnessed an assault, 3.2% had been sexually harassed, 12% had had a victimization injury on school premises, and 6% had missed a day at school because of at-school victimization. Low levels of social cohesion among teachers and learners often lead to antisocial and violent interactions (Mottee and Kelly 2018: 53). The chances of conflict are higher between teachers and learners as compared to between learners and parents because of the length of time that learners spend at school (Kanrich 2015: 27). Schools in low socioeconomic-status communities tend to have fewer resources and less support, which may lead to more aggressive behavior from learners and teachers (Kanrich 2015: 27).

School violence perpetrators could be members of the surrounding community trespassing and entering the school premises to steal from someone, or they could be learners acting violently against each other or teachers and administrators. Many scholars agree that school violence is a “multi-systematic problem” that is manifested from the community, school, school personnel, and learners’ characteristics and processes (Espelage *et al.* 2013: 75). Similarly, Dogutas (2013: 185) stressed that unfortunately, school violence is a “reflection of what is going on in the community

surrounding the school,” and as a result, violence is brought to school by the learners and the intruders from the community. It is an unfortunate reality that violence not only affects learners but also affects teachers as well as the learning and teaching processes.

The United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) defined the aim of education as the holistic development of the child’s full potential and inculcating respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Bower *et al.* 2015: 2). However, unfortunately, school violence is considered a global “problem” in the sense that it affects many nations (Williams 2013: 43). Schools are meant to be loving, caring, and nurturing environments where individuals are groomed to become civil human beings and future leaders. However, it is unfortunate that the damaging consequences of violence turn a school into “a place where children learn to fear and distrust, where they develop distorted perceptions of identity, self and worth, and where they acquire negative social capital” (John 2018: 60).

Kudenga (2017: 188) conducted a study in Zimbabwe on parents’ perceptions of corporal punishment and revealed that corporal punishment is “ingrained” and has become a norm in Black communities where it is seen as a deterrent and reformative means of bringing acceptable behavior in schools and communities. Kudenga (2017: 2) further stated that in most Black communities, it is believed that corporal punishment is a necessary and effective disciplinary tool since it is the “only language” that learners understand. Thus, high levels of school violence, of which corporal punishment is a significant component, routinely undermine children’s capacity to access their right to quality basic education as schools become the places that instill fear and feelings of insecurity among learners (Bower *et al.* 2015: 3).

2.4.5 Political Violence

Political violence is “organized anti-government aggression” that occurs within a state by a domestic population against its government (Bell *et al.* 2013: 241). Political violence is linked to “conflicting interests between the government and opposing groups” and between ethnic groups (Balcells and Justino 2014: 1344). In 2007, the United Nations estimated that over the previous decade, more than 40 countries globally had been affected by ongoing civil conflict and violence (Muldoon 2013: 931). As a result of this ongoing violence, in 2011, the World Bank estimated that 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by armed violence (Balcells and Justino 2014: 1344).

There is a very strong link between inequality, socioeconomic imbalances, and political violence since the unemployed and out-of-school youth are readily available to engage in violent protests and violent activities. In countries such as Nigeria, elections have been characterized by thuggery and violence, widespread acts of hooliganism and vandalism, and the loss of lives and property (Awofeso 2016: 95). In agreement with Awofeso, Muheeb (2015: 1) observed that in Nigeria, between 1999 and 2015, elections had become warlike and were often mired in suspicion, tension, and violence where more than 800 people had died and 65,000 had been displaced in 2011, and 300,000 people had died and 1.5 million had been displaced in 2015. In countries such as South Africa, where there are “scarce resources, access to leadership positions becomes a high-stake endeavor that causes contestations” between and within political parties to be resolved violently (John 2018: 58).

2.5 Extent of Violence

Violence is a complex issue and a global concern. According to Kilby (2013: 3), violence is a “multidimensional yet contingent and unstable phenomenon” since it can be found in environments where it is not expected. Violence is happening everywhere in schools, health institutions, public spaces, governments, families, and places where it is not expected to occur, such as between medical professionals and patients in health institutions, between teachers and learners, and between governments and civilians. Phillips (2016: 1662) reported that the medical profession is a rare

environment for violence to occur, but in 2015, in one of the hospitals in Boston, a surgeon was shot and killed at work by a son of a deceased patient. Phillips further argued that episodes of workplace violence in the medical profession are found to be daily countrywide occurrences in the US. The WHO reported that in 2011, violence had caused approximately 1.4 million deaths worldwide, 58.2% through self-directed violence, 35.5% through interpersonal violence, and 6.3% through war (Hughes *et al.* 2014: 656).

Bobonis, Gonzalez-Brenes and Castro (2013: 172) posited that partner violence is widespread and escalating instead of decreasing throughout the world and has contributed to the recognition of “spousal abuse as an important global and public policy concern.” The majority of studies have focused on IPV within adult relationships, but the truth is that IPV is prevalent among adolescents such that this has become a global health issue (Koker *et al.* 2014: 3). There are other serious forms of violence perpetrated by the state where citizens disappear without a trace or become imprisoned for political reasons (Bell *et al.* 2013: 241). Similarly, Desmond, Papachristos and Kirk (2016: 857) stated that high-profile cases of police violence are a threat to public safety, causing citizens to be reluctant to report crime to the police due to a lack of trust.

The difference between conflict and violence is that conflict is something that can be managed but, if not managed correctly, can spill over into violent conflict, whereas in violence, individuals lack the capacity to think rationally, leading to people intentionally hurting others or the destruction of property. According to Chaundhry and Asif (2015: 239), if a conflict is managed effectively, it can be useful and acceptable in other situations, and it is in such cases where, in some instances, conflict leads to transformation. This section will show the different emphases of conflict management, conflict resolution, conflict mediation, and conflict transformation. Lastly, the section will discuss restorative justice, particularly restorative practices, restorative discipline, and restorative approaches in schools.

In restorative justice, effort is motivated by the desire to work with offenders in a more positive way by providing an alternative framework for thinking about wrongdoings. Restorative practices help to reduce violence and bullying, improve human behavior, strengthen civil society, provide effective leadership, restore relationships, and repair harm (Wachtel 2013: 1). Restorative justice is transformational in the sense that its “ultimate goal is lasting change for individuals within the broader context of their social worlds by looking ahead to a better transformed way of living, a restoration of what existed before the harm” (Crowe 2017: 9). On the other hand, conflict transformation seeks to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships (Lederach 2003 cited in Okem and Ettang 2015: 1). Countries emerging from conflict, such as South Africa, face daunting challenges, and one of the challenges is how to deal with a divisive past in ways that promote peace and reconciliation (Omeje 2015: 34). Therefore, the two theories are deemed relevant to the study because of their special focus on the processes of transforming relationships, interests, and discourses.

2.5.1 Definition of Conflict

Conflict is an interpersonal disagreement or discord between two or more individuals owing to differences in opinions, competition, negative perceptions, poorly defined roles and expectations, or a lack of communication (McKibben 2017: 2). Thakore (2013: 1) believes that conflict is a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Thakore (2013: 1) further stated that:

Conflict means expression of hostility, negative attitudes, antagonism, aggression, rivalry and misunderstanding. It can be defined as a disagreement between two or more individuals or groups with each individual or group trying to gain acceptance of its view or others.

Bano, Ashraf and Zia (2013: 1) concurred with Thakore by stating that conflict is the condition of a clash or disagreement between two or more individuals or parties that can be expressed verbally or with actions. Bano, Ashraf and Zia (2013: 1) argued that conflict occurs when two or more people take different opposing positions in a situation, expressed verbally or with actions. Shahmohammadi (2014: 631) observed that conflict is an expression of antagonism, that is, hostility between two or more people. According to Jager (2014: 10), conflicts are a defining feature of life and an integral part of politics and society, reflecting divergent interests and sometimes diametrically opposed needs. The potential for conflict exists because human beings have different needs, values, views, and goals (Kibui, Kibera and Bradshaw 2014: 1).

Galtung (1981 cited in Demmers 2017: 5) believed that any conflict has three component parts, namely, goal incompatibility, attitudes, and behavior. Conflict is something that can occur anywhere, even with people sharing the same perceptions of goals though being in disagreement regarding means (Chaundhry and Asif 2015: 238). Therefore, conflict is considered inevitable and inherent in the human condition (McKibben 2017: 2). The inevitability of conflict is mainly due to social organizations such as the school environment since schools are composed of individuals from different backgrounds with different personalities, values, principles, capabilities, knowledge, understanding, and experiences. This means that, in most instances, conflicts occur in schools because of their large size, limited resources, and diverse populations (Bano, Ashraf and Zia 2013: 1). In schools, conflict can occur between learners and teachers, parents and teachers, parents and learners, and learners amongst themselves. Conflict can also occur between teachers and management through the teachers not following rules or accepting extra work and the management adopting an authoritative approach. These individuals have to cooperate and learn to co-exist (Saiti 2015: 2). Conflict, therefore, reflects people's existing beliefs and attitudes on the issue in question; influences people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; and shapes people's living space (Kim *et al.* 2014: 143). Figure 2.1 is a classification of conflict, according to Deutsch (1977 cited in Frizzell 2015: 33).



Figure 2.1 Deutsch's Classification of conflict

In Figure 2.1, the first classification is the control of resources that leads to conflict. It is not easy to resolve it constructively because of rigid fixation on the resources. The second classification occurs when one person's activities or tastes impinge on others. The third is when one value dominates over another value, and the fourth classification regards the person's basic assumptions and differences in perceptions. Lastly, Figure 2.1 explains the differences in how people view relationships and what people desire in and for relationships.

Shahmohammadi (2014: 632) opined that conflict can be interpersonal, intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup. Thakore (2013: 2) posited that interpersonal conflict is the interaction between people arising from individual differences such as attitudes, values, personalities, and any other differences. Intrapersonal conflict is internal to individuals and can result in frustration and be expressed in a range of behavioral

strategies (Thakore 2013: 2). Intergroup conflict occurs among members of different groups or teams, while intragroup conflict is conflict within members of the same group.

Conflict is neither good nor bad and can lead to positive outcomes within an organization, but when conflicts are unaddressed, they can have a negative impact on productivity and teamwork (Baddar *et al.* 2016: 92). However, conflict has many positive functions. Firstly, the emergence of conflict is an indicator of organizational performance that leads to better decision making, evolution, and effectiveness (Saiti 2015: 2). Saiti (2015: 2) stated that for conflict to bear positive results, it must be viewed as “a mutual problem that needs a common consideration and solution.” According to Frizzell (2015: 26), some of the positive results of conflict are that:

Conflict prevents stagnation, it stimulates interest and curiosity, it is the medium through which problems can be aired and solutions arrived at, it is the root of personal and social change and it is often part of the process of testing and assessing oneself.

Because of the positive functions that conflict brings, Spaho (2013: 2) argued that it is dangerous for an organization to have too many conflicts as well as not to have conflicts at all. Brown (2015: 21) believed that conflict provides an opportunity for learning, building healthy learning communities, restoring relationships, and addressing power imbalances. In addition, Jager (2014: 10) stipulated that conflict can be productive as long as the parties discover ways of managing them fairly and nonviolently, but they can be destructive if the parties are not willing to collaborate. Therefore, in reducing violence, the content of conflict and its underlying causes need to be addressed (Okem and Ettang 2015: 2). In the light of the changes that happen through conflict transformation, Bano, Ashraf and Zia (2013: 1) opined that:

Conflict is not always a bad thing, if properly handled it can provide benefits to individuals such as increased motivation, enhanced problem/solution identification, increased knowledge, skill and incentive for growth. When poorly handled conflict can decrease productivity, erode trust, increase secrecy and reduce information flow and cause decision-making paralysis.

In trying to differentiate between constructive and destructive conflict, Bano, Ashraf and Zia (2013: 1) mentioned that constructive conflict is characterized by effective communication and strong relationships whereas destructive conflict is characterized by ineffective communication and work relationship tension, arguments, low performance, and hostility. It is, therefore, very important for humans to have correct strategies for managing or handling conflict.

2.5.2 Conflict Management

Conflict management is the process of removing cognitive barriers to agreement and involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for the management of conflict in an environment (Kibui, Kibera and Bradshaw 2014: 3). In agreement with Kibui, Kibera and Bradshaw, Bano, Ashraf and Zia (2013: 2) stated that conflict management is instrumental in removing cognitive barriers to an agreement between conflicting parties. It involves behavioral strategies that prevent escalated conflicts from occurring, mitigate them while they occur, or help avoid potential negative consequences after they have occurred (Baan *et al.* 2014: 1). Since conflict is an inevitable part of human interaction and engagement, learning to manage conflict becomes an integral part of human life. Thakore (2013: 1) observed that if a conflict is not managed, it may escalate, leading to violent conflict or being beneficially resolved. Although conflict is a normal part of human relations, conflicts that are long or highly negative are likely to be detrimental to relationships (Moed *et al.* 2014: 1). Thus, learning to manage conflict can decrease the odds of nonproductive escalation (Kibui, Kibera and Bradshaw 2014: 3). Effective conflict resolution and management are dependent on transparent communication, listening, and understanding the perceived

focus of disagreement (McKibben 2017: 3). Understanding group dynamic processes helps to minimize conflict or manage it effectively. Cohesion among the school community is the most important factor for ensuring greater efficiency and performance and morale (Saiti 2015: 17), which is the reason why the management of conflict is paramount.

According to Spaho (2013: 2), conflict management suggests solving conflicts instead of reducing, eliminating, or limiting their duration. One of the conflict management techniques is to increase the degree of interaction, modifying the reward system. Conflict management requires skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for the management of conflict in an organizational environment (Thakore 2013: 1). Bano, Ashraf and Zia (2013: 2) identified five conflict management styles, namely, avoidance, compromise/sharing, competition/domination, accommodation, and collaboration/integration. There is no simple formula that can eliminate conflict, but there are approaches that can minimize the destructive effects of conflict and maximize the possibility of resolution (Majola 2013: 46). According to Kim (2014: 143), the way people handle conflict affects their relational outcomes either constructively or destructively. Processes involved in conflict management involve diagnosis, meaning recognizing the problem and its cause and applying an intervention after the proper diagnosis (Spaho 2013: 8).

Moed *et al.* (2014: 2) echoed that to manage conflict effectively, human beings must be able to integrate situational information from a variety of sources, manage their emotional states, and coordinate different coping styles. In such instances, Kipyego (2013: 76) recommended different approaches to conflict management, that is, diffusion, smoothing, and avoidance. In agreement with Kipyego, Baan *et al.* (2014: 1) mentioned that conflict management styles include avoiding each other, maintaining stable dominance relationships, investing in social relationships through social grooming and greeting behaviors, and displaying submissive behaviors. Conflict can be diffused through frequent stakeholder meetings and consultation in a school since

it is important for the school management to know both the educational expectations and attitudes of people in the community (Kipyego 2013: 76). This could lead to designing educational programs that are aligned with the community's needs. Conflict smoothing means playing down differences and emphasizing common interests between conflicting parties. On the other hand, avoidance involves withdrawal from or suppressing conflict (Kipyego 2013: 80). As the name suggests, the avoidance approach means avoiding the situation; it involves little concern for oneself and others and is a technique of the conflict management strategy that promotes the postponement of a situation and avoids any discussion of the problem with the parties (Saiti 2015: 7). The compromise approach occurs when opposing parties maintain their differences while they are obliged to find a solution that is equally acceptable to both parties (Saiti 2015: 7). However, a "win-win" solution is the best strategy for transforming the resolution of conflict into a productive process that satisfies all needs and interests (Saiti 2015: 8).

According to Saiti (2015: 1), since conflict management is a joint activity, the degree of its effectiveness determines the type of impact of conflict on school performance. Majola (2013: 49) stressed the fact that the school community (principal, teachers, learners, and parents) must be empowered with knowledge and skills to manage conflict constructively. Failure to train headmasters and teacher counselors in conflict resolution management skills and a lack of clear communication among all the stakeholders constitute some of the causes of conflict in schools (Kibui, Kibera and Bradshaw 2014: 1). Conflict management techniques often focus on changing the structure, changing the process, or both (Kibui, Kibera and Bradshaw 2014: 3).

Conflict management styles and strategies involve negotiation, a superior goal strategy that involves defining a goal about individual goals causing conflict, and a third-party intervention if the negotiation does not work (Spaho 2013: 10).

Emphasis should be placed on the whole-school approach to conflict resolution instead of the cadre approach that involves a few learners, and ongoing practice is

recommended for learners to become skillful in conflict management (Majola 2013: 50). This is the rationale behind Kipyego's (2013: 82) emphasis on the increased engagement of learners in conflict management to allow for the creation of positive learner-to-learner and learner-to-teacher relationships.

2.5.3 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution implies the process of finding a solution to some problem (Joseph 2016: 24). This is a constructive approach to interpersonal and intergroup disagreements that helps people with opposing positions to work together to arrive at mutually acceptable solutions (Saiden 2017: 4). It is a give-and-take process, meaning that each party must be willing to give up something of value where all parties are ultimately satisfied with the resolution. This creates a relationship not characterized by hierarchy, but one marked by equality, respect, participation, mutual enrichment, and growth (Saiden 2017: 4). This means that conflict resolution seeks to solve the problem and not the person, therefore, condemning individuals is not the solution (McKibben 2017: 3). This requires critical thinking and social problem solving. In traditional African societies, conflict resolution provides the opportunity to interact with the parties concerned, and it promotes consensus-building, social bridge reconstructions, and the enactment of order in society, offering great prospects for peaceful co-existence and harmonious relationships (Ajayi and Buhari 2014: 1). Resolving conflict effectively requires specific leadership skills and problem-solving abilities and decision-making skills (Baddar *et al.* 2016: 92).

Yang (2018: 4) emphasized the fact that in order to resolve or reduce conflict, people should respect others, love others, help others, understand others, forgive others, and control themselves. Frizzell (2015: 43) stated that:

The important areas for inclusion in conflict resolution training are communication, negotiation, dialogue and collaborative problem solving. Conflict resolution training involves moral education that changes

individuals and empowers them to recognize and respect their own needs and the needs of others.

McKibben (2017: 3) stated that in trying to resolve conflict, seven “Cs” must be avoided, namely, commanding, comparing, condemning, challenging, condescending, contradicting, and confusing. Wa Munywe (2014: 4) observed that learners who had received the conflict resolution training were more willing to respond to conflict situations with “compromise rather than threats and violence” than learners who had not received the training. Therefore, it is of benefit to teach learners conflict management and conflict resolution skills since this may provide them with the necessary tools to solve their own conflicts in a productive and practical way (Shahmohammadi 2014: 630). According to Frizzell (2015: 42), conflict resolution education provides learners with peacemaking skills that they can use to manage their interpersonal conflict. When learners possess such skills, it can boost their self-esteem, confidence, and communication skills. The major principle of conflict resolution is to separate people from the problem, focusing on interests and not positions and investing in the option for mutual gain (Saiden 2017: 4). Ashraf and Zia, McKibben (2017: 2) stated that the focus of positive conflict resolution lies in addressing the root causes, such as mending relationships, improving communication, and accepting change.

2.5.4 Conflict Mediation

One of the approaches to reduce conflict between individuals or groups is through mediation. According to Shahmohammadi (2014: 633), conflict mediation is a type of problem-solving process where a neutral party assists disputants to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. This is when a trained individual helps the two parties in the conflict to come to a solution that is acceptable to both parties (Shahmohammadi 2014: 630). Mediation is described as a win-win process with a focus on disputants who design their mutually satisfactory conflict resolution (De Voogd *et al.* 2016: 279). The mediator looks at the root cause of the problem and involves all parties to solve the problem. According to Thakore (2013: 8), a mediator is an independent, impartial

person helping two parties reach a solution acceptable to everyone without judging anyone or determining outcomes. The success of mediation depends on both parties' level of trust in the mediator.

According to Dhiaulhaq (2014: 1), mediation facilitated by a third party is widely considered an effective method in transforming conflict, especially when the conflicting parties are unable to resolve it by themselves through negotiation. Mediation has played a crucial role in transforming conflict and improving relationships between conflicting parties (Dhiaulhaq 2014: 1). The mediation mechanism allows for the consideration of a wider range of interests of the parties with a greater chance of reaching an agreement that will be voluntarily respected (Medina *et al.* 2014: 3). Shahmohammadi (2014: 633) mentioned that there are two types of mediation in schools, that is, peer mediation, which involves learners solving disputes among other learners, and adult mediation, involving outsiders invited from outside the school from universities, research centers, and social service organizations. Peer mediation will be discussed in depth under the topic of restorative discipline in Section 3.4.2 in Chapter 3.

2.5.5 Conflict Transformation

To transform conflict means to transcend the goals of the parties in conflict and achieve a higher goal that would benefit both parties in the long run (Joseph 2016: 53). Frazer and Ghetas (2013: 6) explained that conflict transformation is about "changing the way societies deal with conflict," moving them from violent to nonviolent means. Conflict transformation seeks to "envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes" that reduce violence, increase justice, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships (Okem and Ettang 2015: 1). Hence, conflict transformation is deemed as an evolutionary step beyond conflict resolution and peer mediation (Frizzell 2015: 38). According to Okem and Ettang (2015: 2), conflict transformation is mainly focused on reducing violence, increasing justice, and restoring fragile relationships. The ultimate goal of conflict transformation is the restoration of human relations that involves

engaging the concerned parties to rebuild relationships. Conflict transformation has deliberately included the aftermath of the conflict in its focus such as traumas, fears, hurt, and hatred that might remain to poison future events (Joseph 2016: 24).

Conflict transformation theorists assume that conflict is caused by the real problem of inequality and injustice through competing social, cultural, and economic frameworks (Bano, Ashraf and Zia 2013: 1). Park (2017: 14) posited that teaching conflict transformation thinking builds networks of bridging social capital or heterogeneous cooperative connections that allow organizations to appreciate the advantages of acting together. Omeje (2015: 34) argued that it is important to understand the process that enables the transformation of conflict from its destructive and violent forms into a more productive form (this could include dialogue and creative and peaceful means).

Regarding how the conflict transformation theory is applied in restorative justice, Crowe (2017: 9) asserted that “transformation is relationship centered and works to build something desirable out of destruction,” works to initiate immediate and long-term change, and sees conflict as an opportunity to respond to systems and engage with systems where the relationships are embedded. In addition:

[Conflict transformation] emphasizes not only the process of finding a solution to a particular episode of conflict but also an opportunity to address the epicenter of conflict in order for the problem not to re-occur, thus making the process of restoration transformational for the perpetrator, victim and the surrounding school community (Crowe 2017: 9).

Therefore, in order to build healthy and sustainable human relationships, Frazer and Ghetas (2013: 7) suggested that conflict transformation change should happen at four levels, that is, the personal, relational, cultural, and structural levels. In agreement with Ghetas, Joseph (2016: 23) alluded to the fact that conflict transformation can alter conflict in its totality and restore lasting peace by addressing the personal, structural,

and cultural dimensions. Yuksek and Carpentier (2018: 3) concurred with Joseph by stating that the conflict transformation approach views both conflict and change occurring at the personal, interpersonal, structural, and cultural levels. Joseph (2016: 23) further explained how conflict transformation alters conflict:

At a personal level, conflict transformation improves the well-being of people by providing awareness programmes, counseling and ensuring human security. At the relational level, it improves personal relationships through communication, and at the structural level, it addresses the root cause of conflict and ensures basic facilities, socio-economic equality and participation in the decision-making body. At the cultural level, it addresses the factors that contribute to conflict like research for identity and traditional values, thereby respecting the culture and tradition of others.

There is a very close relationship between conflict and change, and according to Makwerere (2017: 20), what is important is to “understand the context in order to deal with conflict constructively.” Makwerere (2017: 20) stated that conflict can be constructed and deconstructed by the same actors, and the power to transform conflict rests entirely with those who are involved in it. This means that the school community (teachers, learners, parents, community, and other stakeholders such as the traditional leaders, government, business community, churches, and non-governmental organizations) can be instrumental in transforming conflict into something positive.

Crew (2017: 8), in his work on peacebuilding as it related to the conflict transformation theory, stated that conflict transformation emphasizes the “process of finding a solution to a particular episode of conflict, the historical context of the problem that created the crisis in the first place, to initiate change so episodes will not re-occur.” Transformation requires moving from a culture of domination to a culture of collaboration, changing competitive relationships into egalitarian and cooperative relationships (Yuksek and Carpentier 2018: 3). The indication that conflict has been

transformed is through the parties' attitudes in the change of perceptions and behavior, focusing on collaboration and the parties' attempts to remove incompatibilities (Dhiaulhaq 2014: 2). It is important for various stakeholders in the process of transformation to engage in a process of construction (Omeje 2015: 34). Conflict transformation holds that peacebuilders must develop the capacity to hear and engage in dialogue in whatever form, including creativity and the arts, where people can share their deep-rooted perceptions (Opiyo 2015: 46).

2.6 Causes of Violence

Different people react differently to violent situations. John (2018: 56) asserted that in many countries of the world, colonialism and oppression have caused people to accept their situation and normalize the use of force to settle disputes. Galtung (1990 cited in Varjavandi 2017: 9) defined the normalization of violence as violence that masquerades as being socially acceptable or even socially encouraged to the extent that it becomes entrenched in everyday life. Most, if not all, triggers of violence are somehow intertwined. Violence can be caused by the unequal distribution of power due to patriarchy, political power, and economic power. Figure 2.2 demonstrates the triggers of violence and its effects.

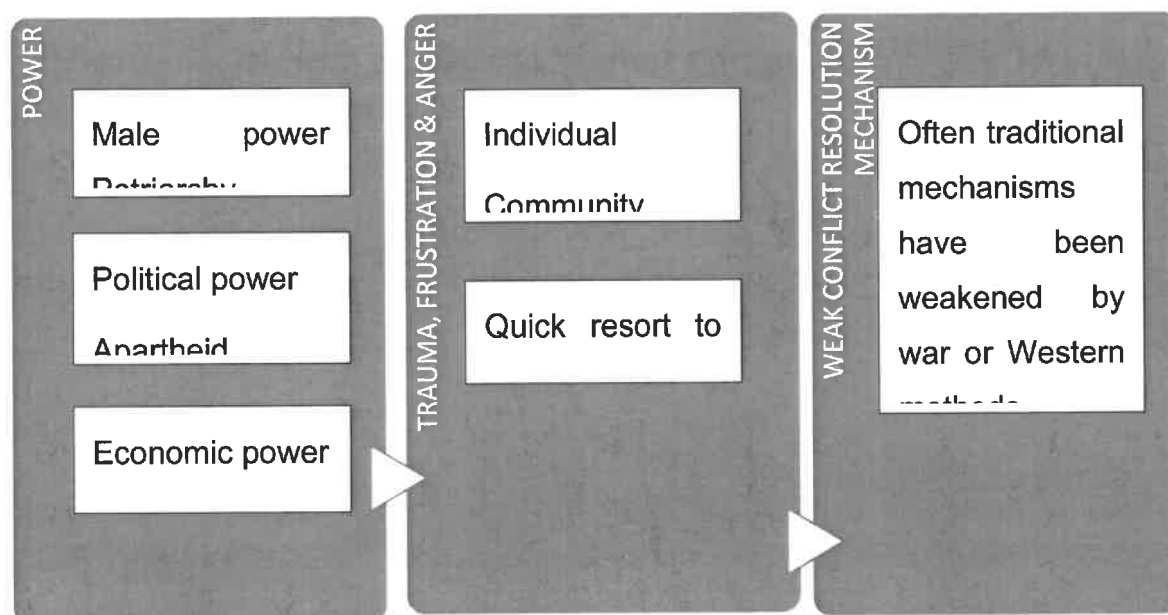


Figure 2.2: Causes of Violence and its effects

Figure 2.2 explains how unequal power can lead to male power, political power, and economic power, which is something that can lead to conflict and creates trauma, frustration, and anger, leading to unhelpful ways of resolving conflict and quickly resorting to violence. These three foundational causes of conflict will be discussed later in this section.

Globally, rising inequality is seen as the greatest threat to humanity and the planet and a source of much violence (John 2018: 56). High levels of inequality can breed political disillusionment and regime dissatisfaction (Kriekhaus 2013: 139). Inequality in incomes causes the family background to play a stronger role in determining the adult outcomes of young people, with their own hard work playing a commensurately weaker role (Corak 2013: 79). Corak (2013: 81) argued that inequality stifles upward social mobility, making it harder for talented and hard-working people to gain the rewards that they deserve. In Africa, the level of inequality is very high, and according to Murithi (2017: 1):

[Three hundred and forty million,] 340 million[,] or half of the continent's population live on less than a dollar a day, the average life expectancy is 54 years, the mortality rate of children under five years is 140 per 1000, the illiteracy rate is 41% and there is a public health crisis caused by HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

John (2018: 5) asserted that:

In South Africa approximately 3.4 million young people between 11 and 24 years are unemployed and are not in education or training. Half of the children who start school do not finish their full schooling. Millions of South Africans remain poor, unemployed and many working households live close to the poverty line, two-thirds of the children live below the poverty line and 5.5 children go hungry.

Melamed and Samman (2013: 6) observed that inequality in education has impacts on employment prospects, wages, poverty, growth, mortality rates, and life expectancy. Kriekhaus (2013: 143) stated that in Peru and Brazil, high levels of inequality have led to citizens withdrawing their support from democratic governance. Bapuji (2015: 1059) observed that:

[A] high level of economic inequality negatively affects individuals and societies. Economic inequality indirectly affects organizational performance via human development in the society and directly via its effects on individual employees and their workplace interactions, as well as via institutions in which the organizations are embedded. High economic inequality results in low human development, which in turn affects organizational performance indirectly imposing burdens.

If the level of human development is low, there will be lower social capital, and low social capital negatively impacts economic prosperity. Rothstein (2013: 1009) stated that social capital is a combination of interpersonal generalized trust and networks based on reciprocity and is seen as a major asset for individuals as well as groups and societies. Melamed and Samman (2015: 1) postulated that human development is the prolonging of people's lives, leading to healthy, productive, creative, and decent lives.

So *et al.* (2018: 735) posited that because of societal inequalities, adolescents from low-income communities are affected by community violence; for instance, in America, 45%–96% of African American adolescents have witnessed violence in their neighborhood. Inequality generates political disillusionment and regime dissatisfaction (Kriekhaus 2013: 139). Sixty percent (60%) of South African children live below the poverty line, and as a result, many children and adolescents facing poverty are frequently exposed to learning deprivations and school delays (Theron and Theron 2014: 3). The following section discusses the unequal distribution of power and how this can manifest itself in various ways such as political power, economic power, and male power patriarchy.

Political power is the system of a government. According to Warren (2018: 3), fragmentation, instability, and domination in various guises, including the denials of existence and expressed needs of subordinate groups, are the key components of political violence. In Western African countries, both police officers and civilians understand violence as one of the ordinary tools of everyday police work (Beek and Gopfert 2013: 483). According to Beek and Gopfert (2013: 3), police researchers often argue that excessive violence is grounded in, promoted by, and protected by a police culture and its informal rules where violence is seen as part of the police's daily work. Awofeso (2016: 1) alluded to the fact that the history of elections in Nigeria has been characterized by thuggery and violence since 1959 to date with widespread acts of hooliganism and vandalism and the loss of lives and property. A number of the recent elections in Africa have been illegal because of political parties' reliance on illegal

electioneering strategies; as a result, thousands of people have died through electoral violence (Gutierrez-Romero 2014: 1501).

Sometimes, “social disorganization,” where the level of poverty is high with low levels of collective efficacy, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential instability, will have a higher rate of crime and violence (Edwards 2015: 361). South Africa is a good example where the Nationalist Party introduced the apartheid system that oppressed the Black majority when they came into power in 1948. According to Clark and Worger (2016: 3), apartheid literally means “apartness,” “separateness,” “putting apart,” and/or “divide and rule.” Apartheid was characterized by poverty, fewer community resources, geographical and social isolation, patriarchal family structures, and the privacy of norms that contributed to violence (Edwards 2014: 361).

Maylam (2016: 1) reported that in 1998, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) declared apartheid to have been a “crime against humanity.” Maylam (2016: 6) further stated that apartheid was “aberration, a monstrous departure” from what had gone before rather than a “culmination of a long history of racial oppression.” The criminality of apartheid can be traced to the execution of banning orders, home detentions, detention without trial, imprisonment, and the assassination of those who opposed the state (Clark and Worger 2013: 9). Though the end of apartheid was positive, Deegan (2014: 10) argued that such were the great “divisions and animosities between racial groups,” and the argument was that only retribution and revenge would emerge. According to Warren (2018: 5), “divisions in language, religion, ethnicity and regions were strategically manipulated by colonialists for their own interest to divide and rule and create divisions” among local people. Russell *et al.* (2014: 284) stated that since South Africa’s history was one of extensive brutality, marked by extraordinary state-directed structural as well as physical violence, this “violence continues to haunt South Africans frequently in a wide range of environments.”

For a long time, South Africa was notorious for apartheid and its unjust laws and being racially divided, an arrangement created to maintain inequality and prevent peace, and

the country has since grown more unequal with high levels of violence (John 2018: 55). Clark and Worger (2016: 9) stated that:

Apartheid can be traced back to 1652 to the beginning of Dutch colonization the policy promoted racial discrimination with regard to where people lived, which schools they went to, where they worked and where they died. The apartheid policy remained official in South Africa until 1994.

Warren (2018: 6) observed that South Africa's system of government was formed by a history of recurrent and still unresolved tensions between oppression and self-determination. Russell *et al.* (2014: 284) argued that the first democratic elections in South Africa marked the end of a history spanning 350 years of racial oppression, including the era of apartheid.

2.6.1 Economic Power

The term *economic power* means the unequal distribution of wealth. Uslaner and Rothstein (2016: 227) stated that historical conditions can have long-term effects on economic prosperity and democratization. Although violence cuts across all socioeconomic groups, it is more prevalent in lower socioeconomic settings (Beland and Kim 2016: 113). In low-socioeconomic status communities, violence may be fueled by the use of substances such as alcohol and drugs in adolescents (Beland and Kim 2016: 1). Zimmerman (2013: 360) observed that structural disorganization (such as poverty, violence, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility) and economic isolation breed pockets of cultural disorganization. John (2018: 60) posited that violence is a drain on the economy and consumes resources that could be harnessed for poverty eradication and development.

De Wet (2016: 1) argued that the interaction of forms of inequality and oppression, such as racism, class, privilege, and gender oppression, are structural root causes for school violence. Such socioeconomic imbalances retard the sociopolitical and

economic development of the countries within the African continent, resulting in conflict caused by scarce resources. Harber and Mncube (2017: 24) observed that in poor countries, learners are sometimes encouraged to attend school, but the school buildings are not safe because of unhygienic toilets and buildings being in danger of falling down and not being protected against earthquakes and fires. Harber and Mncube (2017: 27) reported that in poor communities, learners are beaten for the non-payment of school fees, arriving late at school, or forgetting to bring brooms and cutlasses for grounds keeping. Economic inequality leads to “sluggish economic growth,” partially due to the threat to property rights and because economic disparities lead to political polarization and policy paralysis (Kriekhaus 2013: 143). Similarly, Prasad (2015: 556) observed that high levels of economic inequality threaten the political and cultural stability needed for sustainable economic growth, and this negatively impacts health and education and impedes social mobility. A study conducted by Trends International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2012 revealed that the socioeconomic factors of learners were also another important indicator for potential exposure to acts of violence, with the chances of being bullied being higher for learners in low-income groups (Zuze *et al.* 2016: 1).

2.6.2 Male Power Patriarchy

Patriarchy is male power. According to Makama (2013: 16), “patriarchy justifies the marginalization of women” in all spheres of life such as education, economy, the labor market, politics, business, family, domestic matters, and inheritance. In a patriarchal system, “men are given more power than women,” and young men are given the freedom to be sexually active while young women are judged for being promiscuous (Beckett *et al.* 2013: 6). John (2018: 56) observed that in South Africa, structural violence, together with the “long-lasting systems like patriarchy[,] give rise to the highest levels” of gender-based violence. Russell *et al.* (2014: 284) echoed the same sentiments and stated that the combination of the “legacy of violence together with patriarchal culture” give rise to a society in which boys may grow up with a sense that they are entitled and expected to control girls and that it is legitimate to use force to do so. The dominating factor in gender-based violence has been found to be the “superiority of men” and the social norms of accepting violence in conflict (Russell *et*

al. 2014: 284). Karandikar (2014: 12) argued that although patriarchy is universal, “manifestations of it differ in its intensity and severity” across different situations.

A study conducted by the Office of the England Children’s Commissioner on 188 young people between 13 and 28 years of age on sexual exploitation in gangs revealed the highest level of male power (Beckett *et al.* 2013: 6). The study revealed that:

[Sixty-five percent,] 65%[, of] young women were pressurized into sexual activity, 50% engaged in sex for status and protection, 41% shared examples of individual perpetrator rape, 34% shared examples of multiple perpetrator rape, 39% identified examples of the exchange for sex for tangible goods such as drugs, alcohol, or discharge of an associated debt, 23% noted exchange of sex for money, 31% noted examples of young women being used to attract and then ‘set up’ males from rival gangs to be assaulted, 11% identified examples of rape under threat of a weapon, 7% shared examples of young women having to have sex with more than one gang member to be accepted as a member of the gang (Beckett *et al.* 2013: 6).

These are some of the cultural norms and values that promote violence against women and prevent women from seeking help. An example of these norms and values were reported in research studies that have been conducted that revealed that a substantial proportion of women and men around the world agree that wife beating is justified under certain circumstances” (Guedes 2016: 5). Guedes (2016: 5) further stated that in other countries, it is allowed to kill a wife, daughter, or sister who “dishonors” the family or to sexually harass a woman who dresses “provocatively.” In India, the incidents of gender-based violence among female sex workers is high from male clients such that women sex workers are unable to negotiate safe sex, resulting in the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS (Karandikar 2014: 1).

Makama (2013: 15) postulated that in Nigeria, an average Nigerian woman is seen as an available object for prostitution, forced marriage, an instrument of wide-range trafficking, street hawking, and a misfit in society. Atta (2015: 11) observed that in Ghana, sexual harassment and violence against female children by teachers and classmates is one of the hindrances to girls' education. A comment made by one of the girls in a research study conducted by Atta (2015: 11) in Ghana was:

Being born as a girl into this world seems to be a curse. Women have and continue to suffer various degrees of injustices and inequalities spanning from cultural, social, economic, religious and political matters. These negative attitudes have affected women and girls' educational opportunities.

Russell *et al.* (2014: 284) observed that even though the South African Constitution recognizes the rights of women, South Africa is "traditionally a patriarchal society in which women are subservient to men," and despite the constitutional rights of equality, the notion that men should dominate women and women should defer to them is still being practiced.

2.7 Effects of Violence

Violence can have devastating effects on human beings. It has serious public health and human rights challenges with global psychological impacts across the human life span (Bowman *et al.* 2015: 243). According to Muldoon (2013: 932), children growing up in situations of political violence display signs of anxiety, insomnia, depression, delinquency, and post-traumatic stress. There is evidence that the impact of violence among adolescents is that it places them on a lifelong trajectory of violence for both victims and perpetrators (Lundgren and Amin 2015: S42). Betancourt *et al.* (2014: 157) reported that young people affected by violence suffer impairment and are at risk of

poor health development, low rates of school completion, and poor economic self-sufficiency.

The high rate of inequality leads to high levels of violent crime, murder, robbery, and low educational attainment (Bapuji 2015: 1064). In 2007, the United Nations reported that two million children have been killed in armed conflicts, six million children have been permanently disabled, and more than 250,000 children continue to be exploited as child soldiers (Muldoon 2013: 932). Even when the violent conflict is over, young people continue to suffer from depression and hopelessness, problems in emotional regulation, anger, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Betancourt 2014: 165). Violence is a drain to the economy and consumes valuable resources that could be harnessed for poverty eradication and development (John 2018: 60).

The persistently high levels of corruption in many countries suggest that its root cause is the long-term factors rather than more recent institutional changes (Uslaner and Rothstein 2016: 227). Eugen (2013: 1) posited that “corruption greatly affects economic, human and societal development and is a great threat to sustainable development” and has a direct impact on political instability, economic underdevelopment, and poor governance structures. Corruption may “undermine society’s capacity to provide opportunities for citizens to meet the basic necessities of life, it widens the gap of inequality, aggravates mass poverty, undermines economic growth” and results in high government expenditures (Mohammed 2013: 16). Mohammed (2013: 16) reported that in Nigeria, the damage done by corruption is clearly visible in the schools that are not built, hospitals without medicines, and roads that are not constructed, and it has endangered social, economic, and political stability. John (2018: 56) stated that in South Africa, the report by the public protector on state corruption revealed that during the past few years, there has been “massive looting” by the former state president, the consequences of which are further deepening the injustices, inequality, and violence.

2.7.1 Trauma, Frustration, and Anger

Zimmerman (2013: 359) posited that the stress of living in a violent neighborhood may trigger depressive symptoms and increase suicidal behavior. Studies have revealed that in the US, trauma affects 5%–6% of men and 10%–14% of women in their lifetime, and it can have complex and lasting effects on mental and physical health (Callen *et al.* 2014: 123). In another study conducted in the US on how exposure to violence alters the development of impulse control in adolescents, the findings revealed that “high levels of violence exposure and victimization are linked to a decline in impulse control,” and weak impulse control contributes to risky behavior, such as delinquency in adolescents (Monahan *et al.* 2015: 1267). Risky coping mechanisms, such as drug and alcohol use, theft, physical fighting, IPV and transactional sex, disrespect of elders, and abusive language, are worsened by the lack of social support and poverty (Betancourt 2014: 166). Inequality and poverty create a fertile ground to recruit disillusioned young people who are easily mobilized to violent action (Hakeem 2013: 2). South Africa’s young people are a significant sector of the population, and very many of them are unoccupied, hungry, and angry (John 2018: 56). The exclusion of young people from productive participation is seen as a threat to social cohesion and peace as they are at risk of being drawn into gangs and crime (John 2018: 56).

High levels of poverty, discrimination, and disorder have serious implications for the mental and physical development of young people (McCoy, Raver and Sharkey 2015: 19). Political, social, and economic marginalization leads to frustration and aggression. There is a very close relationship between socioeconomic deprivation, community order, stability, and poverty. Such socioeconomic conditions cause areas with “greater density population” members to behave in more unconventional and more violent manners than residents in less populated communities (Edwards 2015: 361). Democracy’s inability to address persistent economic inequalities leads to “resentment and frustration that weaken allegiance to the regime” (Kriekhaus 2013: 139). Trauma, frustration, and anger can occur at the individual, community, and national levels.

A) Effects of Trauma, Frustration, and Anger at the Individual Level

The damaging consequences of violence lead to mistrust, fear, and the development of distorted perceptions of identity and self-worth (John 2018: 60). Monahan *et al.* (2015: 1280) observed that harsh environments can retard development in individuals. When adolescents are exposed to community violence, it can have negative effects on the people they become in the future. According to So *et al.* (2018: 735), exposure of young people to frequent violence could endorse the “normative belief that aggression is acceptable,” and this promotes an unbreakable cycle of violence. Low and Espelage (2014: 1) concurred with So *et al.* by stating that there is a link between community violence and bullying behavior and aggression in peers. According to Kudenga (2017: 3), the use of corporal punishment may cause learners to believe that the use of force and violence is the only way that society functions. Similarly, Busby, Lambert and Lalongo (2013: 251) observed that adolescents exposed to high rates of crime and violence show signs of aggressive and violent behavior. Exposure to crime and violence can directly affect children’s “cognitive performance while also having a direct effect on attention deployment” (McCoy, Raver and Sharkey 2015: 19). In agreement with McCoy, Raver and Sharkey, Zimmerman (2013: 359) postulated that in violent communities, the youth sometimes develop “street codes” that require engagement in risky and violent activities to gain respect and avoid being victimized.

Bell *et al.* (2013: 240) argued that because of the government’s violation of human rights, people respond violently, and this leads to the destruction of private and public property. Low and Espelage (2014: 1) observed that community violence exposure increases the risk of engaging in and being a victim of interpersonal violence. People who have been exposed to violence suffer from survivors’ guilt, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, shame, feeling worthless and hopeless, frustration, disillusionment, burnout, headaches, sleeplessness, and eating disorders (Grobler 2018: 43). Children and mothers’ exposure to political violence is associated with post-traumatic symptoms and emotional and behavioral problems such as domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and community violence (Pat-Horenczyk *et al.* 2013: 125). Lupu and Peisakhin (2017: 836) observed that political “violence has an intergenerational effect on identities, attitudes and behaviors as it shapes the identities of victims and families transit the effects across generations which impacts the contemporary

attitudes and behaviors” of the descendants of victims. Post-traumatic stress disorder could lead to other social problems such as poor academic and employment outcomes, early parenthood, poor peer relationships, lowered life satisfaction, and the risk of engaging in criminal activity (Klodnick 2014: 48).

B) Effects of Trauma, Frustration, and Anger at the Community Level

Zimmerman (2013: 362) stated that “structural disorganization and economic isolation lead to cultural disorganization where the residents express cynicism about the legitimacy of the law and tolerance” to the use of violence to resolve problems because of frustration. Papachristos and Kirk (2016: 858) alluded to the fact that excessive police violence causes the community to lose confidence in the legal system, and this lowers crime reporting in communities. According to Papachristos and Kirk (2016: 858), a “spirit of legal cynicism and the deep-seated belief in the incompetence, illegitimacy and unresponsiveness” of the criminal justice system is thought to pervade many poor communities. According to Zimmerman (2013: 359), violent cultural frames in the neighborhood encourage violent solutions to life’s problems in communities. This is more common in poor communities which have no confidence in the justice system, and such communities are known to use mob justice where the local people pass judgment themselves, and this further perpetuates violence.

C) Effects of Trauma, Frustration, and Anger at the National Level

Kriekhaus (2013: 142) observed that democracy’s inability to address persistent economic inequalities leads to “resentment and frustrations that weaken allegiance to the regime.” This type of frustration leads to aggressiveness as a way of venting out anger. Poor economic conditions and the ill-treatment of citizens could lead to a feeling of “relative deprivation” where people believe that what has been provided is lower than what was expected (Bell *et al.* 2013: 242). Such situations trigger political and civil violence, creating unstable environments that have negative effects on local businesses and a country’s economy. Wartime violence has the potential to break down social institutions and locks countries into conflict traps, fragments and divides the countries, and damages social cohesion (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017: 837).

2.7.2 Quickly Resorting to Violence

Various reasons lead to violent reactions in human beings. In most countries, young people are the least valued stakeholders for any type of development, leading to young people resorting to violence to ensure that their voices are heard and that they are recognized as equal partners (Schneider 2015: 16). In agreement with Schneider, Harber and Mncube (2017: 7) opined that due to the built-up anger, expressed through the violent behavior and recklessness of young men who have been deprived of all the markers of status in society, the young men also struggle to maintain face and what little status they have. Similarly, Helgeson and Schneider (2015: 16) stated that in other countries, youth are the least valued stakeholders, and this has caused them to resort to violence to ensure that their voices are heard and that they are recognized as equal participants in development. This, therefore, means that quickly resorting to violence is motivated by people's voices not being heard by those in positions of power. According to Hakeem (2013: 2), the recent cause of violent conflict and terrorism is the result of poverty, which breeds insecurity among civilians. Muheeb (2015: 7) observed that:

Socio-economic imbalance leading to scarcity of resources could be the cause for quick resort to violence like in the case of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria where recurring violence was evident in the 1990s and 2000s where different ethnic groups were competing for recognition, patronage and political and social power.

Similarly, Hakeem (2013: 3) asserted that the Nigerian government's neglect of the civilians' basic rights has fostered recurring violence in different parts of the country. Mitton (2013: 322) averred that in such instances, young people are rendered vulnerable to mobilization when there are grievances relating to sociopolitical and economic conditions.

In some of the Western African countries, such as Ghana and Niger, violence is seen as one of the means of constructing social order (Beek and Gopfert 2013: 6). There is a link between civilians' grievances and the action of the police and civilians in quickly resorting to violence. For example, both in Ghana and Niger, police officers who work as violent specialists of the state occasionally beat civilians to "assert their position of authority" (Beek and Gopfert 2013: 6). The immediate response from civilians is to fight back. Young South Africans believe that the violent struggle was instrumental in bringing down apartheid (Hove and Harris 2018: 4), and this, therefore, justifies their engagement in violence. According to Beek and Gopfert (2013: 5), in other environments, violence is seen as a normal way of engagement in places such as pubs and football stadiums and the adjacent parking lots. In most instances, young people are not provided with appropriate avenues, therefore, they feel undermined and less valued. The anger and frustration of adolescents who are unable to express their emotions in an appropriate way might be turned into challenging behaviors or bullying (Uzunboylu *et al.* 2017: 1048).

2.8 Weak Conflict Resolution and Mediation Skills

Biased mediation can have negative implications and outcomes for the values and protection of human rights (Svensson 2013: 878). One of the unhelpful ways of resolving conflict is to prescribe to the community solutions to the conflict and the belief that what works for one community works for all other communities. According to Beardsley (2013: 58), conflict resolution requires neutral mediators, as third parties, to be involved in the process and to have "wide eyes" open to see the root cause of the disputes such that the tools for mediation fit the context. Beardsley (2013: 58) argued that:

[A] successful peacebuilding process encompasses a number of reforms; it implies a political, social and economic component. Key stakeholders must be invested in maintaining peace and not dependent on the third-party inducements since peacebuilding strives to enable the voices of the stakeholders to be heard.

In agreement with Beardsley, Svensson (2013: 22) stated that peace processes should lead to transformation after an agreement, and neutral mediators should be positioned to support the creation of such transformation. John (2018: 70) observed that:

[African cultures are] repositories of a substantial body of knowledge on how to promote peace and maintain harmonious communities. [This encourages a] move from a culture of violence and brutality, hatred and fear, social and political exclusion and economic marginalization to reconciliation and peace.

One of the challenges that African countries have regarding conflict resolution is the adaptation of Western methods that, in most cases, have proven to be inappropriate, ineffective, and costly. John (2018: 70) argued that traditional African mechanisms have been weakened. The Western approach has weakened the traditional African mechanisms. According to Murithi (2017: 2), before slavery, African people had sought to act in solidarity with each other to promote their well-being and ensure their livelihoods. Wadhwa (2016: 10) asserted that the roots of restorative ways of resolving conflict extend centuries back to indigenous people in every continent who felt collectively responsible for building and repairing communities.

In Africa, the spirit of *Ubuntu* is encouraged. African traditions of peaceful coexistence, communal conflict resolution processes, and value systems of interdependence and support – *Ubuntu* – refer to African cultures as “repositories of a substantial body of knowledge on how to promote peace and maintain harmonious communities (John 2018: 70). This promotes communal living and co-existence among community members, and in this way, conflict is resolved in a loving and caring manner where dialogues are encouraged. Wadhwa (2016: 10) ascertained that *Ubuntu* is a “restatement of traditional values of balance between those in conflict within their

communities and signifies an approach to crime and conflict that heals parties through embracing them and their place in symbiosis” while simultaneously rejecting the destructive act that sundered them.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the meanings of peace, violence, and conflict as well as the differences between violence and conflict were discussed. The chapter also discussed the causes, nature, extent, and consequences of violence and how unequal power structures such as patriarchy, political power, and economic power can lead to trauma, anger, frustration, and violence. The chapter also discussed how trauma, anger, and frustration trigger violence because of weak conflict resolution mechanisms. The explanations for societal violence discussed earlier show that it is very deep rooted and that it will take decades of discussed efforts to reduce it (see Section 1.2 in Chapter 1). Chapter 3 will consider conflict transformation and restorative justice as the peace theories framing this study.

3 CHAPTER THREE

RELEVANT PEACE THEORIES

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 considered the peace concepts and discussed the meanings of peace, violence, and conflict, and how unequal power structures can lead to trauma, anger, frustration, and violence. It also discussed the two peace theories underpinning the study and the different emphases of conflict management, conflict resolution, conflict mediation, and conflict transformation. This chapter discusses restorative justice, particularly restorative practices, restorative discipline, and restorative approaches in schools.

3.2 Objectives of Transformation in Schools

The main goal of peace education is to promote constructive ways of dealing with potential conflict and violence and thus help to build the peace skills of individuals and groups alike (Jager 2014: 5). Bilgin (2020: 28) stated that peace education is skill building as it empowers learners to find creative and constructive ways to settle conflict and live in harmony with themselves and others. Frizzell (2015: 35) stated that:

Peace education enhances the purpose of education, which is to reveal and tap into those energies that make possible the full human enjoyment of a meaningful and productive existence. Peace education can serve to support and protect children in the process of peacebuilding by teaching skills and concepts that children can draw upon when faced with new conflict or when dealing with the aftermath of past conflict. Rather than peripheral to education, it is central.

Peace education can be formal or informal and can be inseed into learners using existing subjects such as history for learners to understand the past and present

happenings in their communities. Peace education is best achieved through participatory, learner-centered, and experiential learning processes – such pedagogy allows holistic (cognitive and effective) learning to take place and best generate critical reflection (John 2018: 60). For example, in Austria, the program uses interactive participatory methods which help learners to experience the opportunity to participate in exercises where they learn about the issues, that is, they dramatize situations (through role plays, songs, and collages) and discuss issues freely (Saiden 2017: 6). Another example is that of Kenya where peace education has been integrated into the basic education curriculum through history, life skills education, religious studies, and social studies as one of the core values to promote peace at the personal, community, national, and global levels (Mwanzia 2015: 52). Mwanzia (2015: 53) added that other avenues for transmitting peace messages include activities such as peace clubs, art, music, and drama. In agreement with Mwanzia, Majola (2013: 69) mentioned that poetry is a powerful resource in schools, mainly because many learners across racial or ethnic groups love to listen to lyrics – rap music can be used to pass a message that condemns destructive conflict. Mwanzia (2015: 54) alluded to the fact that:

[The] rationale for peace education in schools is that behavior can be changed, skills of peace education can be learned and taught particularly in post-conflict states. Therefore, schools are considered to be an appropriate institution for teaching peace, learning life skills of decision making, negotiation, promoting self-esteem, empathy and coping with emotions and stress.

Majola (2013: 52) stated that learners who had received higher levels of peace education in their classrooms demonstrated increased willingness and ability to apply the procedures to resolve conflict scenarios. In Kenya, peace education is allocated one session a week, and the content is constructed toward the notion of promoting positive relationships, modeling peaceful behavior, and developing problem-solving skills and reflective thinking (thinking before one acts) (Mwanzia 2015: 54). Through peace education, learners learn nonviolence, love, trust, compassion, fairness,

cooperation, and reverence for human life Bilgin (2020: 28). Peace education aims to initiate and support integrated, holistic learning processes that are guided by the concept of peace (Jager 2014: 5).

3.3 Schools as Agents of Transformation

One of the ways in which conflict can be transformed in schools is through schools becoming the agents of change or transformation. Schools are the most important environment outside of the learners' families; therefore, they are a primary domain for the promotion of healthy relationships (Grobler 2018: 51). As agents of change, schools are set as pedestals that offer knowledge on combating violence (Mwanzia 2013: 19). The rationale behind this is that a school is a place where adolescents spend most of their daily time interacting and socializing with each other and where most of their behavior is influenced (Belle 2017: 28). The researcher sees schools as enabling environments that nurture the holistic development of learners where they feel that they belong (Mathikithela 2019: 77). It is in people's best interest to learn to manage their emotions for good interpersonal relationships and their own benefit. Moed *et al.* (2014: 2) stated that:

Parents who help their children regulate their emotions probably foster their child's acceptance of and coping with negative emotions by offering warm support and guidance for active regulation, such as suggestions for how to cope with anger, distress, sadness and other negative emotions.

To enable learners to develop skills to manage or to "resolve conflict peacefully requires that conflict resolution and peace education should be actively taught in schools," and classroom management practices should center more on character development than behavior management (Williams 2016: 153). This can be done through the introduction of peace education in classrooms. According to Bilgin (2020: 28), peace education is directed at the full development of human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and it promotes

understanding, tolerance, and friendship. The objective is to promote a critical understanding of the root causes of all forms and levels of violence and conflicts and to empower learners to engage in active nonviolent transformation toward a culture of peace (Wibowo 2020: 33).

Peace education is the process of acquiring the values and knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself and with the natural environment (Okoro Okoro 2018: 223). Lauritzen (2016: 78) defined peace education as a process that seeks to empower pupils with the necessary skills to achieve a society wherein such values are standards to be upheld. According to Onebunne (2020: 3):

Peace education is activities that develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to explore concepts of peace, enquire into the obstacles to peace, to resolve conflict in a just and non-violent way and to study ways of constructing just and sustainable alternative futures. It creates an understanding of what it means to belong and to co-exist with others.

Peace education must be understood as a three-level endeavor including the building of peace within individuals, interpersonal relationships, and the community at large (Lauritzen 2016: 78). Okoro Okoro (2018: 224) argued that the objectives for peace education can be grouped into three objectives, that is, acquiring skills, gaining knowledge about issues, and developing attitudes. Lauritzen (2016: 77) explained that peace education can be understood as both a “subject taught within an education system and a guiding principle” for the way schools should be run.

As human beings, we are naturally connected to each other, and this leads to the formation of relationships and, therefore, being able to caringly respond to others through paying attention and listening (Grobler 2018: 51). There is an emotional investment in caring for others whereby a trusting relationship is built, which is

supposed to be a two-way relationship of give and take. Emotional support is a type of social support and refers to the provision of care, empathy, love, and trust (Romero, Hall and Cluver 2018: 33). Learners, families, and teachers should work collaboratively toward the shared vision of establishing an environment where everyone feels socially, emotionally, and physically safe (Mottee and Kelly 2018: 56). For the school to be transformed, the whole school community should be able to show care for one another (Grobler 2018: 32). In agreement with Grobler, Mottee and Kelly (2018: 56) opined that people need collaboration and cooperation from multiple stakeholders in order to overcome school violence, with strategies at the individual, classroom, school, community, and national levels. This is in line with the foreword by the Minister of Basic Education to the current curriculum which states that the Preamble to the Constitution states that the aims of the Constitution are to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice, and fundamental human rights (John 2018: 60).

Grobler (2018: 53) observed that in the single act of giving and receiving care, the self of each person is confirmed. It is only through receiving care that people learn how to care for others – this is how trusting relationships can be built in classrooms through listening with care, understanding, and respect. Body language and behavior – such as eye contact; active listening; listening to learners' ideas; and activities involving aspects that make the learners unique, such as birthday celebrations – are an indication of care and healthy relationship building (Grobler 2018: 51). In the South African context, researchers have identified caring schools as important “agents of resilience” for neglected children with limited access to formal health and social services (Theron and Theron 2014: 3). Similarly, Grobler (2018: 59) averred that a caring school environment allows learners to thrive, could allow them to develop their full potential, and protects learners who come from unfavorable conditions such as poverty. The core element of caring schools should be attentiveness, responsiveness, motivational displacements, and authenticity – this leads to an increase in learners' positive self-image, their sense of self-worth, and teachers' overall ability to connect with learners (Grobler 2018: 58).

In a study conducted in Germany on teachers' perceptions of the school environment, as predictors of learners' aggression, victimization, and willingness to intervene in bullying situations, teachers reported that closer teacher–learner relations were associated with less bullying and aggression victimization and a greater willingness to intervene by learners (Espelage, Polanin and Low 2014: 289). In most instances, learners are influenced by people who form a part of their daily lives, such as their family, friends, peers, principal, educators, and the community around the school (Belle 2017: 32). In agreement with Belle, Lauritzen (2016: 78) opined that teachers and parents' attitudes strongly influence learners' internalization of peace values. This, therefore, means that schools can play a pivotal role in peacebuilding activities in post-conflict societies as they provide education for the young generation who will ensure that a peaceful society will be sustained for future generations (Wibowo 2020: 33). Peace education prepares young people for global responsibility, enables them to understand the nature and implications of global interdependence, and helps them to accept responsibility to work for a just, peaceful, and viable global community (Onebunne 2020: 3).

Adolescents are emotionally unstable if they lack self-concept, self-confidence, self-awareness, self-worth, self-satisfaction, and self-value (Belle 2017: 32). The presence of supportive relationship networks within the community, family, and school enables resilient coping in learners (Mathikithela 2019: 80). However, unfortunately, in the previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa, teachers struggle to provide socio-emotional support to ensure that learners not only survive but also thrive despite the adversity that they face (Mathikithela 2019: 77). The awareness of life's purpose, personal strengths and weaknesses, aspirations and beliefs, values, spiritual and religious identification, and self-esteem lead to the development of a desirable personal identity (Mathikithela 2019: 80). According to Belle (2017: 31), parental participation helps develop a positive sense of efficacy in learners whose self-esteem is raised, and, therefore, they manifest less disruptive behavior. Mathikithela (2019: 77) observed that the climate in South African schools is not conducive to creating physical, emotional, or social spaces for learners to attain positive outcomes. This is caused by the divergence between the values of the family and the values of the

disorganized community, and the school fails to synchronize them, causing adolescents to lack elements of social competence such as prosocial behavior and emotional regulation (Belle 2017: 31).

Building and re-building relationships mean healing from trauma, building trust, enabling forgiveness, and sharing narratives (Abdi 2020: 4). Mwanzia (2015: 53) stated that schools, as agents of transformation, entail trauma healing, conflict transformation, leadership, environmental care, education, human care, and development. De Voogd *et al.* (2016: 280) observed that when learners are emotionally invested in their own and one another's welfare, they find it easier to achieve academic success in the resulting supportive environment. According to Saiti (2015: 17), a collaborative school culture instills trust and encouragement and reinforces an initiative spirit. Social healing is best understood and explored at the level of real-life, face-to-face relationships (Opiyo 2015: 46).

Education can play a major role in peacebuilding in the sense that it can be transformative in terms of transforming values, attitudes, and behaviors (Lauritzen 2016: 77-78). Schools, as agents of transformation, have the "capacity to act purposefully and constructively" to make a difference in educational achievements and other social needs (Themane and Thobejane 2018: 3). Harber and Mncube (2017: 19) raised an argument that schooling has always played a part through "socialization and indoctrination, in the creation, reproduction, modification and vilification of group identities and stereotypes." This means that schools have a better opportunity to instill correct values, norms, and principles in learners. Agency is not necessarily what individuals "possess, but instead something that is achieved through teamwork, [and] the emphasis is not on individual abilities but linkages with different stakeholders including community partnerships" (Themane and Thobejane 2014: 4). According to Themane and Thobejane (2014: 4), agency is an emergent phenomenon, where there is an "interplay of individual capacity, structure, the social context and material conditions" by means of which schools can play and act. Lukacs and Galluzzo (2014: 100) observed that the prevailing trend is that, as transformation agents, schools are

“recipients and implementers of change” initiatives of others. Since schools are closest to the problems of learners, it is believed that they should be the agents of transformation when the issue of concern is renewing their school to improve learning and teaching (Themane and Thobejane 2014: 102). Bilgin (2020: 28) observed that through peace education, teachers are able to establish democratic classrooms and teach cooperation and promote positive self-esteem among learners.

Given an opportunity, teachers can positively contribute to new reforms in the education system. According to Lukacs and Galluzzo (2014: 101), by doing so, teachers can be more active participants in plans for school improvement. Lukacs and Galluzzo (2014: 101) further stated that school improvement strategies should include learners, parents, and teachers' participation, otherwise such programs are doomed to failure because “collaboration among teachers and parents is now required to accomplish change.” Teachers could be at the center of changes in schools because of their role and abilities to change learners' lives for the better. For teachers to lead, they must work in a supportive context in which the principal serves as the “buffer and advocate” for teachers' ideas (Themane and Thobejane 2014: 102). In concurring with Themane and Thobejane, Grobler (2018: 51) opined that the quality of the relationships between the principal, learners, staff, and parents and the ethics of care are complementary approaches that can combat and mitigate violence at schools in South Africa. On the other hand, schools, as change agents, have areas of expertise that allow them to take initiatives in a bottom-up approach as the unit of change and not only the classroom (Themane and Thobejane 2014: 103). According to John (2018: 63), effective peace education requires “trained teachers, motivated learners, integrating peace education foci across the curriculum and a whole school programme that supports a peaceful learning environment” where parents and the broader community are part of the effort. The empowerment of teachers can be a vital component for schools to reach the level of being agents of transformation.

Heijden (2015: 682) argued that in today's society, there is a “greater need for schools who are real agents, willing to learn and change” from the inside (internal drive to

reflect and make sense of matters) and the outside (meeting external demands), both individually and in collaboration with others in their schools. Themane and Thobejane (2014: 103) stated that school agents can “read their community environment, enable the participation of all stakeholders in generating solutions, possess the skills to address the problems they identify in the community and feel a sense of ownership” with regard to those problems. With a sense of ownership, the school community’s self-esteem can be boosted, and they will always have pride in what they do and will be able to take care of the initiative. Themane and Thobejane (2014: 103) asserted that while teachers feel confident in their skills in the classroom, they more broadly possess an inner sense of direction for identifying what might improve teaching practices and/or learners’ achievement in their schools. Teachers’ abilities to be comfortable with both the learners and their colleagues allow school agents to serve as conduits for change efforts between individual classrooms and the school as a whole (Themane and Thobejane 2014: 103). Themane and Thobejane further stated that teachers, as part of the school agents, spot trends and can articulate them to colleagues in ways that engage their commitment to the reform of prevailing practices.

The school has the ability to shape learners to be fully functional human beings in their surroundings. The school climate has been recognized as an opportunity to “enhance learners’ achievement and reduce problem behaviors” and dropout rates (Wang and Degol 2015: 315). According to the United States National School Climate Council, the “school climate shapes the quality of the interactions” of all learners, teachers, parents, and school personnel and reflects the norms, values, and goals that represent the broader educational and social missions of the school (Wang and Degol 2015: 315). Healthy relationships and nonviolence are managed through a healthy environment, which promotes the building of interpersonal relationships based on mutual respect (Becerra, Munoz and Riquelme 2014: 157). Becerra, Munoz and Riquelme (2014: 157) suggested that schools should plan and “implement training programs that facilitate the development of socio-affective and ethical skills such as empathy, respect, mutual appreciation and healthy relationships.”

Berkowitz and Bustamante (2013: 8) opined that there are three major goals in education, namely, academic achievement and learning, character development, and civic socialization. Berkowitz and Bustamante (2013: 8) added that this includes the moral and performance dimension of learners' characters; social-emotional competencies; and civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Berkowitz and Bustamante (2013: 8) quoted the example of Colombia where the standard of Citizenship Competencies is divided into three main domains, namely, peaceful co-existence or peaceful relationships, democratic participation, and diversity. According to Berkowitz and Bustamante (2013: 8):

[All societies should] strive for citizens who display the willingness to participate in the political process toward societal improvement, are willing and able to manage their own emotions and relationships and to understand others and are motivated and equipped to follow a moral compass.

Such competencies contribute to character education and increase learner understanding and caring about and acting upon core ethical values. Berkowitz and Bustamante (2013: 8) further asserted that in a democratic state, citizens are expected to actively participate in the governance – by doing so, they are able to influence policies that promote the building of learners' characters.

Traditionally, schools were considered to be safe havens for learners from outside-world violence (Mestry 2015: 655). Van Jaarsveld *et al*, cited in Mestry (2015: 655) observed that:

No greater challenge exists today than creating safe schools or restoring schools to tranquil and safe places of learning. The challenge requires a major strategic commitment and involves placing school safety at the top of

the educational agenda. Without safe schools, teachers cannot teach and learners cannot learn. A safe school is foundational to the success of the academic mission. A safe school is also one that is prepared to respond to the unthinkable crisis.

According to Lacoë (2013: 2), there is a causal relationship between “feelings of safety and academic achievement”; therefore, a safe environment is a prerequisite for productive learning. Different tiers or types of interventions are important because violence often has “multiple causes,” which, therefore, requires a comprehensive systems approach to be employed in school violence (Williams 2016: 144). Espelage (2013: 27) proposed that any comprehensive examination of school violence must consider schools as “multi-level systems with complex dynamics” that affect teachers and other school personnel as well as learners, parents, and the entire community. The high prevalence of school violence, in turn, demands a growing concern for “improving relationships within the school setting in order to prevent violence and positively influence the psychological development” of learners and the learning outcome of the school (Becerra, Munoz and Riquelme 2014: 156). According to Mestry (2015: 655), this requires that schools be transformed into places of safety.

Mestry (2015: 655) opined that the education authorities, parents, and the broader community are obliged to put measures in place to achieve school safety and security for teachers, learners, and non-teaching staff. Saiden (2017: 11) postulated that open classroom meetings are intended to promote communication and personal relationship skills, listening skills, the ability to communicate feelings and problem-solving skills, and mutual respect for each other’s differences. Saiden (2017: 11) observed that:

In open classroom meetings learners learn to express their feelings and thoughts and to develop the attitudes and skills necessary to listen to the thoughts and feelings of others. Learners and teachers increase their understanding and empathy for each other. Increased understanding often

leads to increased respect and appreciation for differences and contributions of all classroom members.

Andreou (2015: 390) viewed the role of a school as more than an instrument of social control, and he argued that some “aspects of youth development are compatible with schooling” and the school’s role in helping learners learn. Andreou (2015: 389) argued that:

Positive youth development provides a useful framework for reducing negative behavior among adolescents by focusing on social competencies that can overcome risk factors by providing support and opportunities to build social capital, engender civic identity and situate oneself in the broader institutional community.

Andreou further stated that the emphasis on character development and building self-esteem is a very promising approach to tackling school aggression and violence. The role of education should be to promote the holistic development of individuals rather than only promoting the gaining of academic knowledge. According to Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child, the aim of education is to “prepare a child for a responsible life in a free society,” in the spirit of understanding that promotes peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship among all people (Garg 2016: 460). The relationship between school staff and learners influences the behavior of the learners (Crowe 2017: 6). In agreement with Crew (2017: 6), Meier (2014) stated that principals and teachers establish the procedures, routines, structure, and engagement that influence the behavior of learners. Wang and Degol (2015: 315) viewed schools as more than just a context for learning, and they alluded to the fact that a school is also a place where children learn how to form positive relationships; gain independence; and develop emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively. Majola (2013: 49) observed that very little attention has been given to conflict management and peace education in schools. According to Thapa *et al.* (2015: 358), if more attention is given to peace education in schools, a sustainable school

environment will foster learners' development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. According to the National Schools Climate Council of South Africa:

[A positive and sustained school climate is defined as a climate that includes] norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. People must be able to engage and feel respected. Learners, teachers and family work together to develop lives and contribute to a shared school vision. Teachers model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits of and satisfaction from learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school as well as the care of the physical environment (Thapa *et al.* 2013: 358).

The recommendation by Ali (2015: 4) is that we require policies which take into account the socio- economical and political factors that characterize the practice and inform interventions or programmers that address the scourge of corporal punishment.

In supportive teacher and peer relationships, lower rates of school violence among adolescents are more prevalent (Astor *et al.* 2013: 237). It has become imperative for the department of education, parents, and broader society to work closely together to fight the onslaught of pandemic violence in schools (Mestry 2015: 655). Family support, teachers, and school support as well as learner–learner support construct the social climate that satisfies the human need for relatedness – this is important for individuals' psychological growth and well-being (Wang *et al.* 2014: 2). If learners feel meaningfully connected to and accepted by teachers and classmates, their need for relatedness will be satisfied (Wang 2015: 315-352).

3.4 Restorative Justice

In discussing restorative justice, the study will focus on restorative practice and the three restorative discipline approaches, that is, healing circles, peace clubs, and peer mediation. *Restorative justice* is the umbrella term under which restorative discipline

falls. When defining restorative justice, Zehr (2015: 2) stated that it is a process that involves those who have a stake in a specific offence to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and set matters right. Restorative justice is a philosophy based on a set of principles that guide the response to conflict and harm (Crew 2017: 6). It draws on principles from democratic citizenship and peacebuilding education (Parker and Bickmore 2020: 1). Restorative justice emerges in practices focused on finding respectful and effective ways to repair harm, restore relationships, and build communities where divisions and disconnections abound (Dedinsky 2012: 8). The basic premise of restorative justice is that all people are connected to each other through a web of relationships (Zehr 2015: 2). Restorative justice “takes the punitive measures, or elements of punishment out of the equation,” even when dealing with discipline issues (Ortega 2014: 7). According to Brown (2015: 12):

[Restorative justice theory] encourages building connections between all people in schools by promoting healthy child development, positive relationships and creating space for people in schools to speak and be heard across all school environments especially, but not exclusively in instances where harm has been committed.

Through the restorative process, emotional bonds are built and strengthened in a safe environment where people are able to share their innermost feelings. There are three main goals of restorative justice, namely, accountability, community safety, and competency development (Crew 2017: 7). Crew (2017: 7) asserted that the underlying philosophy of restorative justice recognizes the need to keep the community safe through strategies that build relationships and empower the community to take responsibility for the well-being of its members. According to Wachtel (2013: 4), the purpose of the restorative processes is to manage conflict and tensions through reparation of harm and relationship building. Figure 3.1 depicts the restorative typology.

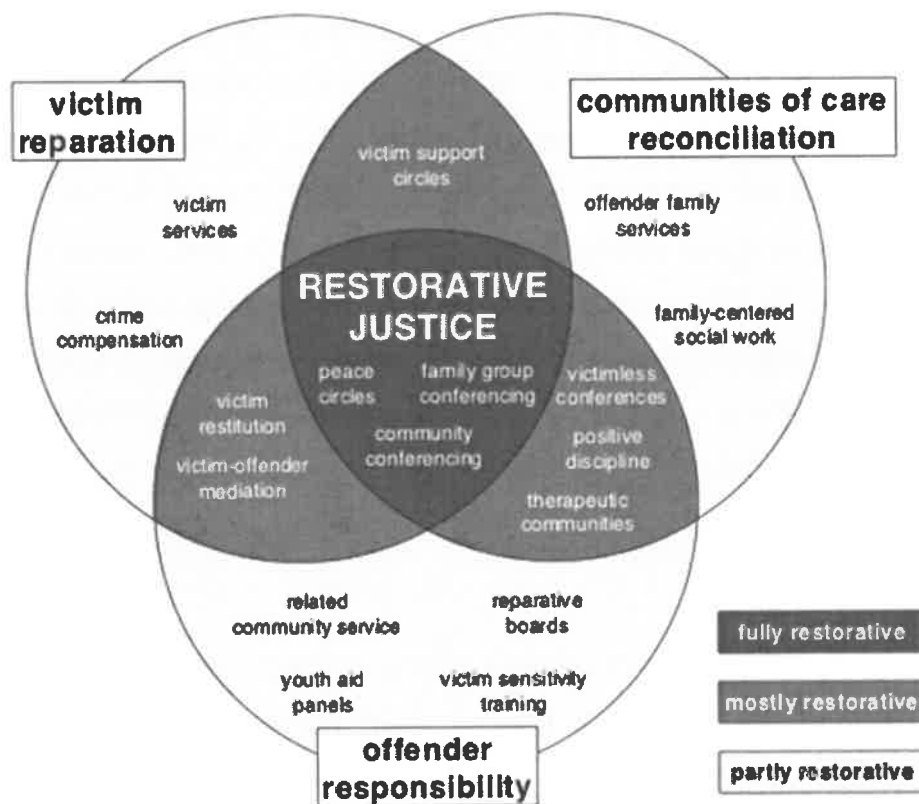


Figure 3.1: Restorative Typology

Figure 3.1 explains the victim–offender mediation process (Watchel 2013: 4). The process involves the victim, the offender, and the family of the offender. For full restoration to take place, each of the parties should be fully committed to the process. Services should be provided for all the parties involved. The offender must be willing to take responsibility for the harm inflicted on the victim. In restorative justice, the emphasis is on building social capital and achieving social discipline through participatory learning and decision making.

According to the United Nations, restorative justice is a way of “responding to criminal behavior by balancing the needs of the community, the victim and the perpetrators”

(Barnes 2013: 102). Restorative justice alternatives are sometimes seen as victim-centered in the sense that they focus on “repairing harm and bring together both the victim and the offender and give the offender an opportunity to apologize and make amends” (Ortega 2014: 2). Johnstone (2013: 14) emphasized the fact that doing so does not mean that restorative justice is “a soft option,” but it offers the offenders the chance to regain the respect of the community rather than its permanent scorn. In addition, communities also benefit since the offenders will be rendered less dangerous, and restorative justice will help foster the arts of citizenship and a sense of community that can be useful in other situations (Johnstone 2011: 14). Crew (2017: 7) argued that restorative justice supports schools by “creating healthy, equitable, caring school communities by preventing and addressing behavioral disruption in a non-punitive way that supports accountability and enables healing”.

Crowe (2017: 11) observed that the restorative justice approach to discipline transforms a learner’s violation into an “opportunity for learning – learning about the harm of the offence, learning about the responsibilities of community and about decision making and participation.” Crowe (2017: 11) further asserted that what sets restorative justice apart from safe-school and anti-bullying initiatives is its “philosophical foundation that emphasizes the inherent worth and wellbeing” of all people. The power of the restorative justice process comes from the engine of the emotional engagement of the participants (Parker and Bickmore 2020: 2). School-based restorative justice can involve the whole community, teachers, learners, and parents (Ortega 2014: 3). In restorative justice, effort is motivated by the desire to work with perpetrators in a more positive way by providing an alternative framework for thinking about wrongdoing. The focus here is not only on the violation of rules but more so on building relationships – in this context, rule violations are viewed not only as violations of rules but as violations against people and relationships (Ortega 2014: 3). Hence, researchers have recommended restorative justice for schools because of its “nature in building relationships within schools since school community members see each other on a daily basis and this can cause even minor encounters to easily turn into dangerous situations” if not handled adequately (Payne and Welch 2013: 2).

3.4.1 Restorative Practice

The difference between restorative justice and restorative practice is that restorative justice is a reactive response to crime and other wrongdoings whereas restorative practice is proactive since processes precede the wrongdoing and proactively build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict and wrongdoing (Wachtel 2013: 1). Restorative practice is contrary to disciplinary practices in the sense that restorative processes shift the focus from punishment and isolation to reconciliation and community building (Payne and Welch 2013: 2). Hence, Wachtel (2013: 1) defined restorative practice as a social science that studies how to “build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making.” Restorative practices are based on the value of living in harmony when it is disrupted (Ortega 2014: 1). In the education field, restorative practice attempts to address learner misbehavior; facilitates healthy school climates; and fosters positive, just, and equitable classroom environments (Brown 2015: 21).

More than just being about control, discipline should be about instilling values and responsibilities, guiding learners such that they are able to practice self-discipline (Mottee and Kelly 2018: 56). The emphasis on character development and building self-esteem is a very promising approach to tackling school aggression and violence (Andreou 2015: 390). Herero-Romero (2017: 33) stated that less controlling and more supportive parenting practices and parenting styles can have a positive impact on adolescents' educational outcomes.

According to Hendry (2010: 15), restorative practice is a way of working with children that “acknowledges the central importance of effective relationships” in schools and promotes the schools' role in developing these relationships. In agreement with Hendry, Payne and Welch (2013: 541) alluded to the fact that the importance of building and maintaining healthy relationships within the school community is emphasized in order to encourage everyone to maintain healthy relationships and abide by the school rules. Through restorative practices, schools can avoid and actively disrupt the pipeline to prison, despite the matrix of poverty, violence, and

school disciplinary practices and policies that are sometimes overwhelming (Wadhwa 2016: 8). Restorative practices help to “reduce violence and bullying, improve human behavior, strengthen civil society, provide effective leadership, restore relationships and repair harm” (Wachtel 2013: 1). Restorative processes focus on healing the damage of woundedness through reconnecting people, highlighting inherent relational qualities, and emphasizing social engagement (Brown 2015: 16).

Wachtel (2013: 3) posited that the social discipline window defines restorative practices as a leadership model for parents in families, teachers in classrooms, and police and social workers in communities. This is based on the belief that “human beings are happier, more cooperative and more productive and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them” (Wachtel 2013: 3). In this way, the approach is more participatory; therefore, the process is owned by all the parties involved. Wachtel (2013: 3) postulated that the process involves the victim, perpetrator, and their communities of care who need to take responsibility, provide care, and achieve reconciliation, and “interaction becomes more important in the process of restoration in order to exchange emotional needs.” According to Wachtel (2013: 3), the process can be both formal and informal. The formal process must be well structured; it requires more preparation time and more people, and the results have more impact. On the other hand, the informal process is more cumulative and is part of the day-to-day engagement.

The school is a “proximal context” in terms of its centrality to child development, and because of all the time learners spend in the socializing space, “schools play a pivotal role as well as [a] more enforcing [role] of disrupting violence” (Williams 2016: 143). The recommendation by Ali (2014: 98) is that a specially designed program needs to be developed for teachers to “change attitudes” toward children’s discipline through “alternative modes” and not through zero tolerance and corporal punishment. Teachers are to be trained to implement restorative practices across all school environments to use “restorative language,” make relationships with learners and with

each other a priority, and work together to create an environment of trust and community that discourages misbehavior and violence (Brown 2015: 39-40). Crowe (2017: 11) acknowledged the fact that restorative interventions “create safe learning environments because restorative justice attends to the social or emotional and the physical or intellectual needs of learners.” The transformation brought through the processes is not something that has not been present, but the issue is about “revealing” what has been present the entire time – strength, courage, and perseverance are what lie beneath under many layers (Crowe 2017: 5).

Restorative practice places particular emphasis on developing respect, empathy, social responsibility, and self-regulation (Hendry 20010: 17). Payne and Welch (2013: 2) stated that restorative programs in schools focus heavily on relationship building and repairing the harm caused by acts of misbehavior, delinquency, and crime. In restorative practices, misbehavior is viewed as a violation of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. To restore the damage caused by the perpetrator, those involved must be reconciled for the relationship to be restored (Payne and Welch 2013: 541). In many ways, restorative processes are “opposed to zero-tolerant” policies that have been popular in many schools in the US (Ortega 2014: 3). The zero-tolerance policies do not promote or teach desirable behaviors; rather, fortress tactics and punishment encourage more aggressive behavior (Brown 2015: 12). On the other hand, restorative practice provides an alternative for zero tolerance (suspension and expulsion) and corporal punishment. According to Byer (2016: 9), in restorative practices, the foundation of “effective discipline lies in the achievement of positive relationships.” Byer (2016: 13) viewed the restorative practices approach of problem solving as “democratic practices in the sense that they are victim centered since they don’t only focus on the victim but also on the perpetrator since the misbehavior is viewed as a violation of relationships rather than breaking school rules.”

3.4.2 Restorative Discipline

Crowe (2017: 10) explained that restorative discipline teaches learners how to become democratic citizens who will contribute positively to their communities. Through

restorative discipline, learners learn to consider and use alternative means to resolve violence (Crowe 2017: 11). Berkowitz and Bustamante (2013: 7) echoed that the priority for all schools should be to “bring out the best in learners,” which is part of the intentional and effective promotion of learners’ flourishing. According to Berkowitz and Bustamante (2013: 7), for this priority to be authentic, it should be supported by conceptually and empirically justifiable educational policy. It is expected that teachers should adopt alternatives to corporal punishment for effective leadership to be exercised in schools – distributed to learners, teachers, and the principal – since leadership is one of the strong qualities for successful schools (Zehr 2014: 3).

“Dehumanization during colonialism and apartheid periods of occupation left enduring psychological scars” on South Africans (John 2018: 56). Some of these scars are seen in the parents and teachers’ learned behavior of “enforcing discipline through violent means” since it was historically tolerated as one of the disciplinary methods (Zehr 2014: 2). South Africans have also learned to believe that some learners can only be disciplined through corporal punishment, and for some cultures and religions, this is an acceptable way of discipline (Zehr 2014: 2). Zehr (2014: 5) stated that parents and teachers “learned to enforce discipline through observation and experiencing it during their formative years and later performing it.”

A study conducted by Zehr (2014: 5) revealed that both teachers and parents have argued that corporal punishment has been very effective as it had been administered on them during their school days, and this has caused the older generation to be more disciplined than today’s learners. However, Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 9) argued that “a whack on the bottom may stop children for that moment but it won’t stop them from doing the same thing later because being hit does not teach them anything useful.” In the same breath, Wadhwa (2016: 13) emphasized the fact that “policies can be effective in stopping learners in bringing guns and weapons to school, but they cannot stop them from bringing their fists or poor attitude.” This gives one even more reasons to resort to restorative discipline because it changes the emotional atmosphere of the school and the learners’ behavior and attitude.

Zehr (2014: 4) argued that it is, therefore, paradoxical that parents and teachers have insisted on corporal punishment for Black learners on the basis that it is aligned with the African culture. Unfortunately, both teachers and learners are victims of the effects of trauma and violence resulting from the two previous regimes of colonization and apartheid. The trauma effect has been transferred from one generation to the other, and teachers have to deal with this on a daily basis. Kiyala (2016: 149) argued that the experience of individuals who participate in “conflict is such that they come out wounded and traumatized, therefore healing is important to dissuade” them from turning violent against other people. Healing from the past pain comes in various forms, such as reconciliation between the victims and perpetrators when the wrongs are addressed and through forgiveness and reconciling with the past.

Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 9) strongly believed that “normative behavior focuses on a life world where a child internalizes moral values, cultures and beliefs” that will determine and regulate good behavior. Emotional knowledge guides social interactions; therefore, one needs to learn to express one’s emotions in appropriate ways. If one fails to express one’s emotions, one is unable to build healthy and long-lasting relationships. Frizzell (2015: 35) stated that:

Teaching children to identify their emotions and label them is an important aspect of learning to regulate emotions. When children are able to label their emotions, as well as the emotions of others, they are more likely to be cooperative, helpful and generous with others.

Emotional literacy is the individual’s ability to read and communicate their own emotions and other people’s emotions (Frizzell 2015: 35). It is important to “engage learners in a dialogue” about why their actions are unacceptable instead of scaring them into behaving with threats of violence. However, as much as open conversations are important and must be allowed, learners need to understand that “normatively,

they cannot just do things haphazardly,” and they need to know that they are expected to be able to “self-regulate” (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 10).

3.5 Effectiveness of Restorative Approaches

Restorative approaches offer a theoretically “coherent and practical basis for interactions” with others rather than alienation (Hendry 2010: 14). Crew (2017: 9) posited that studies have indicated positive results in public schools with the implantation of restorative practices. Similarly, Jones (2013: 3) stated that the “increased level of learners’ academic performance as well as decrease in office referral for discipline” gives enough evidence that the results for restorative practices are the perfect approach for peacebuilding in schools. For an intervention to be a success, commitment from all parties involved is a priority. There have been many success stories reported on the effective implementation of restorative processes. In a study conducted in the US on school-based restorative justice replacing zero tolerance, it was revealed that there were decreases in major disciplinary issues and expulsions and out-of-school suspensions, and a reduction in substance abuse (Ortega 2014: 5). In another study in the US, it was reported that the schools that have implemented restorative practices have had decreases in behavior referrals, suspensions, detentions, and bullying and increases in prosocial behavior and academic achievement (Ortega 2014: 6). The proactive nature of the restorative processes allows the community to be able to effectively deal with any wrongdoing because of the community relationship that has already been established.

Crowe (2017: 9) echoed that dramatic “improvement in learners’ attitude towards authority and increased self-esteem” has been shown with the implementation of the restorative justice programs. Crowe (2017: 9) pointed out that studies have also shown that restorative justice’s engagement of learners has promoted the establishment of connectedness between learners, their families, and school staff. An evaluation report in Pennsylvania on the implementation of restorative programs indicated a 52% decrease in violent acts and serious incidents and a significant decrease in suspensions after 1 year of implementation (Ortega 2014: 6).

Researchers have reported that restorative practice has the potential to “transform the entire school community” and dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline (Crew 2017: 8). The United Kingdom (UK) has embarked on school-wide restorative practices more than any other country, and this has shown positive results. According to Brown (2015: 62):

[The effects have included increased self-esteem,] problem solving and mental well-being; 94% of the school atmosphere has become more positive, 41% reported their schools were calmer, 100% reported that their level of confidence in dealing with challenging learner behavior had increased, exclusion in schools dropped by 51%.

Wa Munywe (2014: 4) reported that in Croatia, UNICEF Croatia, a “school-based healing and peaceful problem-solving programme positively decreased post-traumatic stress and improved self-esteem for learners.” Wa Munywe further stated that the program promoted a good psychosocial climate in the classroom involved. According to Brown (2015: 33), the three main processes that are commonly used for restorative justice in schools are peace circles, peer mediation, and conferences. In the following sections, peer mediation, peace-making circles, and peace clubs will be discussed further.

3.5.1 Peace-Making or Healing Circles

Restorative processes can make use of the restorative healing or peace-making circles to “enable people to tell their stories in order to facilitate healing, resolve conflict, for support, decision making, information exchange and relationship development” (Wachtel 2013: 7). Restorative peace circles have value in classrooms both for post-incident peace-making and as a proactive pedagogy for citizenship, academic learning, and developing understanding (Parker and Bickmore 2020: 1). Peace-making or healing circles are used for the purposes of talking, activating

healing, and reducing the load from stressful and traumatic experiences. Wadhwa (2016: 12) explained that in healing circles, the purpose is to have “formal or informal conversations, building community and healing” to address conflict. Experts have placed emphasis on the need for everyday educational practices such as healing circles to “develop positive attitudes” among learners about the process of restorative justice (Crew 2017: 8). Ortega (2014: 8) stated that the aim of restorative circles is to hold a space that promotes understanding, self-responsibility, and action. Research in classroom circles has suggested that they “address issues before they escalate, assist in building community and assist teachers in teaching the curriculum” (Ortega 2014: 6).

Trust can be built in circles where learners can feel safe to share with their teachers and peers. Teachers can begin to share their stories with the learners, and the learners follow the same strategy. When teachers share their personal stories and feelings with their learners, it “humanizes the process of education and creates opportunities for learners to form pro-social attachments with their teachers” (Freire 2008 cited in Brown 2015: 276). Research in Australian schools using circles has suggested that participants have felt “safer, more understood and accepted” after participating (Ortega 2014: 3). In Brazil, schools indicated a 98% reduction of police visits following a school-wide adoption of restorative circles (Ortega 2014: 14). In a study conducted in Sao Paulo, a 93% satisfaction rate by over 400 participants on peace-making circles was reported (Ortega 2014: 14). Circles provide everyone with an opportunity to speak and listen to each other, connect, and dialogue. Peace and conflict resolution are part of a proactive educative process that builds classroom community, strengthens relationships, and infuses equity across curricula (Parker and Bickmore 2020: 1).

In healing circles, all parties involved are part of the conversation, where they sit in a circle, the facilitator leads the discussion, and there is a talking piece that is passed around in the same direction. People talk one at a time, and only the person who is carrying the talking piece is allowed to talk. Wadhwa (2016: 12) pointed out that the circle employs the three-core principle of restorative justice that identifies the harm,

asking community members to state how they have been impacted by the harm and then develop concrete ways for the responsible party to repair the harm. Wadhwa (2016: 13) emphasized the fact that peace circles are “worth the time and energy because of their effectiveness in bringing about healing.” South Africans have never healed from the effects of past violence, and this gives one enough reason to consider healing as the point of departure in dealing with school violence. Brown (2015: 55) asserted that teachers can use circles to “build communities of trust in their classrooms” and solve problems when they occur.

For teachers, as caregivers, to be able to understand and contribute to the healing of learners, they have to understand themselves, that is, having a healthy identity and knowing what their role is. Their role is to give hope and meaning, restore the relationship they have with learners, and help learners find meaning in life. According to Wachtel (2013: 7), in a school environment, circles can be used as morning meetings before the start of the day’s program. Similarly, Brown (2015: 55) stated that the five social emotional learning (SEL) competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationship skills are modeled and taught using circles, showing that SEL can be easily incorporated into daily practices without being yet another chore that teachers are obliged to do. According to Parker and Bickmore (2020: 2), peace circles can interrupt cycles of violence, replace punitive or repressive approaches to conflict, and build capacity for sustainable peace.

According to Mestry (2015: 662), this approach will undoubtedly create a safer educational environment for all. The morning learner/teacher engagement will help to set the tone for the day’s engagement for acceptable behavior. It can create a friendly environment conducive to teaching and learning. Ginott (1972 cited in Harber and Mncube 2017: 15) stated that:

I have come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my

daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool to torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate, humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized.

Brown (2015: 302) stated that "consistent and protected time for community circles must be scheduled, so that teachers and learners can continually get better at talking, listening and preventing and resolving conflict." Brown further asserted that teachers' schedules must include time and space for participation in circles or conferences that are convened when harm has been committed such that relationships, not referrals, are restored. It is important for those participating in healing circles to practice their listening skills such that anyone talking can feel respected and confident to share. In education, circles and groups provide opportunities for learners to share their feelings; build relationships; solve problems; and, where there is wrongdoing, to play an active role in addressing wrongdoing and setting matters right – this is termed "the responsive classroom" (Wachtel 2013: 2).

3.5.2 Peace Clubs

A club is usually an extracurricular program in schools. Therefore, a peace club is a "learner initiative that aims to create a responsible young generation through a culture of dialogue" (Wa Munywe 2014: 3). Peace clubs are used to develop solutions and support each other in peacebuilding through discussion, drama, and other creative processes to educate each other and plan peace actions (John 2018: 67). According to Wa Munywe (2014: 3), the aim of a peace club is to create a "peaceful and harmonious academic environment" where learners of diverse backgrounds can live interdependently. Peace clubs provide a platform where young people can learn skills, exchange experiences, teach others, and apply the knowledge of peace in their everyday life (Alty 2013: 3). According to John (2018: 68), the "non-formal programmes like peace clubs tend to be responsive to critical needs in communities

and schools and also have the learning conditions to use more suitable participatory and experiential pedagogy.” John (2018: 67) asserted that:

Peace clubs’ knowledge and skills are acquired to equip participants as peace scholars and practitioners enabled to set up peace clubs in their respective situations. Peace clubs further unearth the potential for the improvement of relationships inherent in conflicts that affect all sectors of society.

For a peace club to be functional, two trained teachers are required to lead and have weekly meetings, which are conducted in a discussion format (Alty 2013: 5). It is, therefore, “ideal to have an outside support from the coordinator to train the teachers to lead the process” and to give them any type of support that they might need. In peace clubs, teachers act as coaches while learners lead the club meeting; learners, in turn, are expected to use the knowledge acquired from teachers to share with other non-peace-club members, their parents, and the community and also to apply this knowledge in their daily lives (Alty 2013: 7). John (2018: 67) observed that through peace clubs, learners are able to work toward “developing better relationships” with themselves, their teachers, fellow learners, parents, and the broader community. Peace clubs provide a platform for “peace builders to inspire one another” to put words into action and make a difference in bringing hope and changing lives (Wa Munywe 2014: 8). John (2018: 67) reported that peace clubs offer learners a means by which to find solutions to deal with conflict.

3.5.3 Peer Mediation

Peer mediation is one of the nonviolent responses to conflict and a process through which peers guide each other through resolving conflict (Frizzell 2015: 35). According to De Voogd (2016: 280), peer mediation programs provide assistance in developing constructive social and conflict behavior in children at all educational levels. Peer mediation is applied in cases involving children and adolescents to help conflicting parties face each other and develop solutions to the problem. Ufoka (2018: 14) stated that peer mediation is not concerned with finding the truth or who is right and who is

wrong, but it allows room to consider the parties' different cultural backgrounds and how this affects the process. Lauritzen (2016: 81) explained that in mediation, if something has happened in the classroom, the "learners solve it and before bringing it to the teacher's attention learners try to solve it," and when it becomes too difficult, they take it to the teacher. Peer mediation is one of the options that often "lead[s] to restitution" that requires offenders to repay for the harm (Payne and Welch 2013: 3).

De Voogd (2016: 281) reported a significant growth in social skills as a result of mentored peer mediation, which also helped to reduce personal conflict. In most cases, peer mediation uses role plays as a pedagogical approach where learners rehearse the strategies being learned. One of the challenges with peer mediation is that it focuses on training a small group of learners, which is less successful than training the entire school (Frizzell 2015: 46). The positive outcome is that participants learn to identify their emotions while mediators learn more about conflict analysis and creating alternative solutions. However, peer mediation involves low maintenance, with learners keeping checks on the conflict such that they are able to identify potential spots and address them instantly before they escalate into violence.

Frizzell (2015: 47) argued that the challenge of peer mediation is the interference of families and the community and keeping the entire school informed about the program. Sometimes teachers are skeptical about the benefits and resist the program, and the program requires much time from teachers and learners away from the classroom. However, mediation is considered to be the most "highly regarded peace building strategy" for strengthening interpersonal relationships (Lauritzen 2016: 81). Therefore, peacebuilding within individuals is seen as the most fundamental level of peace education as it allows individuals to regain a level of feeling ownership in their lives (Lauritzen 2016: 80). Building on the notion that peace must start within each individual, the next level is the interpersonal relationships that look at equality in relationships, interactions based on nonviolence, and mediation as a tool for solving conflict (Lauritzen 2016: 80).

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the main focus was on the transformation of conflict and more so on conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict mediation. Emphasis was placed on schools as agents of transformation as one of the strategies to transform conflict. Restorative justice; restorative practice; and the approaches used in restorative discipline, that is, healing circles, peace clubs, and peer mediation were also discussed. Chapter 4 considers school violence from an international perspective.

4 CHAPTER FOUR

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 discussed restorative justice, particularly restorative practices, restorative discipline, and restorative approaches in schools. This chapter examines school violence from an international perspective and covers the nature, extent, trends, causes, and consequences of school violence. The latter part of the chapter deals with attempts that have been made to deal with school violence and whether these attempts have been effective.

4.2 Nature of School Violence

Dogutas (2013: 185) observed that schools are seen as a “modal setting for violent acts of victimization among adolescents” and the second most common setting for violent acts besetting older teens. The study conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) between 2012 and 2014 reported that:

Over 60% of children in Chile, Mexico and Peru were bullied. More than 90% in the UK reported homophobic bullying, in New Zealand lesbians, gays and bisexual learners were three times more likely to be bullied than their heterosexual peers. In Norway 15-48% lesbian, gay and bisexual learners reported being bullied (Bokova and Mlambo-Ngcuka 2016: 23).

School violence manifests in various ways such as corporal punishment, bullying, cyberbullying, gang violence, gender violence, violence against teachers, and school

shootings. The following section discusses the various ways in which school violence manifests itself.

4.2.1 Corporal Punishment

Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 2) described corporal punishment as a type of discipline that entails the direct infliction of pain on the physical body, and it can also involve verbal abuse, the deprivation of basic needs such as food, and the use of the toilet. On the other hand, Makhasane and Chikoko (2016: 1) defined corporal punishment as “the use of physical force with the intention of causing pain but not injury, for purposes of correction or control.” Ali (2014: 98) believed that corporal punishment was “strongly interwoven in people’s social attitudes,” and attitudes must change such that children can be disciplined without the rod. This could be the reason why some adults “view corporal punishment, fighting and bullying as a normal part of discipline and growing up and they are not aware of the negative consequences” that it has on the education, health, and well-being of children and adolescents (UNESCO 2017: 8). Consequently, more than 80% of learners suffer corporal punishment in schools, even though half of all children live in countries where there is legal protection from corporal punishment (Bokova and Mlambo-Ngcuka 2016: 23). Harber and Mncube (2017: 26) posited that in 90 out of 197 countries monitored by the Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children, corporal punishment has remained legal despite evidence of its harmful effects on learners.

Researchers have observed that corporal punishment is more prevalent in poorer countries, but in countries such as the US, 65% of 3-year-olds had been spanked in the previous month (Ferguson 2013: 197). In poorer countries such as Tanzania, corporal punishment is still lawful, and researchers have emphasized the need to inform parents, teachers, and governmental organizations about the adverse consequences of corporal punishment at school and at home (Hecker *et al.* 2014: 885). Hecker *et al.* (2014: 885) reported that in a study conducted in Tanzania, 40% of teachers had agreed to the frequent use of corporal punishment, that is, more than 10 times a week. Kudenga (2017: 188) observed that in India, corporal punishment was banned in 1992; however, researchers have discovered that 65% of learners are

still being beaten. UNICEF's report on 35 middle-income countries revealed that six out of ten countries in which corporal punishment was found to be very common are in Sub-Saharan Africa (Hecker *et al.* 2014: 885). Merrill (2018: 2) postulated that a research study conducted in Ghana revealed that 93% of boys and 94% of girls had reported having been a victim of physical violence from teachers, irrespective of the fact that corporal punishment was banned in 1997. According to UNESCO (2017: 8), boys are more likely to experience corporal punishment or more severe corporal punishment in school than girls.

UNICEF, Save the Children, and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reported that since December 2003, corporal punishment was banned in Pakistan, but teachers have continued to inflict corporal punishment on learners (Mirza and Ali 2014: 97). In a study involving six countries on six continents, the rate of corporal punishment ranged from 20% in Sweden and the Netherlands to 75% in China (Hecker *et al.* 2014: 885). In Uganda, more than 90% of learners have reported a lifetime of physical violence from teachers; 88% have reported caning; and 8% have reported extreme violence, such as choking and being burned, stabbed, and severely beaten up (Devries *et al.* 2015: 1). A report by UNESCO revealed that corporal punishment "neglects to teach children how to think critically, make sound moral decisions, cultivate inner control and to respond to life's circumstances and frustrations" in a nonviolent way, and this leads to increased incidents of bullying and an overall culture of violence in schools and communities (Horner 2017: 10). A study conducted in Zimbabwe on corporal punishment revealed that teachers still use corporal punishment to enforce discipline on learners to ensure that learners abide by the rules (Kudenga 2017: 187). Beek and Gopfert (2013: 483) stated that in West African countries such as Ghana and Niger, there is a popular belief that if you "spare the cane, you spoil the child." One of the corporal punishment practices in Nigerian school children involves "forcing children to bend over, putting their heads between their knees and grabbing their ears through their legs while standing in the hot sun up to half an hour" (Beek and Gopfert 2013: 16).

4.2.2 Bullying

Globally, approximately 30% of children are involved in bullying as victims, perpetrators, or both victims and perpetrators (Evans, Frazer and Cotter 2014: 532). Mestry (2015: 658) defined bullying as a “conscious, willful and deliberately hostile activity that can be verbal, physical or relational – in which children get pleasure” from another child’s pain. According to Chui and Chan (2014: 1751), bullying is the exposure of a learner “repeatedly and over time, to negative actions” on the part of one or more learners. Thornberg and Jungert (2013: 477) stated that bullying is a “social process” because, in most instances, there are bystanders who are not directly involved in the bullying act. UNESCO (2017: 8) defined bullying as “unwanted aggressive behavior” among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. Furthermore, Patton *et al.* (2017: 3) opined that school bullying is recognized as a serious social problem that affects children globally. Bokova and Mlambo-Ngcuka (2016: 23) believed that bullying is the most prevalent form of school violence, and it affects one in three learners between the ages of 13 to 15 worldwide.

Bullying can range from simple verbal teasing to violent physical conduct (Chui and Chan 2017: 1751). Patton *et al.* (2017: 3) defined bullying as any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or a group of youths that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and that is repeated multiple times or that is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth, including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm (Patton *et al.* 2017: 3). Cornell and Limber (2015: 333) argued that the definition of bullying includes three characteristics, namely, intentional aggression, a power imbalance between the aggressor and victim, and repetition of the aggressive behavior. Casas, Del Rey and Ortega-Ruiz (2013: 580) stated that bullying is essentially a psychosocial problem involving the intentional, repetitive harming of another person and the creation of a power imbalance between the victim and the aggressor, with negative consequences for both parties.

Perron (2013: 1) asserted that bullying has become more of a serious form of societal violence, and children who are bullies are characterized as “self-important, arrogant

and lacked empathy, they believe they are superior than others, lack remorse, lack guilt, and lack conscience, they do not want to conform to social norms, have no regard for others' safety and rationalize their behavior. Such children have difficulty in making friends and when hurting someone they do not see their behavior as being problematic".

Bullying involves physical victimization, verbal victimization, social exclusion, and the spreading of rumors (Goldweber, Waasdorp and Bradshaw 2013: 469). UNESCO (2017: 8) stated that children and adolescents sometimes experience violence and bullying both at home and at school. The bullying perpetrator's intention is to "cause distress" to their victims over time (Perron 2013: 1). In other settings, bullying is acceptable because it is viewed as the "process of socializing boys' entry into adolescent masculinity" (Collins 2013: 75). Learners who are bullies have high social intelligence, and this enables them to manipulate or influence others or have power over them because of their popularity, since "their aggressiveness causes them to be popular" (Goldweber, Waasdorp and Bradshaw 2013: 469). Thornberg and Jungert (2013: 477) revealed that girls express higher basic "moral sensitivity and moral disengagement" in bullying than boys. Children with special educational needs, or those who are physically disabled, are more at risk of being victims of bullying (Harber and Mncube 2017: 30).

Thornberg and Jungert (2013: 477) categorized the different roles played by different participants during the bullying process: there could be an "assistant to the bully, there could be re-enforcers who are cheering and laughing, there could be outsiders who remain passive or uninvolved and there could be defenders who try to help or support the victims." Bystanders rarely support the victim because of the fear of victimization or because they do not want to become involved. Characteristics of learners who are involved in violent acts mostly involve being depressed; using drugs and alcohol; and having been exposed to violence in the past, especially domestic violence (Dogutas 2013: 185). Sometimes, a "lack of social support increases the level of bullying and

victimization” because of the fear of retaliation from the bully or because adults do not intervene (Perron 2013: 1).

4.2.3 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is more an extension of bullying. Cyberbullying is defined as “aggressive, intentional acts” carried out using information communication tools (ICTs) and resulting in power imbalances (Casas, Del Rey and Ortega-Ruiz 2013: 581). Hinduja and Patchin (2013: 711) viewed “cyber-bullying as willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones or other electronic devices.” Through these devices, one can send “hurtful and degrading messages” and content to a specific target such as third parties or a public forum that many other online users visit (Hinduja and Patchin 2013: 711). According to Kwan and Skoric (2013: 16), there is a strong relationship between school bullying and Facebook bullying, as well as between school victimization and Facebook victimization.

Cyberbullying is a problem affecting a meaningful proportion of youth as they embrace online communication and interaction (Hinduja and Patchin 2013: 711). Hinduja and Patchin (2013: 711) observed that the common forms of cyberbullying include “sending threatening messages using a computer or a cellphone, posting libelous or harassing messages on one’s Facebook page, or uploading unflattering or humiliating pictures or videos to the Internet without permission.” In a study conducted in Singapore on cyberbullying, the use of Facebook and engagement in risky Facebook behavior were related to Facebook victimization and Facebook bullying, respectively (Kwan and Skoric 2013: 16). UNESCO (2017: 10) observed that worldwide, between 5% and 21% of learners appeared to have been affected by cyberbullying. The United States National Crime Victimization Survey (2014: 1) indicated that between 1992 and 2010, school-based physical victimization violence had declined by 74%; however, the cyberbullying rate had increased from 6% in 2000 to 9% in 2003 and 11% in 2010, an increase of 82% over the decade. Another study in the US revealed that 60% of cyberbullying victims were also victims of physical violence and were also bullied at school (Bokova and Mlambo-Ngcuka 2016: 23).

4.2.4 Gang Violence

Dogutas (2013: 85) stated that it is a “common feature for learners to be carrying weapons to school and to witness robberies and fights taking place inside the school premises.” In a study conducted in California on Latino, Black, and White grade seven learners to investigate how school risk behaviors and attitudes mediate the effects of gang membership on school violence, the findings proved that there is an “association between gang membership and school violent” behaviors (Estrada 2013: 626). Learners with a “lower level of school connectedness” are significantly more likely to be involved in victimization and gang violence (Espelage *et al.* 2014: 289). When human beings feel that they do not belong, they cannot take care of their surroundings because having a sense of belonging leads people to take care of and protect their environment. Some learners at school may be in a league with gang members and “help facilitate them[,] and some may be assisting gang members to sell drugs” inside the school premises (Harber and Mncube 2017: 23).

Whenever “gang members feel unsafe or sense risk at school they are much more likely to be school violence perpetrators” (Estrada 2013: 626). This means that there is a “high possibility of violence in schools where gang members” are in operation inside the school premises. Melde and Esbensen (2013: 146) observed that the presence of gangs in a community or a school environment “affects the normal routines and functionality,” and involvement in gangs increases the opportunity to risk taking part in activities such as drug and alcohol abuse, juvenile delinquency, and violence between members of the rival gangs. According to Hennigan and Sloane (2013: 8), in 2004, the Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury reported that Los Angeles was home to between 1,000 and 1,300 gangs with more than 95,000 members.

4.2.5 School-Related Gender-Based Violence

Bokova and Mlambo-Ngcuka (2016: 13) defined school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) as acts or threats of sexual, physical, or psychological violence

occurring in and around schools. Bokova and Mlambo-Ngcuka further stated that SRGBV is a global phenomenon that affects millions of children, families, and communities and is “perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes” and enforced unequal power dynamics. UNESCO (2017: 8) observed that girls are more likely to be victims of sexual violence at school. As a result, it is estimated that worldwide, 120 million girls under the age of 20 have experienced sexual violence at school (Bokova and Mlambo-Ngcuka 2016: 13).

In a study conducted in Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique aimed at empowering girls and enabling them to enjoy their rights to education, the results showed that violence against girls at school is the key toward girls attaining education (Parkes and Heslop 2013: 19). In the same study, it was also revealed that the rate of school violence within the past 12 months was 83% for girls in Ghana, 90% for girls in Kenya, and 80% for girls in Mozambique. UNESCO (2017: 8) stated that children and adolescents whose sexual orientation and gender identity or expression did not conform to traditional social or gender norms were disproportionately affected, and as a result of this, 16% to 85% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered learners experienced school violence. In agreement with UNESCO, Harber and Mncube (2017: 31) echoed that one in six lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered young people from 37 European countries had experienced discrimination and prejudice at school. Harber and Mncube (2017: 31) further stated that according to the United Nations (UN), the abuse of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals was 68% in Chile, 53% in Guatemala, 51% in Mexico, 66% in Peru, and more than 40% in Brazil.

4.2.6 Violence Against the Teachers

The American Psychological Association has reported that teacher victimization is prevalent throughout the US and the rest of the world (Kanrich 2015: 1). Kanrich (2015: 5) further revealed that research conducted on over 2,000 teachers from the kindergarten to grade 12 levels indicated that:

80% of teachers reported experiencing at least one form of victimization. Verbal aggression was the most frequently reported form of violence 93% to 96% of perpetrators were learners, 94% of teachers were victimized by learners, 73% reported experiencing at least one harassment or offence, 44% reported being physically attacked, 55% reported theft and damage to their personal property.

In a study conducted in the US on classroom violence against teachers, the findings revealed that 80% of teachers reported victimization, and of these teachers, 94% reported being victimized by learners and 44% reported physical attacks (McMahon and Martinez 2014: 753). In another study conducted in the US to investigate the contrast between school violence and educational outcomes, 8.5% of the school principals reported that physical violence against teachers and staff by grade eight learners was a serious problem, and 8% of secondary school teachers reported being threatened by learners with injury (Rutkowski *et al.* 2018: 234). The extent of the safety issues faced by teachers has a negative effect on teachers, learners, and the entire education system (Le Mottee and Kelly 2017: 47). Le Mottee and Kelly further observed that teachers find it extremely difficult to control their classes, with learners' loss of respect for educators being a major contributing factor to this.

4.2.7 School Shootings

The act of school shootings is a result of negative social experiences of the perpetrator and a feeling of victimization. According to Bondu and Scheithauer (2014: 592), school shootings are not very common criminal offenses since Germany has the second highest level of offenses after the US, and only 12 such incidences have ever been reported in Germany. In agreement with Bondu and Scheithauer, Madfis (2017: 21) stated that school shootings are more prevalent in the US, and its prevalence "continues to claim innocent lives and in most cases it claims multiple lives of innocent learners and teachers." Gerard *et al.* (2016: 31) argued that even though school shootings are more common in the US, they are not only limited to the US as in 1996, 16 children and one adult were shot at a primary school in Scotland. Most school

shooting incidents are not premeditated, but they are random shootings and senseless violent acts.

Perpetrators of school shootings can be both current and former learners in a particular educational institution where the shooting occurs. Most of the studies indicated that before the attacks, the perpetrators of school shootings had “experienced intense conflicts and problematic relations” such as bullying with peers and teachers and were antisocial (Sommer *et al.* 2014: 3). Sommer *et al.* (2014: 3) revealed notable facts about the perpetrators’ experiences: more than 88% of the perpetrators experienced social conflict within the school environment, 29% were physically bullied, 53% experienced peer rejection, 29% experienced romantic rejection, and 43% had conflicts with the teachers. Madfis (2017: 21) echoed the same sentiments as Sommer, stating that the perpetrators were people with negative social experiences, such as negative peer and family influences, poverty, substance abuse, and/or mental illness.

In a research study involving 28 cases conducted to establish the characteristics of the offenders, the findings revealed that:

63% of the offenders in the study came from two-parent homes, 19% lived with one biological parent, 19% lived with a biological and stepparent and 5% with a stepparent or a guardian. The majority of the offenders lack parental supervision, parents have little knowledge about children’s activities, interests and peers, school performance, limits and boundaries are missing or set by the children themselves. The offenders exhibit issues of anger management and are considered frequent loners (Gerard *et al.* 2016: 26).

Certain behaviors have been identified as the warning signs indicating the perpetrators’ intentions, and it is important to recognize these. Leaking is described

as the “behavior that indicates intentions” of committing a violent crime, and it is considered to be an important warning sign for school shootings in Germany (Bondu and Scheithauer 2014: 592). Similarly, Meloy *et al.* (2014: 203) posited that:

[B]efore the incident there are always warning signs in the offenders’ behavior like planning for the attack, signs of pre-occupation, identifying themselves with the previous attackers or assassins, aggressiveness, energy burst, leakage, the last resort warning behavior and directly communicated threat warning behavior.

Bondu and Scheithauer (2015: 1520) observed that offenders are identified as “adolescents or young adults (between the ages of 18 and 25) with low self-esteem and a range of other mental disorders.” The perpetrators of these shootings, in most instances, are not aiming at any target since these shootings are almost always random. The perpetrators “intentionally use firearms” and shoot at least one or more people inside the school premises, and the “victims are randomly targeted” (Gerard *et al.* 2015: 5). In addition:

[The] offenders could be current or former learners or students of the educational institution where the incident takes place, it could be an adult who is either linked to the institution in some way or has no connection, in almost all cases the perpetrators are white males and they deliberately chose the institution [where they have committed the crime] (Gerard *et al.* 2015: 5).

4.3 Extent and Trends of School Violence

Globally, approximately 246 million girls and boys are harassed and abused in and around schools every year (Makota and Leoschut 2016: 18). School violence has been identified as the “key factor contributing to under-representation of girls in education” (UNESCO 2017: 13). An example can be seen in Malawi where violence is a key

barrier for girls attending and performing well in school, and this impedes their academic progress (Sherr *et al.* 2016: 37). According to Kanrich (2015: 28), learners living in “high poverty communities are exposed to more stressful life events which may lead to an increased risk of social, emotional and behavioral difficulties including aggressiveness” at school and at home.

In New Jersey, between 2012 and 2013, 148 incidents of violence in schools were reported (Anderson 2016: 4). A national survey conducted in the US in 2011 on grade 9 to 12 learners indicated that more than 20% of learners had reported being bullied on school property (Anderson 2016: 4). Collins (2013: 77) observed that schools and parents “normally ignore or actively endorse” widespread and systematic abusive intimidation and bullying. The results of the study conducted in California on Latino, Black, and White grade seven learners indicated that more than 9.5% of the sample had agreed that they belonged to gangs (Estrada 2013: 626). In the same study, parents revealed that:

Approximately 35% of learners in the middle school were reported to be gang members. Gangs are more likely to commit violent acts at a higher rate, to be violently victimized and experienced a greater number of victimizations than non-gang members and they are also more likely to carry guns or other dangerous weapons (Estrada 2013: 626).

A study conducted in Nigeria revealed that more than 85% of children do not attend school because of high levels of violence and feel unsafe to go to school (Abdullahi and Terhemba 2014: 34). Akesson (2014: 192) stated that:

In Palestine, going to school became difficult for the Palestinian children because of the disruption by the Israeli army and settlers on their way to and from school. The Palestinian political violence lasted for more than five decades; during that period children encountered physical violence,

harassment by the police and soldiers was rife and the schools were occupied by soldiers.

In a study conducted in Uganda on teachers' use of violence against children, it was revealed that:

[There was a] high possibility for teachers to use violence if they personally approved of physical discipline practices, had children of their own, were between the ages 30 and 39, used physical violence against individuals who are not learners and were victims of intimate partner violence (Merrill 2018: 2).

4.4 Causes of School Violence

UNESCO (2017: 8) reported that the causes of school violence are gender and "social norms and the wider structural factors." The argument raised by Goldweber, Waasdorp and Bradshaw (2013: 469) is that learners or children do not exist in a vacuum, and children's "characters, social and emotional beings develop in homes, schools and in communities" from where they come. Children are socialized and shaped in their environment to behave in a particular way. Low levels of social cohesion among teachers and learners often lead to antisocial and violent interactions (Le Mottee and Kelly 2018: 53). With low levels of social cohesion, there is a lack of trust, belonging, and focus toward achieving the same goal. Edberg (2017: 55) observed that there is "insufficient dialogue" in low- and middle-income country settings between what can prevent violence, where dialogue can harmonize the efforts to address violence. Negative peer influences, poor relationships with classmates, poor parent-child communication, a lack of parental monitoring, and living in an unsafe environment also increase the risk of being a bully (Shetgiri, Lin and Flores 2013: 90). Hinduja and Patchin (2013: 711) argued that during adolescence, many "behavioral choices are influenced and conditioned by the role of major socializing agents," including friends, families, and adults at school. According to Ramarola and Joyce

(2014: 12), drug abuse in schools is one of the causes of school violence – it is also a global problem that poses a severe threat to the goal of establishing peace and democracy.

Children learn through observation, hearing, and sometimes through experiences, and the learned behavior becomes a norm in human interactions. According to Harber and Mncube (2017: 9):

When children are trained, they learn to train others. Children who are lectured to, learn to lecture; if they are admonished, they learn how to admonish; if scolded, they learn how to scold; if ridiculed, they learn how to ridicule; if humiliated, they learn how to humiliate; if their psyche is killed, they learn to kill.

Berkowitz and Bustamante (2013: 11) observed that the most powerful influence in a child's development is how people, particularly those who are significant in the child's life, treat that child and others in the child's presence. In agreement with Berkowitz and Bustamante, Busby, Lambert and Lalongo (2013: 250-251) stated that exposure to crime and violence have been identified as the main reasons "disadvantaged neighborhoods have adverse effects on adolescents' academic development." Human development, including character development, happens largely as a product of children's interaction and relationships with others (Berkowitz and Bustamante 2013: 11). Social norms are influenced by what is being observed and heard in families and communities and reinforced by experience (Shamu *et al.* 2015: 19). Similarly, Garg (2016: 460) stated that children and juveniles raised in such environments characterized by deviant norms may adapt to violent habits and patterns of deviant behavior, which adversely affect their social life.

There is a link between learners' feelings of safety and their sense of belonging to their environment, which means that there is a link between school violence and the school

climate. Goldweber, Waasdorp and Bradshaw (2013: 470) postulated that the school climate is a “multidimensional construct” consisting of shared values, beliefs, and attitudes that shape learner–learner and learner–teacher dynamics and “set the tone” for behaviors that are acceptable and normative. Fisher *et al.* (2018: 6) argued that an authoritative school climate is one of the factors that causes learners to feel unsafe at school. Some of the causes of violence in school are the unfairness and inconsistency of rules, exposure to violence, victimization, intimidation, and feeling unsafe (Fisher *et al.* 2018: 6).

Absent parents and parents who are ill-equipped with parenting skills inform delinquency in children. Strong global evidence shows that “beyond cultural and socioeconomic characteristics, less controlling and more supportive parenting practices and parenting styles can have a positive impact” on adolescents’ educational outcomes (Herero-Romero 2017: 31). Children growing up in violent families and communities could be made to believe that violence and aggressive behavior are a normal way of living and resolving conflict. Their exposure to violence could lead to emotional damage. Herero-Romero (2017: 31) observed that supportive parenting has the potential to protect against school delays for poly victimized adolescents. Mestry (2015: 660) contended that the “family is the most significant institution in shaping the beliefs, attitudes and values”. Children from single-parent households could be vulnerable to violent behavior and are more at risk due to a lack of parental guidance. A lack of role models and exposure to crime and violence are some of the contributing factors to violence in children. Weare (2013: 8) observed that the “breakdown of [the] extended family and the rise of a more mobile population” have meant that the support of any larger community has become less significant. The mobile population leads to family disruptions, and this can cause aggressive or violent behavior in children and juveniles.

McCoy, Raver and Sharky (2015: 19) stated that “high levels of poverty, discrimination and disorder have serious implications for the mental and physical development” of young people. Socioeconomic imbalances in disadvantaged communities trigger

anger that, in many circumstances, leads to violence. Zuze *et al.* (2016: 1) observed that the “socio-economic status of learners is another important indicator for perpetual exposure to acts of violence,” with the chances of being bullied being higher for learners in low-income groups. In concurring with Zuze *et al.*, Ot wombe *et al.* (2015: 450) posited that although violence cuts across all socioeconomic groups, it is more prevalent in lower-income settings. According to Belle (2017: 29):

[Closely related to the socioeconomic imbalances are] the overcrowding of classrooms; harsh discipline; learners’ alienation; the feeling of disempowerment from the principal to deal with indiscipline; lack of effective leadership; inadequate supervision; absence of the teaching of social, creative, communication and interpersonal skills; lack of learners’ voice; feeling rejected by other learners; lack of care from friends, teachers and principal; lack of extra-curricular or sport activities; use of corporal punishment and lack of academic support for students with academic and behavior problems.

Dogutas (2013: 85) stated that what causes and sustains school violence is the “complex interaction” of poverty, racism, drugs, alcohol, the high rate of unemployment, gangs, the unrestricted supply of guns, the lack of personal opportunity and responsibility, after-school activities, and family violence. In concurring with Dogutas, Espelage *et al.* (2014: 287) stated that a “negative school environment” can lead to an increase in the frequency of bullying, aggression, and victimization and reduce the feeling of safety. It is highly likely that children and adolescents who have been exposed to violence in their families will display bullying behavior (Uzuboylu *et al.* 2017). There is a clear link between the prevalence of school-related violence and high crime levels in communities (Zuze *et al.* 2016). Monteiro and Rocha (2017: 213) asserted that violence could have “serious welfare short-term and long-term consequences if it affects education production, children’s schooling and accumulation of human capital.”

There are always perceptions about school violence where teachers and parents each have their own perceptions. According to Anderson (2016: 22), teachers' perceptions of school violence include major or minor violence programs, a lack of consistency, and the non-existence of violence prevention and professional development. These are the major categories, and the associated concepts are misbehavior, disrespectfulness, a unified discipline policy, classroom management, behavior modification strategies, and annual briefing on laws and policies. Table 4.1 illustrates some of the perceptions of teachers.

Table 4.1 Teachers' perceptions of school violence

Major categories	Associated concepts
Major or minor violence programs	Misbehavior, constant disciplining, disrespectfulness, not paying attention, impacting student achievement
Lack of consistency	Clear expectations, consistent consequences, unified discipline policy, district-wide referral protocol
Non-existence of violence prevention programs	Classroom management, behavior modification strategies, implementation of district-wide violence prevention programs
Professional development	Yearly training, annual briefing on laws and policies

According to UNESCO (2017: 12):

The social, cultural and gender-based norms make it difficult to discuss or report violence and, in a way, condone or ignore the problem. Weak or a lack of collaboration among stakeholders like the civil society, parents, community, teachers, the business community and different government departments increases the level of school violence. Limited involvement of learners when planning interventions, lack of counseling and other supportive services, by-standers and families of perpetrators perpetuates violence in schools. Some of the causes of school violence are limited information on the nature, extent, causes and the effects of school violence.

Finkelhor (2014: 15) observed that communities with “signs of disorder and criminal activities like drugs, gangs, police raids and schools with gangs and weapons” were all associated with increased at-school victimization. Some of the reasons could be because gangs claim their own territorial space, drug sales, and the collection of “taxes” or other illegal “businesses” (Hennigan and Sloane 2013: 8). Figure 4.1 depicts the impact of violent communities on human beings.

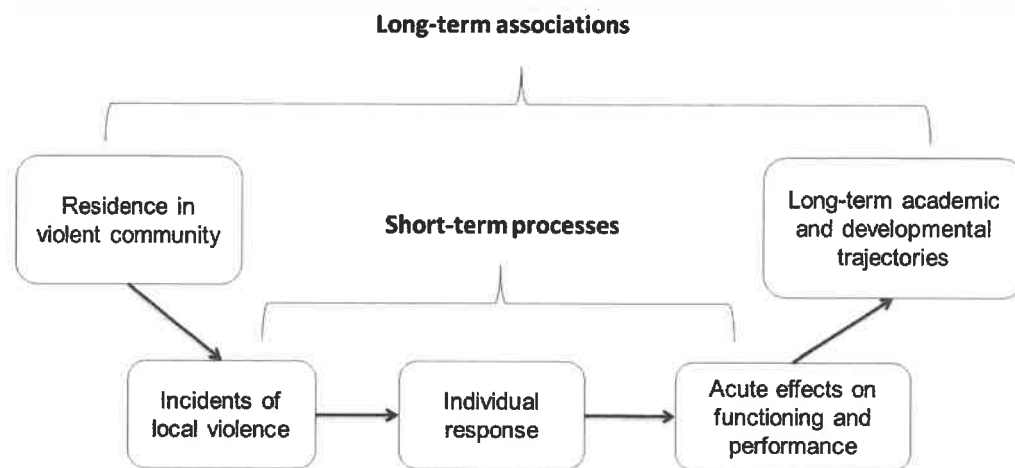


Figure 4.1: Impact of violent Communities on human beings.

Figure 4.1: Impact of violent communities on human beings.

The conceptual model in Figure 4.1 indicates the impact of short-term processes linking residence in a violent neighborhood with learners’ long-term academic and developmental trajectories.

4.5 Consequences of School Violence

Lester, Lawrence and Ward (2017: 187) observed that the long-term consequences of school violence can be “very costly to the whole society.” According to UNESCO (2017: 10), school violence “impacts both victim and perpetrator,” and the consequences could include being unable to effectively socialize, having relationship

difficulties, and displaying criminal behavior. The effects of school violence can be “devastating to the economy” of the country because it drains the economy and consumes resources that could be harnessed for poverty eradication and development (John 2018: 60). Similarly, UNESCO (2017: 10) stated that school violence negatively impacts social and economic costs. Diette *et al.* (2017: 215) postulated that violence undermines perceptions of agency and self-efficacy and leads to a more myopic view of life events – in return, this retards the willingness to invest in the future and compromises the prospects of social and economic benefits.

Kudenga (2017: 186) stated that even though many people regard “corporal punishment positively as a customary and necessary technique of child rearing,” in actuality, it increases aggressive behavior, especially toward other people. Kudenga further stated that most of the advocates of corporal punishment have a “history of being abused as children,” and some believe that corporal punishment has caused them to work hard and become successful. The negative effects that victims experience can affect their immediate social environment, becoming a problem that transcends school lives (Becerra, Munoz and Riquelme 2015: 157). School violence has “systematic adverse effects on learners’ learning behavior, as well as school personnel functioning and teachers and parents’ partnerships” (McMahon *et al.* 2014: 754). Researchers have reported that teachers spend most of their time focusing on solving problems associated with school violence instead of focusing on effective teaching and learning (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 1). Davids and Waghid (2016: 28) observed that among the largest challenges facing school leaders concerning violence is that they have “not acquired sufficient training to deal with violent encounters, and often respond in equally violent and violating ways.”

Violence directed at teachers can have a significant impact on schooling and the recruitment and retention of highly effective teachers (Espelage *et al.* 2013: 75). An argument raised by Zuze *et al.* (2016: 1) is that it is highly likely that “teachers are victims of violence[,] and the negative effect on teacher morale and the sense of helplessness” that many teachers may feel can further damage the learning

environment. Teachers have reported “classroom management” to be one of the greatest concerns in their teaching, often leading to burnout, job dissatisfaction, and early exit from the profession (Sullivan *et al.* 2014: 43). Teachers experience anxiety, depression, somatic symptoms, lower professional functioning, lower efficacy in classrooms, and lower overall well-being (Kanrich 2015: 5). To reiterate this point, teachers’ reports of “anxiety, depression and somatic symptoms were related to lower professional functioning, lower efficacy in the classroom and lower emotional and/or physical wellbeing” (Espelage 2013: 77). According to Espelage (2013: 77), teacher victimization costs include lost wages on the part of the victim, increased workman’s compensation payments due to acute psychological distress, trauma, and/or injury.

Learners exposed to school violence are at risk of developing health problems later in life such as depression, alcohol abuse, and lower educational achievement (Merrill 2018: 1). Ot wombe *et al* (2015: 450) posited that because of its “contribution to mortality, morbidity and long-term health implications, violence is now widely recognized as a public health priority,” especially in youth. Psychological distress as a result of exposure to violence has caused the impairment of children and adolescents’ academics even years after exposure (Ozer *et al.* 2017: 355). Diette *et al.* (2017: 215) stated that suffering from trauma in the formative years harms many dimensions of a child’s development. According to UNESCO (2017: 10), school violence harms the physical health and emotional well-being of children and adolescents, and sexual violence increases the rates of teenage pregnancy and HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Umaru and Terhemba (2014: 32) noted a “high level of school absenteeism” in Nigeria because of violence and that most of the children who could not attend school because of violence were at a high risk of dropping out of school. According to Sherr *et al.* (2016: 37), educational outcomes are measured in a number of ways, including years of school completed, post-school education, school performance, school attendance, school progress, and school dropouts. The school, family, and peers have a great influence on adolescents’ lives (Belle 2017: 27). Therefore, it follows that adolescents’

exposure to violence “creates the normative belief that violence and aggression are acceptable,” and this promotes an unbreakable cycle of community violence (So *et al.* 2018: 735).

Learners who “lack empathy” and who are exposed to violence are more likely to be bullies (Goldweber, Waasdorp and Bradshaw 2013: 469). Perron (2013: 1) stated that “victims of bullying exhibit physical and psychological symptoms and report significantly more unexplained psychosomatic symptoms” than those who are not bullied. Bullied victims suffer consequences such as poor social and academic life, depression, and anxiety (Evans, Frazer and Cotter 2014: 532). Rendon (2014: 62) observed that, in an effort to “avoid victimization,” learners exposed to violence may resort to peer ties for respect and protection, and what is inherent in these social networks are “obligations” and “expectations.” Rendon further stated that some of these expectations could include “engaging in delinquent acts” such as peer-group conflicts, drug and substance abuse, and sexual activities. In the US, there have been incidents of bullied victims taking revenge on the perpetrators, such as the event of the 1999 shooting at Columbia high school (Ferguson 2013: 197). Violence exposure has been linked with a “high rate of posttraumatic stress disorder” (PTSD) in young people, where signs of distressing thoughts, flashbacks about the incident, “feeling numb” or detached, difficulty in concentrating, and sleeping inabilities are observed (Klodnick *et al.* 2014: 47).

Roman and Taylor (2013: 400) stated that bullied adolescents, in most cases, “avoid social contexts,” such as school and physical activities, since such activities make them feel vulnerable. In agreement with Roman and Taylor, Hart *et al.* (2013: 456) stated that to avoid appearing “weak, externalizing behaviors among adolescents residing in neighborhoods characterized by violence may be prevalent” because these behaviors seem to be more adaptive in managing violent settings than internalizing behavior, as weakness makes them more vulnerable to perpetrators. Researchers have suggested that learners who feel “unsupported and unsafe” at school are more likely to engage in bullying behavior, and this encourages a climate or culture of

bullying (Goldweber, Waasdorp and Bradshaw 2013: 469). Diette *et al.* (2017: 218) added that learners engage in aggressive behavior as a coping mechanism for the negative thoughts and feelings that haunt them.

Andreou (2015: 390) observed that bullies are “five times more likely than their classmates” to end up in juvenile court and to be convicted of crimes, and when they have children, their children could display highly aggressive behavior. Perron (2013: 1) opined that there is evidence that bullies are more likely to grow up and have criminal records or substance abuse problems. Similarly, Collins (2013: 14) stated that bullies are “likely to be criminals, beat up women, [or] start a fight at a pub, [or be] habitual bullies and sadists, police, private security or bouncers where they can practice their pathetic insecurities.” UNESCO (2017: 10) argued that bullied victims are more likely to experience “inter-personal difficulties, depression, anxiety, loneliness, [and] low self-esteem and have withdrawal thoughts or attempt suicide, [and be] unable to concentrate in class” or partake in school or class activities, and all these can negatively impact their academic performance.

Lester, Lawrence and Ward (2017: 187) argued that school violence “undermines children’s rights to education” and adversely affects their development. Some of the effects of school violence include a higher percentage of school dropouts for Black and Latino learners who are victims of school violence (Anderson 2016: 2). Diette *et al.* (2017: 215) echoed that maltreatment during childhood causes victims to be “less trustful of others, harms the mental health and this fosters self-destructive behaviors” such as the abuse of alcohol and use of illicit drugs. According to Kwan and Skoric (2013: 17), victims of cyberbullying experience a range of negative effects, from poor academic performance to emotional trauma and even suicide.

The long-term effects of violence include a “high risk of social and relationship difficulties, anti-social and criminal behavior, lower qualifications and less likelihood of adequate social support” (UNESCO 2017: 11). The stigma suffered during childhood is shown later in life where the incidence is always remembered with anguish, and

both the aggressors and victims can maintain the “dysfunctional symptoms” that they have experienced as children (Becerra, Munoz and Riquelme 2015: 157). The dysfunctional symptoms were revealed in a study conducted in Finland in 2011 to check the effectiveness of the abolishment of corporal punishment 28 years after it had been prohibited – the findings revealed that the respondents who had scored higher in corporal punishment “scored significantly higher on alcohol abuse, depression, mental health problems and schizotypal personality” (Osterman, Bjorkqvist and Wahlbeck 2014: 568). According to Wong *et al.* (2013: 1611), the reason for such symptoms is because there is a close association between violence, substance abuse, and suicide patterns in adolescents.

Extreme violence in high schools may “hinder learners from learning efficiently and can affect learners’ decision about whether to stay at their school, [affect] the cognitive skills,” and influence their behavior (Beland and Kim 2016: 113). Beland and Kim (2016: 114) further stated that adolescents’ early-life exposure to violence causes behavioral problems and can cause “poor mental health outcomes” later in life. Some of the risk factors for educational outcomes include adolescents’ exposure to multiple types of violence, socioeconomic disadvantages, low-quality education, and school delays (Romero, Hall and Cluver 2017: 31). Extreme violence between learners may “hinder learners from learning efficiently,” and deadly shootings in schools can affect their decision regarding whether to stay at school (Beland and Kim 2016: 113). Exposure to violence may cause PTSD and poor mental health, which diminish academic achievement (Beland and Kim 2016: 114). Lepore and Klierer (2013: 1179) asserted that exposure to violence has been linked to poor academic results in learners, depressive symptoms, and intrusive thoughts that could interfere with motivation, concentration, and memory function, which are critical for learning and academic performance.

Research conducted in New Jersey indicated that three million learners are absent from school each month because they feel unsafe at school; 280,000 are physically attacked in secondary schools; and every minute, a child is bullied on the playground

(Perron 2013: 1). Diette *et al.* (2017: 215) observed that male and female learners who are victims of violence are more likely to drop out of high school as compared to their peers who have never been abused. According to life-course theorists Moffitt (1993) and Nagin and Tremblay (1999), there is a positive relationship between childhood behavioral misconduct and later delinquency and/or criminality.

The escalation of violence in communities causes children to feel unsafe when going to school, leading to school dropouts. In a study conducted in Uganda between 2012 and 2014, the findings revealed that “exposure to physical violence in childhood is associated with increased risk of depression disorders, suicide attempts, poor educational outcomes, and increased risk of perpetrating or experiencing intimate partner violence in later relationships” (Devries *et al.* 2015: 378).

4.6 Attempts to Deal with School Violence

Schools have been much more supportive of “retributive approaches” to preventing and identifying learner behavior, as evidenced by the growing presence of surveillance cameras, metal detectors, drug-sniffing dogs, security-oriented school resource officers (SROs), and even armed police (Payne and Welch 2013: 542). According to Aboluwodi (2015: 135), retributive justice is defined as “repayment” for a wrong committed in the past. The notion of retributive justice is always associated with revenge as it involves the punishment of perpetrators for whatever wrong that they have committed. Retributive approaches are not concerned about the “impact or the effect that punishment has on the offender but the means of controlling similar behavior” and preventing it from recurring (Kudenga 2017: 187). The process involves “shaming and stigmatizing the offenders,” pushes them into more wrongdoing, and fails to change their behavior (Wachtel 2013: 3).

Sullivan *et al.* (2014: 43) observed that in Australia, there has been a growing sense of social anxiety about learners’ behavior in schools. The strategies commonly used by teachers to prevent learners’ disruptions in class frequently involve a “controlling”

attitude to ensure learners' compliance (Sullivan 2015: 44). For most schools and teachers, "discipline strategies involve authoritarian sanctions" of increasing severity in response to repeated rule infringements (Sullivan 2015: 44). Sometimes this means the "escalation of punitive responses that involve in-class time-out, out-of-class time-out," learners being referred to the school principal, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and permanent exclusion (Sullivan 2015: 45).

Anderson (2016: 16) stated that in 1994, the Safe Schools Act was introduced in the US to "improve school security and decrease criminal behavior" in high-crime-rate schools. According to Crowe (2017: 5), the results of the implementation of such policies in the US is a steady stream of learners moving from public schools to juvenile detention, which is now referred to as the "school-to-prison pipeline." The school-to-prison pipeline describes the phenomenon in which learners who are repeatedly suspended and expelled have an increased likelihood of dropping out of school and ending up dealing with the justice system (Fasching-Varner *et al.* 2014: 416). According to Wadhwa (2016: 8), teachers can "contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline through individual decisions about when and how to sanction" learners. In critiquing the school-to-prison pipeline, Mallet (2015: 15) argued that the US school districts and juvenile courts were not intended to operate in a collaborative paradigm. Retributive approaches include corporal punishment, zero tolerance, and armed guards, and these will be discussed in the following sections.

4.6.1 Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment in schools refers to any type of "violent action" inflicted on children by teachers or school administrators as punishment for disciplinary purposes (Bower *et al.* 2015: 1). Ferguson (2013: 197) argued that corporal punishment includes a more "severe use of physical punishment," such as striking the face, hitting the child with an object, or shaking or pushing the child. Furthermore, corporal punishment is commonly defined as "any form of punishment in which physical force is used," and it is intended to "cause some degree of pain or discomfort," no matter how light it is (Govender and Sookrajh 2014: 2). The argument raised by corporal punishment

advocates is that “corporal punishment is necessary and effective for enforcing discipline” in children since this is the language that children understand (Kudenga 2017: 188). This is the reason why corporal punishment has remained a common practice not only in schools but also in many homes, and some parents and teachers believe that “it is a norm since it is an essential disciplinary” measure (Hecker *et al.* 2014: 884). The advocates of corporal punishment strongly believe that the use of corporal punishment “inculcates a strong belief in the impressionable minds” of learners that force is justified to control unwanted or undesirable behavior (Ahmed, Said and Khan 2013: 130).

Kudenga (2017: 188) stated that for some people, corporal punishment is “regarded positively and perceived as a customary” way necessary for child rearing. There is a strong sentiment among teachers that corporal punishment still has a place in “achieving learner discipline” (Zehr 2015: 4). Despite the banning of corporal punishment in many countries, it remains widely used (Ferguson 2013: 197). According to Zehr (2015: 2), the advocates of corporal punishment believe that corporal punishment “makes children obedient and respectful” and that it is a harmless form of enforcing discipline.

4.6.2 Zero Tolerance

The zero-tolerance policy on firearms was introduced in the US under the act that “learners who bring guns to schools are expelled from school for not less than a year or into the juvenile justice system” (Curtis 2014: 1253). Ortega (2014: 3) explained that the zero-tolerance policies “aim to control learner behavior by using mandated suspensions and expulsions.” Zero tolerance can be traced to drug enforcement policies of the 1980s, when the approach was used pre-emptively to prevent the expansion of drug cartels by punishing “all offenses severely, no matter how minor” (Wadhwa 2016: 5). Because of this law, many schools have adopted zero-tolerance policies for other disciplinary infractions. Mestry (2015: 657) recommended that when school violence is concerned, schools should consider applying stringent measures, such as the zero-tolerance approach. According to Mestry (2015: 657), school

management teams (SMTs) and teachers favor zero-tolerance policies as “fast-acting interventions” that send a clear, consistent message that certain behaviors are not acceptable in the school. The presumption of zero-tolerance policies is that “strong and strict punishment” can act as a deterrent to other students considering misbehavior and create an improved working environment for the remaining learners (Byer 2016: 9).

School-based zero-tolerance policies have “broadened to include mandatory punishment for possession of any number of contraband items like knives, drugs and even over-the-counter medication” on school premises (Payne and Welch 2013: 4). Curtis (2014: 1253) made the following observations:

[There is a] disturbing trend in the United States’ education system of harsh disciplinary policies and referral of learners to law enforcement. There is a shift in school discipline to a more formal approach on punitive justice at the expense of rehabilitative norms. The reasoning behind zero-tolerance policies is that school violence is at a crisis level and increasing, thus necessitating forceful, no-nonsense strategies for violence.

Crowe (2017: 5) observed that in 1990, many districts in the US had implemented zero-tolerance discipline policies in response to the increasing acts of violence and crimes committed by learners in schools. According to Crowe (2017: 1), in 2014, the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights reported that in the US, almost 3.5 million public school learners received in-school and out-of-school suspensions each year. Crowe further stated that the US Department of Education reported that “an overwhelming 92 000 learners have been arrested and funneled from the school system into the juvenile system annually.”

Mallet (2015: 15) stated that over the past 30 years, a “partnership among schools and courts” has developed through punitive and harmful frameworks to the “detriment

of many vulnerable children and adolescents.” Over the years, children and adolescents seem to be facing juvenile courts rather than focusing on acquiring a good education. The Advancement Project observed that the majority of the children and adolescents in juvenile courts are “not supposed to be” there since they “do not pose any threat to the community,” be it their peers, families, or schools (Mallet 2015: 15). In agreement with Mallet, Skiba *et al.* (2014: 640) asserted that “school expulsion and out-of-school suspension remain a substantial component of discipline in schools” in the US, and this is not only restricted to serious or dangerous crimes but most commonly used for day-to-day interactive disruptions. Mallet (2015: 15) further stated that according to the American Psychological Association, by being in “prison[,] their problems get complicated with poor long-term consequences,” and this becomes an unbreakable system to overcome.

4.6.3 Armed Guards

Swartz *et al.* (2015: 466) stated that in the US, different strategies have been put in place to prevent violent activities in schools, and one of these interventions has been the use of SROs, and it is estimated that there are 17,000 to 20,000 current SROs nationwide. In 1999, the US Department of Justice established the Cops in Schools program to “help law enforcement agencies hire new, additional school resource officers to engage in community policing” in and around primary and secondary schools, and their role was to handle behavioral problems in learners from the start (Curtis 2014: 1260). On the other hand, there are sworn police-officer SROs who perform typical police activities, but rather than working in the neighborhoods, they operate in schools (Swartz *et al.* 2015: 466). According to Anderson (2016: 5), the state of New Jersey is “addressing school violence with violence-related resources” available from the Department of Education’s website. In concurring with Anderson, Swartz *et al.* (2015: 466) stated that:

The SROs operate under the triad of a law enforcer, teacher and counselor but law enforcement is their primary function. The school law enforcement is the fastest growing sector of policing in the United States. The SROs are

seen as a mixture of security measures put in place within schools and these can include surveillance cameras, security guards and police officers.

In the US, various school programs, such as Safe and Supportive Schools, have been started, and grants programs have been made available to support such schools (Anderson 2016: 2). Another initiative by the state of New Jersey has been that since 2003, the first week of October has been dedicated to public awareness on school violence, where the focus is on preventing harassment, intimidation, and bullying (Anderson 2016: 5).

4.6.4 Restorative Practices

According to Harris (2020: 86), restorative approaches are not a “soft option” for offenders; instead, they involve the difficult work of holding learners accountable for their actions and helping them understand the impact of their behavior. In a study by Chiramba and Harris (2020: 1), conducted in three primary schools in Zimbabwe on restorative discipline, teachers were trained in two restorative discipline alternatives, namely, peace-making circles and peer mediation. The outcomes were that peace-making circles enabled teachers to get to know their students and to respond preemptively to potential problems, while peer mediation led to a small but noticeable decline in the number and intensity of playground conflicts. The study shows that such restorative practices can be a promising way of addressing school discipline issues. According to Harris (2020: 86), restorative approaches can be applied by any teacher at any school to any group of children. Restorative practice can produce a calmer school environment where learners feel that they have a voice.

4.7 Have the Attempts to Deal with School Violence Been Effective?

Rothman and Xuan (2014: 284) argued that the current intervention approaches “may lead to a reduction of violence in highly policed schools but the desired results cannot be attained if the root causes of violence are not clearly defined.” The use of school

“suspension and expulsion as a disciplinary tool” carries many negative outcomes, such as increased negative behavior over time (Skiba *et al.* 2014: 641). Rendon (2014: 62) stated that “punitive school policies adopted to address academic failure and behavioral problems play a central role in school dropouts and non-completion” of high school education. Because of school suspension, learners remain absent from school for longer periods, and absenteeism leads to withdrawal from school (Ahmed, Said, and Khan 2013: 130).

Current research has indicated that zero-tolerance discipline policies leading to suspensions and other retributive disciplinary actions have failed to correct the delinquent behaviors of learners (Crowe 2017: 2). Instead, such policies have been seen as “perpetuating learners’ discipline problems” (Crowe 2017: 5). Regarding the reason for the failure of retributive approaches, Skiba *et al.* (2014: 642) averred that zero-tolerance policies “criminalize learners’ behavior” by increasing the risk of the learners being suspended, expelled, or arrested at school, thus feeding the school-to-prison pipeline. Zero-tolerance policies contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline by “pushing dis-proportionate numbers of learners out of school” (Curtis 2014: 1254). Anderson (2016: 5) reported that teachers have felt that one of the reasons that they fail to resolve school violence is because there is a “lack of competency when these policies are implemented.” According to Zehr (2014: 2):

[Having been socialized to believe that violence is the] only way to resolve issues makes it hard for teachers to stop using corporal punishment therefore, the banning of corporal punishment raises serious arguments by some scholars since corporal punishment touches on deeply held religious and cultural values [about disciplining a child].

Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 10) argued that corporal punishment encourages learners to be “emotional thinkers” rather than objective thinkers and sends a message that if expectations are not met or rules are broken, physical force is justified. Similarly, Belle (2017: 31) asserted that learners are socialized to believe that “having power”

(being older and stronger) justifies the marginalization and oppression of the younger and the weaker. Exposure to violence impacts the types of peer relationships that learners establish, which influences their orientation and behavior in a way that clashes with school policies. Ahmad, Said and Khan (2013: 130) observed that corporal punishment intimidates learners and causes them to develop low self-esteem and see aggression as a means to solve problems in life. Learners who are physically punished develop a negative attitude toward learning, and in adulthood, they possess no empathy for others and, instead, learn to be aggressive (Ahmad, Said and Khan 2013: 130).

Research on the school-to-prison pipeline indicates that the learners who are subjected to sanctions are more likely to eventually be punished in the criminal justice system (Payne and Welch 2013: 4). According to the Schott Foundation, the most unfortunate part about zero tolerance is that it has become increasingly common for learners to be suspended, expelled, and arrested on campus, and learners as young as the preschool age are expelled at a rate more than three times that of their older peers in K-12 (Wadhwa 2016: 8). In a study conducted by Perry and Morris in 2014 on 17,000 learners in Kentucky over 3 years, the findings showed that higher rates of suspension correlated to lower math and reading end-of-semester scores for the non-suspended learners (Wadhwa 2016: 7). This, therefore, suggests that punitive discipline practices affect not only the learners who are suspended or expelled but also those who are not suspended or expelled. Research has revealed that the presence of SROs and their execution is associated with an increase in the reporting of serious violence (Swartz *et al.* 2015: 466).

Researchers have found out that retributive discipline methods are not only ineffective but also “life-changing” for learners from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Crowe 2017: 5). There is evidence that learners who are subjected to harsh discipline are at an increased risk of “future delinquency,” both in school and in the community (Payne and Welch 2013: 4). Not completing high school can have a negative impact on social capital, leading to an increase in the rate of unemployment, crime, and other social

ills. Wadhwa (2016: 4) observed that disciplinary practices such as suspension and expulsion have the capability to “reduce the chances of graduating, becoming employed and engaging with the broader community in positive ways.” Because of this, communities could find themselves trapped in an unbreakable vicious cycle of violence and poverty. Wadhwa (2016: 4) further stated that learners who are repeatedly suspended miss “important instructional time, can become more disengaged in school and are more likely to participate in illegal activities” and eventually drop out. Curtis (2014: 1253) asserted that civil rights activists have argued that policies such as zero tolerance push learners out of the school into the approach that spread rapidly after the passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994.

Ortega (2014: 3) argued that the school-to-prison pipeline is directly facilitated by zero-tolerance policies. Ortega further referred to the “growing pattern of tracking learners out of educational institutions primarily via zero-tolerance policies” and, directly or indirectly, placing them into juvenile and adult criminal justice systems. Ortega (2014: 3) alluded to the fact that in 2013, the American Academy of Pediatrics had reported that in spite of the “harsh zero-tolerance policies evidence shows that schools with higher rates of suspensions have higher drop-out rates and an increased risk of students entering the juvenile system.” Social control measures, such as punitive sentencing and curfews, have been proven to be “ineffective and reflect the failure of the community to prevent violence and address the risk factors associated with future anti-social and delinquent behavior” by intervening at the school level early in adolescence (Andreou 2015: 390). It appears that retributive approaches have failed the education system in many countries of the world. Because of the failure of the retributive practices, there appears to be considerable momentum in the US in policy discussions for “considering disciplinary practices that could serve as alternatives” (Skiba *et al.* 2014: 642).

The study by Chiramba and Harris (2020) on restorative discipline showed that such restorative practices can be a promising way of addressing school discipline issues.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed school violence from an international perspective. In trying to understand school violence, the concept was defined and the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of school violence were considered. The chapter also looked at whether there have been attempts to address the issue of violence in schools and whether the attempts have been successful. Chapter 5 will discuss school violence in the South African context, in particular, the nature, extent, trends, causes, and consequences of school violence in South Africa. The chapter will also discuss what attempts the South African Department of Education has made to ensure that school violence is reduced and the successes and challenges that they have encountered in ensuring that school violence is reduced or dealt with effectively.

5 CHAPTER FIVE

CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 discussed school violence from an international perspective and mainly focused on the nature, extent, trends, causes, and consequences of school violence in different countries. It also discussed the attempts that different countries have made to deal with school violence. Chapter 5 examines school violence in South Africa and considers the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of violence in South African schools. Two major studies have examined school violence from a national perspective, that is, the studies by Burton and Leoschut in 2013 and Mncube and Harber in 2017 from which their key findings will be considered. The chapter also focuses on how the South African government has dealt with school violence. When discussing what the government has attempted to do, the chapter considers government policies and how successful the government has been in dealing with violence in schools.

5.2 History of Violence in South African Schools

South Africa is a violent country with one of the highest rates of sexual and interpersonal violence in the world (Bower *et al.* 2015: 3). South Africans have been socialized to believe that violence is the only way in which issues can be resolved. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) has reported that violence in schools is considered to be more serious in South Africa than anywhere else in the world (Zuze *et al.* 2016: 1). Fisher *et al.* (2018: 7) stated that in 2013, approximately half a million learners nationally avoided school activities or classes because they thought someone might attack or harm them. Unfortunately, the experiences of the past have caused South Africans to become victims of their own actions. The reality about South Africa is that violence has been internalized and

normalized in such a way that South Africans have learned to be helpless and hopeless in violent situations. Evidence of this is included in the 2017/2018 analysis report by Lancaster (2017) of the murder dockets conducted by the South African Police Services, which revealed that 51.5% of murders were committed during an argument or misunderstanding (John 2018: 57). In South Africa, the standards of acceptable human behavior have been lowered because of society's acceptance of violence. The most recent South African Police Services report revealed that 52 people are being murdered in South Africa on a daily basis with a total of 19,016 murders during the 2016/2017 financial year (John 2018: 57). Most South Africans have learned to believe that there are no other ways or alternatives with which to respond to violence other than being violent.

School violence is a microcosm of what is happening in today's society; it is a multifaceted phenomenon, and no single explanation is enough to understand the learners' behavior (Shields *et al.* 2015: 51). In South Africa, daily reports of school violence appear in newspapers and electronic media (Mncube and Harber 2017: 58). This type of violence is a disturbance for the school community for both learners and teachers as it disrupts the smooth running of schools. Research conducted in a South African school on boys and girls between 15 and 17 years of age regarding adolescents' views on the power of violence revealed that adolescents view "violence as both negative and positive in that it causes harm and at the same time it serves as a strategy to ensure order and protection" Schools that are at risk are those in "poor socio-economic backgrounds, with a high level of poverty" and also a high level and history of violence.

Community violence is one of the most prevalent forms of violence exposure among children in South Africa, and the homicide rate in South Africa is five times more than the global average (Foster and Brooks-Gunn 2015: 292). Modern-day South Africa was born out of extreme structural and direct violence and oppression, which has had a profound impact on South African society, and the result has been the breakdown of a number of social systems such as schools, families, and communities with some

of the highest rates of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in the world (Mottee and Kelly 2017: 3). Exposure to multiple forms of violence is common amongst adolescents from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities in South Africa due to related high-risk factors such as chronic poverty, unemployment, and household overcrowding (Herero-Romero 2018: 11). The frequency of exposure to community violence in South Africa became apparent when 50.1% of children participating in a national study reported having witnessed someone in the community using threats or force to physically harm another person (Leoschut and Kafaar 2017: 82).

Schools in post-apartheid South Africa are besieged by violence, and one of the major challenges with which school leaders are faced is that they have not acquired sufficient training to deal with violent encounters and often respond in equally violent and violating ways (Davids and Waghid 2016: 28). Unfortunately, South African schools bear a strong authoritarian and undemocratic culture (John 2018: 60). Kudenga (2017: 3) observed that part of the strong authoritarian and undemocratic culture is corporal punishment, and this causes enmity between the learner and the teacher and can affect the emotional development of the learner. Harber and Mncube (2017: 23) postulated that learners from poor backgrounds reflect the standards that they see at home where they display what has been instilled at home.

South African schools are sites of regular violence, mirroring problems in the wider community (John 2018: 55). The social ills prevalent in communities are known to infuse the school environment (Khuzwayo, Taylor and Connolly 2018: 1216). Social norms are influenced by what is observed and heard in the family and general social milieu and reinforced by experience (Khuzwayo, Taylor and Connolly 2018: 1216). In agreement with Khuzwayo and Taylor, Zuze *et al.* (2016: 1) stated that violence in schools is always an extension of violence in communities. Much of the conflict and violence that dominates life in South Africa today has its “roots in the brutal and oppressive systems of colonialism and apartheid” (John 2018: 56).

Violence has shaped South Africa's past, in the colonial and apartheid periods, and it continues to deeply impact the present. A government-commissioned study by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in 2010 identified South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid as having "normalized the use of force" to settle disputes – this, access to firearms, and poor youth socialization are factors sustaining a culture of violence (John 2018: 56). The "moral fiber of our society has been destroyed" because our society has been conditioned to believe that violence is the only solution that can bring about a correction in human beings. Mampane *et al.* (2013: 734) observed that:

The level of violence in South African schools is an indication that the legacy of apartheid and colonialism continues to haunt the social and economic fiber of the society. This has created a culture where violence has been viewed as a normal part of our lives and this has contributed to an intergenerational culture, a culture that is reproducing violence.

South Africa's violent history has victimized all South Africans, including children, young people, parents, communities, and the business community. Research studies that have been conducted indicate that South Africa is an angry and wounded nation (refer to Chapter 1, Section 1.2). South African President Ramaphosa echoed the same sentiments:

[W]e also recognize our own wounds as a nation. We must acknowledge that we are a society that is hurting, damaged by our past, numbed by our present and hesitant about our future. This may explain why we are easily prone to anger and violence (Pretorius 2018: 1).

Ngwenya (2014: 70) posited that "a sick society cannot afford to underplay its tragedy and apply ineffectual remedies anymore that it can afford to be overwhelmed by the trauma it has suffered." This, therefore, suggests that there is a need for South

Africans to go through the process of healing to undo the damage and harm that has been inflicted in the past. South Africans are still haunted by the apartheid nightmare because the issues with which South Africa is currently confronted are a result of the apartheid system. Maylam (2016: 1) opined that the TRC only served to “reopen the old wounds and then to leave them septic to ooze.” Deegan (2014: 10) stated that the ending of the “nightmare” of apartheid has been positive and heartwarming, yet some have feared that the nation would lapse into violence and bloodshed. In 1948, the Afrikaner-led National Party institutionalized a system of racialized discrimination under apartheid, categorizing the population into four different racial groups (Russell, Sirota and Ahmed 2019: 3). Under apartheid, the 1953 Bantu Education Act created separate education systems for the four different racial groups, which were unequally resourced (Russell, Sirota and Ahmed 2019: 3).

5.3 Nature of School Violence

All forms of violence and bullying in schools “infringe the fundamental right to education,” and unsafe learning environments reduce the quality of education for all learners (UNESCO 2017: 10). Le Mottee and Kelly (2017: 2) explained that the issue of violence in schools is a “severe problem” in South Africa, and it threatens both learners and teachers. Leoschut and Kafaar (2017: 1183) observed that in the South African context, “risk factors for victimization include family and household composition, frequent exposure to violence in the home, living in a disorganized community, harsh and inconsistent parenting, poor parental supervision and monitoring and parental substance abuse.”

Mestry (2015: 655) stated that in some instances, school violence in South Africa can be “serious [to the extent] that it can include stabbing to death, ax killing, assaults, rapes on school premises,” and these incidents frequently take place in schools. The complexity of school violence caused by its interrelatedness and interconnectedness of the issues makes it difficult for anyone to resolve it. Some teachers and learners feel unsafe at school, and the reasons given are the fear of being hurt, criminals, classmates, gender-based violence, and traveling to and from school. In a study

conducted in South Africa by Burton and Leoschut (2013: 1), it was reported that there are areas in schools that are particularly “unsafe for learners like toilets, classrooms, sports fields, other open areas and areas outside the school gate.” Mampane *et al.* (2013: 735) investigated the adolescents’ views on the power of violent children, who associate violence with authority. In the same study, children mentioned forms of violence as a way of discipline by teachers, such as “corporal punishment using sticks, sjamboks, hitting with hands, slapping and pinching.” According to Taole (2013: 4), sometimes teachers “verbally degrade” learners, swear at them, and physically and emotionally abuse them. The following section discusses various forms of school violence, such as corporal punishment, bullying, cyberbullying, gender violence, gangsterism, and violence against teachers.

5.3.1 Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment “demonstrates, *inter alia* authoritarianism” and is the most common form of violence “perpetrated by teachers against learners” in South Africa (Makhasane and Chikoko 2016: 1). Mthanti and Mncube (2014: 71) explained that corporal punishment and caning is a “brutal relic of British rule” – it has become embedded in people’s minds as being critical to school discipline, and this has resulted in a cycle of caning transmitted from one generation to another on the basis of experience and sentiment. Because of the violent system that was in place in South Africa, it became easier for teachers to use corporal punishment in schools, firstly because the system allowed it, and secondly because the system itself was violent. Whatever the case may be, corporal punishment is regarded as “ineffective classroom management,” leading to detrimental effects, including learners’ resistance and, in some cases, school violence (Sullivan 2014: 43).

Even though corporal punishment was banned in South Africa as far back as 1996, Mncube and Harber (2013: 14) observed that it was still being used in “three out of four schools” in the Western Cape and other provinces and that learners were subjected to incidents of verbal insults and humiliation. In agreement with Mncube and Harber, Mampane *et al.* (2013: 735) averred that corporal punishment is “very much

in use in South Africa,” especially in rural areas but that in the middle-income formerly White schools, it has been phased out. Some of the reasons given for the persistent and illegal use of corporal punishment include the absence of alternatives, the legacy of authoritarian education practices, and the belief that corporal punishment is necessary for orderly education to take place. In 2011, the chief executive of Childline reported that corporal punishment in South Africa was “rife” but that many cases were left underreported (Mncube and Harber 2017: 70). In trying to explain the severity of corporal punishment, Mncube and Harber (2017: 70) further explained that in Kwa-Zulu Natal, four teachers were arrested for allegedly beating a learner to the extent that he needed surgery in his testicles.

It has been reported that as a result of banning corporal punishment, teaching has become a “stressful and challenging occupation,” and many teachers are demotivated and feel hopeless (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 2). Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 2) observed that after the banning of corporal punishment, most teachers have felt “incapacitated and helpless” in dealing with learner indiscipline. Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 2) argued that it is surprising that the growing problem of indiscipline has been linked to corporal punishment. An argument raised by some teachers is that the banning of corporal punishment in schools has resulted in learners’ unruly behavior. The South African Department of Education’s response to this argument has been that learners who are subjected to corporal punishment at home and in their schools are likely to “adopt violent means to solve problems” (Zehr 2015: 2).

In a study conducted by Zehr (2015: 1) on the causes of youth violence, it was revealed that the schools that utilize corporal punishment “socialize learners into violent behavior.” Similarly, Makhasane and Chikoko (2016: 2) echoed the same sentiments that schools that utilize corporal punishment often “socialize learners into violent behavior.” This was evident in 2011 in the case of Ntsako Mogobe, the chairperson of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), when he called upon learners “to fight fire with fire and hit back at teachers who use corporal punishment” on them (Le Mottee and Kelly 2017: 56). The statement by the COSAS chairperson proves, beyond

doubt, that learners who are subjected to corporal punishment may have thoughts of revenge, and this may lead to truancy and a high rate of dropouts (Makhasane and Chikoko 2016: 2). In agreement with Makhasane and Chikoko, Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 9) raised an argument that some of the violent offenses from learners emanate from the violent disciplinary measures. Unfortunately, more than half of South African learners continue to experience corporal punishment at the hands of teachers (Bower *et al.* 2015: 4). The South African Human Rights Commission reported that learners who are "subjected to humiliation and violent punishment are less likely to respect the rights of others" and are more likely to display problematic behavior (Le Mottee and Kelly 2018: 56). Parihar *et al.* (2018: 12) believed that the effects of corporal punishment must be articulated through "creating awareness among teachers and other educationists" regarding the adverse effects of corporal punishment on children. Parihar *et al.* (2018: 12) believed that the effects of corporal punishment must be articulated through "creating awareness among teachers and other educationists" regarding the adverse effects of corporal punishment on children.

5.3.2 Bullying

Bullying is a "learned behavior" and is brought to school from the learners' families and neighboring communities (Mncube and Harber 2017: 72). According to Skiba *et al.* (2014: 642), bullying is "limited to peer aggression in which there is a marked power imbalance between the aggressor" and the victims. Mncube and Harber (2017: 75) disputed the fact that bullying is only limited to learners, and they stressed that teachers can be bullies as well. In a study conducted in South Africa on school violence, in a sample of 800 teachers, it was reported that 43% of teachers had threatened learners over a period of 1 year, and 17% of teachers had attacked learners (Mncube and Harber 2017: 75). Mestry (2015: 658) asserted that bullying in South Africa had reached epidemic proportions during the past few years. The prevalence of bullying is high and evident in interpersonal conflict among learners, learners bullying teachers, learners bullying other learners, and teachers bullying learners (Taole 2013: 4). A study conducted by Taole (2013: 4) on school violence revealed that when learners do not have money, they bully others by beating them in toilets and taking it by force. According to Mncube and Harber (2017: 73), bullying is

an indication of other behavioral problems. Kyobe, Oosterwyk and Kabiawu (2016: 3) differentiated between the traditional form of bullying, which is more physical, and newer forms, and they mentioned that with the advancement of technology, new ways of electronic bullying, which involve cyberbullying, have emerged.

5.3.3 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the form of bullying that involves the use of “information and communication technologies such as email, cellphones, text or instant messaging for deliberate and hostile behavior” by an individual or group with the intention to harm others (Smit 2015: 1). According to Kyobe, Oosterwyk and Kabiawu (2016: 2), cyberbullying involves the exposure of individuals, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more people. Kritzinger (2014: 1) observed that learners are “getting at risk” when using information communication tools (ICT) and that they are also “vulnerable to revealing compromising personal information.” Some of the risks observed by Kritzinger (2016: 2) are access to “inappropriate material like pornographic pictures, cyberbullying, identity theft and exposure to gossip and name-calling which threatens learners’ social and emotional well-being.” Cyberbullying is often “operationalized as an aggression conducted by people on various electronic devices” (Kyobe, Oosterwyk and Kabiawu 2016: 2). Burton and Leoschut (2013: 3) reported that in five high schools, learners had experienced cyberbullying within a year and that “sexual cyber-bullying” was the most common form.

In South Africa, there have been reports of cyberbullying and harassment among learners, with most cases involving girls being pestered by boys, teachers, and older men (Porter *et al.* 2016: 31). A survey conducted by Kyobe, Oosterwyk and Kabiawu (2016: 2) in South Africa on 3,621 learners revealed that in the Western Cape province, “school culture” had the greatest influence on mobile phones. Regarding the current line of activities in which learners become involved, it was revealed that 4% claimed to have been bullied, another 4% remained uncertain, 65% claimed that they were aware of cyberbullying incidents in their school, 18% stated that they had a friend

or family member who had been bullied, 8% admitted to having previously cyberbullied someone, and 14% were uncertain (Kritzinger 2014: 1).

In a study by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention among 1,726 adolescents, the findings revealed that 46% had been cyberbullied (Smit 2015: 3). Smit (2015: 3) reported another case in Gauteng where a 16-year-old girl was granted a peace order against another 16-year-old girl for humiliation on MXit. In 2012, the University of South Africa's Bureau of Market Research conducted a study in Gauteng where it was revealed that one in five learners who had participated in the study had been cyberbullied (Rachoeane and Oyedemi 2015: 5).

5.3.4 Gang Violence

Schools throughout South Africa are affected by gang violence. According to Mncube and Harber (2017: 63), "gang violence is one of the main reasons for school violence in the Western Cape schools" since children as young as 13 years of age are recruited into gangs. Maphalala and Mabunda (2014: 64) stated that "gangs in schools" should be seen as a community problem in South Africa since schools are part of the community, and they reflect the problems of communities. Similarly, Mestry (2015: 657) argued that gangsterism involving theft, drugs, and "weapons extend from the surrounding community" and streets where learners are seen as easy prey. According to Mestry (2015: 657), gangs usually emerge in "areas of economic decline," where there may be an absence of positive role models, community networks, and stable families. Maphalala and Mabunda (2014: 64) posited that fear is the most determining factor in joining a gang, and gangsters compete to recruit as many learners as possible. In agreement with Maphalala and Mabunda, Mncube and Harber (2017: 66) stated that in Limpopo schools, learners form "crews" (a different term for *gangs*) inside school premises as learners "feel the need to protect themselves" because they feel unsafe in schools.

Conflict resolution and crime prevention practitioners in the Western Cape have reported that some gangsters have made it a point to recruit young learners, especially when drugs are involved (Maphalala and Mabunda 2014: 61). These recruitments are

conducted during school lunch breaks where gangsters recruit learners inside the school premises for drug trafficking. Maphalala and Mabunda (2014: 61) observed that in the Western Cape, gangsterism is regarded as one of the “prime sources of school violence,” and certain factors, both internal and external, have been found to contribute to gangsterism.

Maphalala and Mabunda (2014: 61) reported that Dan Plato, the Community Safety Member of the Executive Council (MEC) in the Western Cape, had stated that 60% of South Africa’s drug- and gang-related crimes occurred in the province, even though the Western Cape forms only 10% of the South African population. Maphalala and Mabunda further stated that spokeswoman for the Western Cape Education Member of the Executive Council had reported that “30 stabbing gang-related incidents on school grounds” had been reported to the Western Cape Education Department in the first two quarters of 2012.

5.3.5 Gender-Based Violence

Russell, Sirota and Ahmed (2019: 3) stated that gender violence occurs at an “alarming rate” in South African schools irrespective of race and class, but the difference lies in its intensity and people’s vulnerability to it. South Africa’s gender problems are both “glaringly obvious and widely publicized” in the gender profiles of crime, health, and work (Morrell *et al.* 2013: 14). According to Matthew and Benvenuti (2014: 28), sexual abuse affects both boys and girls, and children at greater risk are school-going children between 5 and 12 years of age. However, violence against girls and its magnitude has, by many measures, been one of the striking “political and educational failures” in South Africa (Russell, Sirota and Ahmed 2019: 3). According to Grobblers (2018: 38), it is unfortunate that most of the rapes and cases of sexual assault among South African learners are perpetrated by someone whom they know, including male teachers and fellow learners.

In South Africa, sexual harassment is a serious problem as school-going girls are at risk of being beaten, raped, and harassed (Mncube and Harber 2017: 77). Gender violence is “complexly interdependent on patriarchy, variations in culture, race, class and this impacts how masculinities and femininities are played out at school since schools cannot be separated from the social context” in which they exist (Russell, Sirota and Ahmed 2013: 41). Surprisingly, schools do not challenge the unequal power relationship that exists in society but instead reinforce them in schools (Taole 2013: 1). Instead of challenging gender issues, schools are the key sites for the production and reproduction of gender relations and inequalities in South Africa (Russell, Sirota and Ahmed 2013: 43). Burton and Leoschut (2013: 5) observed that female learners were the most vulnerable to school violence since out of the 5,393 learners interviewed, 12.2% had been threatened with violence by someone at school, 6.3% had been assaulted, 4.7% had been assaulted or raped, and 4.5% had been robbed at school. In 2011 and 2012, the South African Police Services reported that of the 64,514 sexual offenses reported, 25,862 had involved school-going girls under the age of 18, and 40% of sexual offenses had involved children between the ages of 0 and 11 years (Russell, Sirota and Ahmed 2019: 3). Mestry was of the opinion that some teachers sexually harass female learners by “inappropriately touching” them on the buttocks or breasts (Mestry 2015: 657). In a study conducted by De Vries *et al.* (2013: 383) in KwaZulu-Natal on sexual harassment, according to the young boys and girls who were interviewed, “forced sex [was regarded] as a sign of love and an appropriate way to satisfy sexual desires.”

5.3.6 Violence Against Teachers

Mncube and Harber (2017: 73) observed that the “relationship between teachers and learners has deteriorated to such an extent that learners fight with the teachers physically or verbally and when reprimanded learners physically attack teachers.” A study by Taole (2013: 4) revealed that “female teachers are more at risk” of being bullied by both boys and girls, and this makes it very difficult for teachers to manage classrooms. In September 2013, it was reported that a grade eight learner in Glenvista High School in Johannesburg had grabbed a chair and hurled it at his teacher (Russell, Sirota and Ahmed 2013: 41). Burton and Leoschut (2013: 7) revealed that in 2013,

41% of teachers had been verbally abused by learners, and 7.9% had been physically victimized. In an informal interview conducted in Cape Town in 2016 and 2017, the findings revealed that:

[Thirty,] 30[,] teachers were attacked and in 23 out of these cases learners were perpetrators, with 14 assaults, six cases of verbal abuse, two sexual abuse and one where a weapon was used, some were robbed or beaten by the community. In 2016 the deputy school principal was killed in a highway while transporting a sick learner home, a grade 12 learner was stabbed to death in gang-related violence at school, an 18-year-old learner was shot five times on his way to write matric examination in a gang-related incident. In 2017 learners were stabbed to death in two separate school incidents.

Sometimes, violence in schools can be amongst teachers, such as the case of a school principal in 2012 who was suspended in Newcastle, Kwa-Zulu Natal, for repeatedly punching and striking a teacher with a knife in full view of other teachers and learners (Mncube and Harber 2017: 58).

5.4 Extent and Trends of School Violence

Just as in other countries of the world, violence is “deep-rooted” in South African schools (Jacobs 2014: 1). School violence is a reality in South Africa, and it is “increasing at an alarming rate as schools get transformed into battlefields where the safety of learners and teachers cannot be guaranteed” (Taole 2013: 1). Similarly, Maphalala and Mabunda (2014: 61) alluded to the fact that the scourge of violence is a “cause for concern,” and the extent of violence in schools mirrors the level of violence in South African communities. An observation by Mncube and Harber (2017: 58) was that the “carrying of knives, guns and other weapons is part of daily school life.” In agreement with Mncube and Harber, Mestry (2015: 657) stated that some “learners bring weapons to school like guns, knives and any dangerous weapons as a means

of resolving and protecting” themselves against violence. According to Netshitangani (2016: 7), in such instances, where guns and weapons are carried to school, there is a “lack of respect and trust between teachers and learners.” This is the reason why South African school violence has “reached the highest levels such that in some schools learners are alleged to have murdered others inside school premises, openly challenged teachers and have a do-not-care attitude towards their work” (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 1).

Mampane *et al.* (2013: 735) reported that South African schools have become “unsafe places” for learners and teachers. Violence has claimed the lives of both learners and teachers in South Africa (Smit 2015: 1). Recently, the safety of teachers and learners in school has become a “national concern” in South Africa as incidents of school-based violence are reported regularly (Mestry 2015: 655). In 2012, the Department of Basic Education reported that more than 14% of the nearly 14 million learners in South Africa had experienced violence, corporal punishment, or verbal abuse at school (Grobler 2018: 14). Grobler (2018: 37) revealed that the state of violence in South African schools has not improved in the past 15 years, and 20% of the 20,000 teachers interviewed at 138 schools had revealed that “schools are violent and dangerous places.” In 2012, it was reported that “grade one learners battered a seven-year-old classmate so bad that he might never walk properly again” (Taole 2013: 2). Mncube and Harber (2017: 59) reported that in 2012, 55% of learners had responded that they had been victims of violence in schools.

In numerous cases, learners are the perpetrators of violence, with both learners and teachers becoming victims (Mestry 2015: 655). Violence between teachers and learners is a significant problem, with 25% of secondary school learners reporting learner–teacher physical violence and a similar 25% of schools reporting teachers physically abusing learners (John 2018: 59). In a study conducted in the Western Cape in 2012 by Burton and Leoschut, the authors found that:

Out of all the nine provinces in South Africa, the Western Cape had the highest rate of school violence at 18.5% and Kwa-Zulu Natal came fourth at 11.3%. In the same study, the rate of corporal punishment ranged from 22.4% to 73.7% with Kwa-Zulu Natal as the highest. The study further revealed that 22.2% of learners have been threatened with violence or have been victims of assault, robbery, and or sexual assault at school. Two out five educators claimed that there are areas in school that are particularly unsafe for learners like toilets (45%), classrooms (16%), other areas (13%), areas outside the school gate (11%) and the sports or playing fields (9%) (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 22).

In agreement with Burton and Leoschut, Makota and Leoschut (2016: 2) reported that surprisingly, “classrooms were the most frequent site for violence” occurring in secondary schools, with class teachers and other schoolmates being identified as the most common perpetrators. The teacher–learner relationships are “marked by conflict,” causing aggressive behavior. Espelage *et al.* (2014: 259) posited that the effectiveness of teachers’ classroom management skills is a strong indicator of the extent to which learner violence is directed at teachers. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 2) observed that school violence in South Africa is not only perpetuated between teachers and learners but also between rival schools and rival gangs.

5.5 Causes of School Violence

The causes of violence in South African schools are “multifaceted,” and the consequences have ramifications far beyond the effects on the immediate perpetrators and victims (Mampane *et al.* 2013: 733). Some of the causes of school violence are “chronic poverty, gendered inequalities and patriarchal, normative notions of masculinity and social and economic inequality as well as unemployment” (Grobler 2018: 40). Sometimes, the “bullying behavior” by teachers triggers violent behavior in learners (Taole and Ramorola 2014: 51). Peer pressure has been identified as one of the contributing factors to violent or aggressive behavior in children or learners. Learners feel compelled to conform to pressure from peers in order to be accepted

and for support since peers have the greatest influence on children and adolescents, and such conditions shape learners' behavior. Mncube and Harber (2017: 74) stated that one of the reasons why the levels of bullying are high in schools is because most of the "schools and teachers ignore it and learners end up not reporting [it] because of negative attitudes" encountered when reporting it.

5.5.1 Social Ills

Literature has revealed that the conditions under which learners live or their past experiences could trigger aggressive behavior in them. Mestry (2015: 655) opined that the reason for the high rate of violence may be attributed to numerous social ills, such as gender discrimination, gang-related activities, and drug and alcohol abuse. Wadhwa (2016: 7) observed that in the most distressed, poorer communities, teachers, guidance counselors, and principals are left to deal with learners and respond to a host of social ills and inequities that undermine their daily efforts to educate learners. Wadhwa (2016: 7) further stated that among the "host of social ills and inequities[,] learners in low-income communities face violence, concentrated poverty, lack of access to health care, unhealthy food and limited economic resources." A complex interaction of factors, including the individual, family, socioeconomic, cultural, school, and community factors, may play an important role in the violence displayed by adolescents (Andreou 2015: 390). Shetgiri, Lin and Flores (2013: 90) argued that substance abuse, below-average academic achievement, exposure to child abuse and domestic violence, and corporal punishment are associated with an increased risk of bullying. Similarly, Mestry (2015: 656) stated that the "cause of the upsurge in school-based violence is attributed to numerous social ills that filter into school premises, corporal punishment, including family and community violence, cultural influences, drug and substance abuse, absent parents, socio-economic imbalances and poverty."

Some of the unbecoming behavior in schools is due to "easy access to drugs and alcohol, drugs, and weapons [that] are easily available for many learners and the number of learners who have encountered violence at school in the past year was

1,020,597” (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 12). Substance abuse, as with violence in schools, has an impact on school discipline and, in turn, demoralizes teachers and takes away their motivation (Manu, Maluleke and Douglas 2017: 2). In South Africa, “alcohol consumption among 15-year-olds is classified as among the highest in the world” (Otwombe *et al.* 2015: 450). Similarly, Russell *et al.* (2014: 284) opined that the problem in South Africa is that there have been reports about “early initiation to alcohol” drinking and binge drinking being on the increase. Otwombe *et al.* (2015: 450) further stated that alcohol consumption may be fueled by the use of such substances and drugs.

According to Khuzwayo and Taylor (2016: 1216), the prevalence of social ills in communities is known to “infuse the school environment” since learners spend much of their time at school, and these schools exist in the broader context of the community. Burton and Leoschut (2013: 1) explained that “violence within the school cannot be effectively addressed without dealing with the various environmental factors and context” in which children live and develop. More than 15% of learners have reported parent neglect and abuse of alcohol by parents, and between 35% and 45% of children have witnessed violence and abuse against their mothers (Matthews and Benvenuti 2014: 29).

5.5.2 Structural Factors

School violence in South Africa can be attributed to structural factors. The cause of violence in South Africa today dates to the history of the structural violence of apartheid where South Africans were subjected to a violent regime. Matthews and Benvenuti (2014: 27) argued that:

The root causes of school violence are complex dating back to the colonial past and the legacy of apartheid that normalized and created widespread social acceptance of violence. Widespread poverty, inequality, and high levels of unemployment together with a weak culture of law enforcement,

poor schooling and poor education outcomes all contribute to social dynamics that fuel violence.

The social acceptance of various forms of violence is the major contributing factor in perpetuating violence as these are transmitted from one generation to another (Matthews and Benvenuti 2014: 28). According to Staeheli and Hammett (2013: 2), the legacy of apartheid still haunts South Africa's education system where there is an obvious racial division and where the teaching staff is predominantly White while the maintenance staff is predominantly Black. In concurring with Staeheli and Hammett, Galtung (1969 cited in Gopal and Collings 2017: 7) observed that:

Apartheid was structural violence in the sense that there was a component of exploitation which focused on the division of labor with the benefits being asymmetrically distributed, penetration which necessitates the control by the exploiters over the consciousness of the exploited, thus resulting in the acquiescence of the oppressed, fragmentation which means that the exploited are separated from each other, and the marginalization with exploiters as a privileged class with their own rulers and form of interaction.

There are underlying structural divisions in public schools where some are still located in areas that are not accessible by public transport by the previously disadvantaged communities. From 1948 to 1994, the entire South African education system was based on "racial separation and inequality" with an assumed hierarchy of racial groups (Mncube and Harber 2012: 71). It then follows that the hostile environment prior to 1994 has contributed to the violence that is experienced in schools today. The lingering colonial past, something that Williams (2016: 144) terms "lingering colonialities," is more of an ethos – "one of rigidity, hierarchy, control, docilization and exclusion, that lingers and shapes contemporary relationships, structures and processes." Previous research studies have consistently shown that:

[C]omplex causal pathways bind the social fabric of structural inequality, socio-cultural tolerance of violence, militarized masculinity, disrupted community and family life, and erosion of social capital, to individual-level biological, developmental and personality-related risk factors to produce this polymorphic profile of violence [in the country] (Bowman *et al.* 2015: 243).

Mampane *et al.* (2013: 735) argued that in South Africa, inequality is deeply connected to structural processes that exclude large sections of the South African population from meaningful participation in the economy of the country. According to Le Mottee and Kelly (2017: 3), modern-day South Africa was born out of extreme structural and direct violence and oppression, which has had a profound impact on its society. As a result, schools in post-apartheid South Africa are under siege by violence (Davids and Waghid 2016: 28).

5.5.3 Socioeconomic Factors

The causes of school violence are interrelated and intertwined, which makes it difficult to separate the causes or resolve one issue independently from the others. School violence cannot be discussed or resolved without considering its co-existence formations and the social and economic conditions and processes that produce them (Russell, Sirota and Ahmed 2013: 44). In agreement with Russell, Sirota and Ahmed, Burton and Leoschut (2013: 9) posited that:

School violence can also be attributed to the contextual factors like vulnerable and unstable family systems and children's exposure to violence, peer pressure, permanent exclusion of learners due to juvenile delinquency when schools are unable to enforce policies that deal with violence and discipline, widespread access to firearms, alcohol and drug abuse, high levels of crime and failure to uphold safety as a basic right of teachers and learners.

A study conducted by the Cape Times on school violence in the Western Cape revealed that the interaction of forms of inequality and oppression, such as racism, class privilege, and gender oppression, are “structural root causes for school violence” (de Wet 2016: 1). The socioeconomic reality in South Africa is that South Africa's wealthiest 10% have accounted for 51% of income while the poorest 70% have accounted for a mere 21%, and the average White family's expenditure is more than six times that of a Black family (Staeheli and Hammett 2013: 14). Donohue and Bornman (2014: 2) stated that:

The present challenges in the education system in South Africa can in part be attributed to the legacy of the education policies instilled under apartheid. The racially entrenched attitudes and the institutionalization of discriminatory practices led to extreme disparities in the delivery of education, a reflection of the fragmentation and inequality that characterized society as a whole.

Le Mottee and Kelly (2017: 3) argued that inequality and violence, as a common experience, have resulted in the “normalization” of violence, and this has left South Africa shrouded in what has come to be known as a “culture of violence.” One of the reasons given by Frazer and Ghetts (2013: 6) for the persistence of violence is that people resolve conflict violently. The high level of violence that the “democratic state has inherited from the previous regime has resulted in the breakdown of a number of social systems like schools, families and communities, along with some of the highest rates of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the world,” and this has been a major contribution to high levels of violence (Le Mottee and Kelly 2017: 3). An overly controlling and restrictive approach to learning and discipline within schools can model and encourage violence and can often promote aggressive behavior and violence (Mampane *et al.* 2013: 735). The patriarchal South African society endorses violence against women and children to maintain men's positions of authority (Matthew and Benvenuti 2014: 4).

The 2008 report of the South African Human Research Council, the 2012 CCJP study on school violence, and most researchers in the field have all highlighted the close “linkages between violence in the home and community and violence in schools” (Bower *et al.* 2015: 3). In concurring with Bower *et al.*, Le Mottee and Kelly (2018: 53) alluded to the fact that the social behaviors of both learners and teachers are influenced by various factors, including personal, family, school-related, and societal characteristics. An analysis of murder dockets conducted by the South African Police Services showed that 51.5% of murders had been committed during an argument or misunderstanding (John 2018: 57). A lack of social interactions such as those included in recreational activities and facilities, social clubs, and entertainment could lead to vulnerability in children. According to social control theorists, delinquency occurs when an individual’s bond to society weakens – this is also known as a decrease in social capital (Maphalala and Mabunda 2014: 62).

South Africa’s youth are a significant sector of the population, and very many of them are “unoccupied, hungry and angry” (John 2018: 57). Approximately 3.4 million young people aged between 11 and 24 are not involved in employment, education, or training, and half of the children who start school do not finish their schooling – this makes it easier for this group of young people to become engaged in criminal activities (John 2018: 56). According to Zehr (2015: 1), South African society is counted as being among the “most unequal in the world, with 45% of the population being classified as poor and children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more exposed and vulnerable to multiple forms of violence” than those from affluent families and communities. The level of school violence is higher in poor communities with low socioeconomic status, higher levels of poverty, and high levels of violence. Herero-Romero (2018: 12) stated that the Department of Basic Education’s report in 2016 revealed that “school delay is closely related to the country’s levels of inequality,” which affects the quality of education and, thus, adolescents’ school outcomes. Mampane *et al.* (2013: 735) stipulated that there is an assumption that high levels of “socio-economic disintegration in most of the communities have caused a brittle

masculinity” with a sense of powerlessness, leading to an increase in children using violence to regain a sense of power and control over their lives.

In South Africa, “socio-economic disadvantage[s] and educational exclusion” are associated with high rates of violence against children and adolescents at home and in the community (Romero *et al.* 2018: 34). According to the Department of Education, “being named, shamed and exposed to humiliating treatment by teachers and administrators on account of late coming or non-payment of school fees is another form of violence” against children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Gopal and Collings 2017: 8). Andreou (2015: 390) alluded to the fact that schools in disadvantaged areas and disorganized communities with easy access to weapons, drugs, and alcohol have high rates of violence. According to the South African Council of Educators, “poverty in the family has been found to be associated with learners facing higher risks of experiencing school-based violence” (Gopal and Collings 2017: 8). Poverty and high rates of unemployment could cause people to look at alternative survival strategies, such as crime. In addition to poverty, Gopal and Collings (2017: 8) opined that being exposed to “poorly resourced schools” that are not adequately equipped to meet learners’ academic needs means that learners in socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds attend schools in communities where there is no infrastructural development, and this affects the quality of education that they receive. The 2017 Child Gauge report revealed that two-thirds of the country’s children live below the poverty line and that in excess of 5.5 million children go hungry (John 2018: 57).

5.5.4 Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma and Anger

Unfortunately, older generations’ anger has been transmitted from one generation to the next for many years. Mncube and Harber (2017: 62) argued that many of the children in South Africa are exposed to violence in their families and neighborhood even before they go to school. In some cases, it escalates to a level where it ultimately affects the families of learners and the whole community. According to Mampane *et al.* (2013: 735), children’s actions are a result of the complexity of interactions

occurring with various environments because of their exposure to such environments. Cultural influences can have a major influence on the perpetuation of violent behavior. Shamu *et al.* (2015: 18) stated that in a research study conducted in 2012 on IPV among grade eight learners in South Africa, it was revealed that “a latent construct of male superiority and violence which was constructed from measured gender attitudes, views on male sexual entitlement and attitudes towards dating violence, was directly associated with IPV perpetration in boys and experience in girls.” Galtung (1969 cited in Gopal and Collings 2017: 7) opined that the “pathways to violence flow from cultural violence,” that is, repressive beliefs via unstructured violence to direct violence. Gender stereotypes and unequal power relations within the broader society sometimes lead to sexual violence and harassment (Mestry 2015: 657). Power relations are one of the contributory factors to gender-based violence as oppressive cultural beliefs and practices cause gender imbalances and violence.

Herero-Romero (2017: 31) opined that exposure to multiple forms of violence is common amongst adolescents from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities in South Africa. Other areas vulnerable to violence include those that are very remote, those with high levels of illiteracy in parents, those where there is a lack of parental involvement, and those with unsafe school buildings and vague perceptions about the need for school safety (Mampane *et al.* 2013: 735). Zuze *et al.* (2016: 1) concurred with Mampane *et al.* by stating that violence in schools is always an extension of violence in communities. In addition to these conditions, the “mixture of consistent exposure to violence, poor role models, punitive parents and teachers develop a repertoire of aggressive behaviors” as a way of dealing with conflict (Mampane *et al.* 2013: 735). Community violence is one of the most prominent forms of violence to which South African children are exposed (Foster and Brooks-Gunn 2015: 292). A national survey conducted in 2015 among adolescents between 15 and 18 years of age revealed that 34% had experienced physical abuse, 21% had experienced neglect, 16% had suffered emotional abuse, 23% had endured domestic violence, 20% had experienced persistent bullying at school, while 50% had witnessed violence taking place in the community (Herero-Romero 2017: 32). Some of the violence

perpetrated against women is based on traditional ideas of masculine superiority and entitlement (Mncube and Harber 2017: 78).

5.5.5 Absent Parents

The environment in which a child is brought up could have a direct influence on the child's violent behavior. Netshitangani (2017: 7) argued that pupils' hostility can be caused by the absence of control and authority and a lack of supervision. Without any guidance from adults, children are vulnerable to crime, drug and substance abuse, sexual engagements, and all other social ills. Alcohol and drug abuse can also be attributed to the high levels of violence in schools. "Single-parent families are a norm" in South Africa, and this contributes to stress, which, in most cases, results in harsh and inconsistent parenting (Matthews and Benvenuti 2014: 27). In addition to single parenting, apartheid had a "profound effect" on family life where the migrant labor system created an environment where large numbers of fathers were largely absent in the lives of their children (Matthews and Benvenuti 2014: 27). In addition to the conditions mentioned by Matthews and Benvenuti, the challenge that South Africans are facing today is the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS leading to children heading households with some being taken care of by grandparents (Mncube and Harber 2017: 63).

5.6 Consequences of School Violence

All forms of violence infringe on the fundamental right to education, and unsafe learning environments reduce the quality of education for all learners (UNESCO 2017: 6). History has taught people that conflict can have a devastating impact if it is left unrestrained and unmanaged (ACCORD Handbook 2015: 27). The exposure of young people to violence can have harmful effects on their lives. The violence displayed by children and adolescents is associated with a number of behavioral and emotional outcomes that can continue into adulthood (9). Swain, Pillay and Kliwer (2016: 1) averred that traumatic stress may arise from a variety of incidents, such as community violence, rape, and school violence, and it can severely impact personal functioning and interpersonal relationships.

The effects of trauma in children are evident in their behavior, where signs of withdrawal, depression, violence, anxiety, or learning disabilities are displayed. According to Kaminer (2017: 8), the levels of violence experienced by South Africans translates into a large amount of traumatic stress in society, with some researchers reporting that the level of traumatic stress is as high as 75%. Zhang et al. (2019: 1) stated that bullying and the associated victimization were both related to involvement in violence in the future, leading to, for example, depression and criminal offenses. Young-Jones et al. (2015 :186) alluded to the fact that victimization in school can have “lasting effects for both learners and the teachers.” The South African Human Rights Commission explained that the “environment and climate necessary for effective teaching and learning is increasingly undermined” by a culture of school-based violence (Le Mottee and Kelly 2017: 2).

Other studies have revealed that “excessive punishment, more so in boys, can prompt tyranny” (Mncube and Harber 2012: 72). Increasing levels of overall violence exposure and “higher levels of poly-victimization” are associated with an increased risk for both internalizing and externalizing health difficulties in both international and South African school-goers (Humm, Kaminer and Hardy 2018: 41). Young-Jones *et al.* (2015: 186) alluded to the fact that victimization in school can have “lasting effects for both learners and the teachers.” Because children need to feel safe in order to achieve their full potential at school, experiences of violence or a lack of safety can have a “devastating impact” on their ability to learn and live healthy and productive lives (Nansel *et al.* 2003 cited in Zuze *et al.* 2016: 1).

Casas, Del Rey and Orteg-Ruiz (2013: 580) acknowledged the fact that research has shown that the quality of peer network relationships deteriorates when bullying takes place, and the effects are felt in the social circles of those involved. In the contexts of high community violence, “children and adolescents with greater levels of perceived familial support demonstrate lower levels of violence exposure and internalizing and externalizing symptoms” than their peers who have lower levels of perceived family

support (Humm, Kaminer and Hardy 2018: 42). An argument raised by Humm, Kaminer and Hardy (2018: 41) is that “stress-buffering effects of social support” may not be maintained in the context of high exposure to violence.

According to UNESCO (2017: 10), children and adolescents who are bullied are more likely to experience “interpersonal difficulties, to be depressed, lonely or anxious, to have low self-esteem and to have suicidal thoughts.” According to Garg (2017: 460), children and juveniles raised in such environments characterized by “deviant norms may adapt to violent habits” and patterns of deviant behavior that adversely affect their social life. Violence against children affects their “health, social and psychological well-being and this impacts their ability to realize their full potential” in life (Matthew and Benvenuti 2014: 1). Matthew and Benvenuti further stated that “abuse and neglect in early childhood result in aggressive behavior which affects the children’s brain development and impacts on cognitive and psychosocial adjustment resulting in an increased violent and antisocial behavior.”

Researchers have proved that “girls who experience physical and sexual abuse are vulnerable to depression, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, suicide as well as unwanted pregnancy, HIV infection, whereas in boys harsh parenting shapes their violent behavior, truancy, gang violence and crime” (Matthew and Benvenuti 2014: 4). Similarly, Khuzwayo and Taylor (2018: 1216) stated that the consequences of violence among learners include “psychosocial problems, and poor academic performance and health outcomes like depression, unwanted teenage pregnancy and HIV.”

Violence in schools has serious and negative consequences for school attendance, learning, and achievement among a significant proportion of learners (Mncube and Harber 2013: 80). Mestry (2015: 657) is of the opinion that the high levels of violence taking place within schools in South Africa have severe “emotional and psychological outcomes” and are depriving learners of the opportunity to reach their optimal academic and educational potential. Violence is associated with a number of educational outcomes, which may have long-term effects (Sherr *et al.* 2016: 36).

According to the South African Human Rights Commission, some of the consequences of school violence are a “high rate of absenteeism, high rate of truancy, high rate of school dropouts, increased incidents of learner suicides, academic underperformance and the deterioration of the teaching and learning environment” (Mestry 2015: 657). Researchers have shown that “diminished educational progress, dropping out, future involvement with delinquency and adult criminality have been associated with youth victimization” (Peguero *et al.* 2016: 2). Teachers are often absent because they need time away for “trauma counseling and debriefing” (Maphalala and Mabunda 2014: 61). Hence, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the significance of peace and justice for development because there “can never be sustainable development” without peace and no peace without sustainable development (John 2018: 60).

Staeheli and Hammett (2013: 13) stated that an important point that needs to be considered is the fact that “teachers themselves have been deeply wounded by and shaped by violence” (structural and physical). In agreement with Staeheli and Hammett, Grobler (2018: 42) observed that “teachers have been victimized by violence through witnessing and experiencing it and this has a negative effect on their well-being and in turn leads to burn-out, professional disengagement and lowers personal satisfaction.” Therefore, “teachers have to deal with their own wounds and at the same time they are expected to deal with the broader experience of the past and give hope for the future” (Staeheli and Hammett 2013: 13). Matthew and Benvenuti (2014: 4) posited that the “impact of school violence is far above the visible physical wounds, and scars with lasting emotional and social consequences” have been reported.

Grobler (2018: 3) postulated that the experience of “violence changes the caring role,” and the way teachers engage with learners in classrooms becomes negative. According to Burton and Leoschut (2013: 22), the abuse of teachers affects them “emotionally, physically and professionally.” On a personal level, teachers “experience depression, low self-esteem, feeling worthless, helpless, shame, frustration and guilt”

(Shields *et al.* 2015: 53). According to Grobler (2018: 19), teachers' repeated experiences of violence "disable them to establish ethical and authentic relationships" with learners in classrooms, which could cause teaching to be mediocre and ineffective. This causes "teachers to feel powerless and isolated because of the withdrawal symptoms as they are overwhelmed by the incidents that affect their psychological functioning" (Shields *et al.* 2015: 56).

In a study conducted by TIMSS in 285 schools across South Africa, the school principals expressed greater worries about school safety than their international counterparts in over 60 countries that participated in the study in 2011 (Zuze *et al.* 2016: 2). The study further revealed that in the North West, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Free State, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga, at least "one-third of learners were victims of bullying on a weekly basis." John (2018: 59) stated that the figures in 2012 indicated "increased rates of school violence in Kwa-Zulu Natal with learner assault at 8.2%, sexual assault at 3.9% and theft from learners at 49.9%." Researchers who conducted a study in 16 secondary schools in the uMgungundlovu district in Kwa-Zulu Natal revealed that during the past 12 months, "23% of learners had been bullied, 21.7% missed school because of feeling unsafe, 15.4% had been involved in fights, 2.4% carried weapons to school, 12.1% were hurt by people they were dating and 4.5% were forced to have sex" (Khuzwayo and Taylor 2018: 1216).

5.7 How has South Africa Tried to Deal with School Violence

Makhasane and Chikoko (2016: 1) opined that addressing the issue of school violence is essential for "social transformation." The formal end of apartheid was marked by attempts to make a new South Africa, transforming its government machinery, its foundations, and the ways in which individuals were positioned as citizens within the polity (Staeheli and Hammett 2013: 2). The government of South Africa has shown commitment to dealing with the violence epidemic in public schools. Since the democratic government came into power in 1994, the government has been grappling to address a highly unequal education system inherited from the apartheid past

(Russell, Sirota and Ahmed 2013: 3). To redress some of the education inequalities between racial groups created by the previous government:

When the current government took over from the apartheid government in 1994, compulsory education was implemented for all South African children and segregation schooling practices were eliminated by replacing the 19 former distinct education departments with a single and undivided education system for all learners (Donohue and Bornman 2014: 2).

According to Makota and Leoschut (2016: 18), nationally, South Africa's aim to achieve safer schools is documented in the National Development Plan, the National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996), and the Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Davids and Waghid (2016: 31) observed that official strategies by the Department of Basic Education to reduce violence in schools have included the prohibition of corporal punishment, as stipulated in the South African Schools Act (1996). Davids and Waghid (2016: 32) explained that:

In trying to establish a safe teaching and learning environment, the Department of Basic Education introduced publications such as 'Alternatives to Corporal Punishment' (SACE 2000) and Signposts for Safe Schools (South African Police Service and the Department of Education 2002) and safety programmes, such as 'adopt a cop', 'Captain crime stop' and Bambanani.

The National School Safety Framework (NSSF), approved by the Minister of Basic Education in April 2015, affirms the commitment to the right of all children in South Africa to be protected from all forms of violence (Makota and Leoschut 2016: 1). The NSSF is a wide-ranging approach that seeks to address violence in schools using the four building blocks of being prepared, awareness, action-taking, and taking care (Makota and Leoschut 2016: 19). The Department of Basic Education has initiated two

strategies to move schools toward using nonviolent positive discipline techniques – these are a training entitled “Positive Discipline and Classroom Management” and a prototype code of conduct (Bower *et al.* 2015: 4). Furthermore, John (2018: 62) asserted that the government has introduced the Chapter 9 Institutions that were established alongside the institutions of a Public Protector, Auditor General, and Electoral Commission as educational intervention strategies directed at peacebuilding and nation-building. In 2011, the Department of Basic Education and the South African Police Service signed an Implementation Protocol on the prevention of school violence and the promotion of safe schools (Grobler 2018: 48).

Mestry (2015: 656) argued that it is essential that school policies, practices, and procedures are policed, enforced, and reviewed to ensure that schools are made safe and that the learning environment is not hostile. Unfortunately, the research conducted by TIMSS observed that existing legislation to protect learners from the worst forms of physical violence is not always enforced (Zuze *et al.* 2016: 1). A positive school climate is one where learners experience caring relationships with peers and adults, participate meaningfully in school activities, report a strong sense of belonging and feelings of personal safety, and have limited exposure to risky peer behavior (Astor *et al.* 2013: 236).

Coping Strategies for Teachers

Currently, no strategies have been suggested to teachers regarding how to cope with school violence (Le Mottee and Kelly 2018: 51). According to Burton and Leoschut (2013: 11), the South African government’s response to school violence has been “disjointed and piecemeal at best.” Similarly, Galtung questioned the rationality of government policies that focus on resolving violence but tend to rely more on truncated definitions of violence that are restricted to acts of physical or verbal aggression occurring in schools, which fail to adequately address cultural and structural violence in many of its forms (Galtung 1969: 167; Galtung 1990 cited in Gopal and Collings 2017: 7).

This, therefore, means that school policies and rules are not enough to reduce the anger that schools are experiencing (Mestry 2015: 656). Many schools have put in place policies and codes of conduct to deal with the issue within their premises, but despite their efforts, violent activities are still the order of the day (Maphalala and Mabunda 2014: 61). Sometimes, intervening in cases of violence could cause teachers to become vulnerable if cases are reported; therefore, teachers need to be provided with a caring environment for them to be able to care for others (Grobler 2018: 32).

5.8 What has Been the Outcome of the South African Government Strategies to Deal with School Violence?

Grobler (2018: 18) argued that what is missing is the “teachers’ voice” and exploring the ethical response of fostering caring relationships between teachers and learners in a context of school violence. The teachers’ voice is important because it will inform the researchers about the correct strategies and interventions – the buy-in of the teachers as well as their support is very important for such initiatives. The manner in which the policies are introduced is such that they are imposed on teachers since there are no prior engagements. The top-down approach to policy implementation has caused divisions between policy and practice. Donohue and Bornman (2014: 6) argued that, on the other hand, the “bottom-up approach” is concerned more with understanding the experiences of the target population and service deliverers for both inclusive learning and corporal punishment. In most cases, programs initiated by policymakers use the “top-down approach,” and the implementation of educational programs is done in such a manner that it can be difficult for local school stakeholders to dispute its relevance or theoretical foundations (Lauritzen 2016: 77). The ownership of the program by the stakeholders, therefore, becomes a priority if it is to be successful, hence the bottom-up approach is the most relevant for the initiation of such programs.

As the “implementers of the Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (ATCP)[.] teachers strongly feel that they should have been engaged in the process of designing the

ATCP in order to have a deeper understanding of the dynamics, the implementation challenges and results” of the ATCP (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 9). ATCP are defined as a disciplinary strategy that emphasizes effective communication, respect, and positive educational exchanges between teachers and learners (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 2). Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 9) further argued that if the teachers are consulted, they will be given an opportunity to inform the policymakers on the strategies that do not work in schools as well as the perceptions thereof.

The “failure to consult can cause conflict and resistance of the teachers to implement the ATCP that could also result in conflict” between the school leaders, teachers, and learners (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 9). Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 3) argued that the recommended alternatives remain questionable and that South African teachers have expressed their displeasure by stating that the “alternatives are ineffective, inadequate and a waste of time, [and] they also feel that the Department of Education is trivializing the problem and does not understand its magnitude” as far as its impact on teaching and learning and the total management of the school are concerned. The fact that the introduction of the ATCP has been imposed on other stakeholders has also been met with resistance because teachers, parents, and religious groups have felt that the government has undermined their rights to be consulted as key stakeholders (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 3).

A lack of “consultation and collaboration among stakeholders” could be the reason why the ATCP has been met with resistance when it was introduced in South Africa because not all stakeholders were engaged (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 3). Therefore, teachers, parents, and community members “feel undermined by the government” because of a lack of consultation even though they are key role players in the learners’ education (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 3). The “reason why SADTU supports its members when they are charged for administering corporal punishment to learners is because of the top-down approach that the government adopted in implementing alternatives to corporal punishment” (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 4).

Matthew and Benvenuti (2014: 1) argued that the fact that South Africa “lacks both national empirical data on the exact extent of the problem limits understanding of the problem, the effective design targeting of services and prevention strategies.” Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 3) alluded to the fact that the ATCP do “not seem to be effective[, which] raises questions whether this is an appropriate strategy for instilling discipline in schools.” During teacher training, teachers are not equipped with skills to strengthen learners’ relationships and deal with disturbing behavior from learners. Teachers have reported that the “manual developed in conjunction with the CJCP by the Department of Basic Education is inadequate for changing attitudes and for building the capacity of teachers to implement the positive discipline strategies recommended” in it (Bower *et al.* 2015: 4). In addition, teachers seem not to understand the “holistic approach of positive discipline” and continue to mete out other punitive measures rather than adopting an ethos of positive discipline (Bower *et al.* 2015: 4). A recommendation by Bower *et al.* (2015: 4) is that the Department of Basic Education should develop a “national definition of what corporal punishment constitutes,” and, in this way, all the stakeholders will have the same understanding and know the correct ways of disciplining learners.

Bower *et al.* (2015: 2) observed that “little headway has been made” in reducing the levels of corporal punishment at schools. Therefore, Bower *et al.* (2015: 4) suggested that emphasis should be placed on “shifting attitudes” and improving mechanisms for the enforcement of the prohibition. South Africa’s 2013 report to the United Nations Committee on the rights of the child stated that “the reasons for the continued use of corporal punishment in schools is the lack of support for the prohibition of corporal punishment amongst educators in certain communities” (Bower *et al.* 2015: 4). Bower *et al.* (2015: 4) further stated that parents either “encourage corporal punishment against learners or feel powerless to confront it” if they do not approve. Matthew and Benvenuti (2014: 1) reported on a study on violence against children where they discovered that more than 50% of learners had revealed that they had experienced corporal punishment at school despite it being prohibited. Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014: 1) averred that “suspensions and expulsions are highly prevalent” in the

Western Cape schools in South Africa. Mestry (2015: 662) argued that the “drastic measures of the zero-tolerance approach are in line with section 9 of the South African Schools Act which permits the governing body to suspend or recommend expulsion of a learner from school after a fair disciplinary hearing.”

Many teachers find it difficult to find alternatives to this traditional method of punishment, and it is argued that corporal punishment persists because parents use it at home and support its use at school (Msomi 2004). An example involves a case in 2014 when the then Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Enver Surty, expressed the opinion that the “abolition of corporal punishment has resulted in educators feeling like they have lost control and the ability to instill discipline” (Le Mottee and Kelly 2018: 55). In concurring with Surty, the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU) representative also indicated that “according to reports by the union members and other teachers, discipline has become more of a problem since the abolishing of corporal punishment” (Le Mottee and Kelly 2018: 55). “Discipline is an important part of classroom management and teachers need some form of control measure in order to maintain order and respect,” hence the reason why ATCP are needed (Le Mottee and Kelly 2018: 56). Zehr (2015: 2) stated that according to the Department of Education, some teachers still “persist to administer corporal punishment because it is easy to administer, while alternative approaches require [the] skills, patience and time” that teachers claim not to have.

What is needed are disciplinary measures that can instill important values in and develop learners to become responsible young adults. Providing teachers with “alternative discipline techniques” may contribute to a better understanding of the learners (Le Mottee and Kelly 2018: 59). Nonviolence is a peaceful resolution to conflict, and it is an alternative to violence. An argument raised by Makota and Leoschut (2016: 18) is that while the “presence of police is a crucial role in reducing school violence, their presence in schools and in the surrounding communities cannot be a replacement for whole-school violence reduction measures.” South Africa has failed to reduce school violence because most school “interventions have focused on

learner-directed violence, whereas school interventions focusing on teacher-directed violence” have lagged (McMahon and Martinez 2014: 754). Ignoring school violence directed at teachers has a direct effect on the poor academic achievement of learners. According to McMahon and Martinez (2014: 754), learners’ academic outcomes are directly influenced by the level of teachers’ professionalism. Gopal and Collings (2017: 8) argued that:

[The Nelson Mandela Foundation has extensively discussed the need for attention at a broader level to] address structural problems like poverty and unemployment which seems to be associated with high levels of exposure to violence and negative impact on school attendance, delayed entry into school, interrupted or delayed progression through the schooling system and irregular school attendance.

Since 1994, in the pursuit of ending violence in schools, attention has been given to ending corporal punishment. Very little has been done toward building and restoring the relationships that have been destroyed many years ago. The root causes and historical background are important factors when exploring young people’s involvement in violence. What is needed is to build peace in a transformative manner that can lead to long-lasting peace. According to the UN, there can never be “sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development” (John 2018: 60).

Some government officials have shown a lack of confidence in government policies; as a result, there have been disagreements and inconsistencies on policies implemented by their own government. In 1999, the Kwa-Zulu Natal Education Member of the Executive Council publicly announced that:

[S]he supported corporal punishment and was adamant that the cane is the surest way of maintaining an orderly and safe environment in schools and

... she had an internal arrangement with the teachers at her son's school, that, if they feel he has done an act that warrants he should be given a slap, they should do so (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 2).

This suggests that there are minimal chances for the policies to be successful when there is disagreement amongst the government officials on the policies that they have designed themselves.

An exclusive focus on preventing violence in school settings also fails to adequately acknowledge the fact that South African children and adolescents learn to be violent not only at school but also in the community and at home (Gopal and Collings 2017: 7). These spheres of influence need to be addressed as well. Williams asserted that “across all levels in the education system, families and communities need to be involved” (Williams 2016: 153). Williams (2016: 153) further alluded to the fact that people need to build “humane school communities.” By ignoring the contextual factors and focusing on the “misbehaving” learner, the attributional orientation of these policies and practices is conveniently limited (Sullivan 2015: 45). Grobler (2018: 48) argued that:

The National School Safety Framework suggests that a holistic “whole-school or whole-of-society” approach to reducing violence in schools ... requires schools to have safety policies, codes of conduct and disciplinary measures, interventions against bullying, psychosocial interventions to modify the behavior of learners, adequate support measures and [the] fostering of a school climate that does not tolerate violence and is responsive to incidents of violence.

“Second wave” violence scholars (where the term *second wave* means that violence has first affected one group of people, then appeared to decrease, and finally increased in a different part of the population) have argued that “the future of violence

research may not lie primarily in merely amassing more data on risk but rather in better theorizing the mechanisms that translate risk into enactment” that can mobilize individual and collective aspects of subjectivity within these enactments (Bowman *et al.* 2015: 243). Williams (2016: 153) argued that the “narrow conceptualization of school violence ultimately informs ineffective interventions” if the school community lacks the understanding of what violence is and there is an obvious lack of compatibility between them. For this reason, Yurtal (2014: 1420) pointed out that what is more important is for the school community members to have the “same understanding of what violence is,” otherwise they might ultimately treat each other in a violent manner without being aware that they are violating each other.

Yurtal (2014: 1421) echoed that in order for the violence program to be effective, it is necessary to “build [the] cooperation and participation” of all school members, including parents, teachers, and learners. According to Humm, Kaminer and Hardy (2018: 41), it is important to identify protective factors that may ameliorate both exposure to and the impact of cumulative violence. The way violence is perceived by all parties involved might influence finding the reasons for the problem and, eventually, the solution to the problem (Yurtal 2014: 1421). According to Wadhwa (2016: 6), while teachers have recognized that “suspensions in themselves rarely remediate learners’ behaviors,” they continue to resort to the practice to provide immediate respite in their classrooms. For some teachers, it is out of desperation that they still use the zero-tolerance approaches, even though they recognize their ineffectiveness. The United Nations on the Rights of the Child has stressed the use of alternatives to cruel punishment in the form of positive discipline in schools (Mirza and Ali 2014: 97). If no acceptable alternatives are provided, the result involves creating “anger and frustration” in the teachers, and, thus, causing further problems for the learners, parents, and school (Mirza and Ali 2014: 97).

Curriculum

Lamb and Snodgrass (2017: 3) reviewed 15 studies on Life Orientation (LO) in South Africa and concluded that this literature “consistently confirms the importance of the

LO subject in the schools' curriculum but highlights that LO does not seem to bring about the desired behavioral changes" in learners (John 2018: 64). How schools "respond to learners' deviant behavior could potentially initiate and sustain a transformative change within the school's culture" and the learners themselves (Crew 2017: 8). The "management of the school environment should carefully promote positive classroom settings that enhance the social and emotional development" of each of its members (Becerra, Munoz and Riquelme 2015: 157). Becerra, Munoz and Riquelme (2015: 157) suggested that schools should be allowed to develop and evaluate their management practices in line with the policies of the Department of Education using the following recommendation:

The formation of holistic development of learners, creating a safety environment for the school community based on respect and understanding and participation and democratic life where learners are allowed to democratically participate in responsible and constructive manners without any fear or intimidation [are recommended] (Becerra, Munoz and Riquelme 2015: 157).

"Experiential learning is the key method for the acquisition of values, attitudes, perceptions, skills and behavioral tendencies, in other words, their internalization" (John 2018: 68). The system of oppression succeeded because South Africans were able to internalize the values and principles of oppression; therefore, it is equally important to internalize the values and principles of peace through experiential learning. Unlike teaching traditional subjects, where it is enough to know the content, peace education programs require the teacher to "truly internalize the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes associated with peace education if they are to be successful" (Wa Munywe 2014: 12). Wa Munywe (2014: 12) emphasized the fact that to ensure that a viable program is developed, it is essential that it is not a "once-off" initiative but rather one that is both structured and sustained. To develop a culture of peace, learners are expected to acquire collaborative interpersonal attitudes such as respect, trust, honesty, humility, fairness, empathy, and justice. Learners are also

expected to acquire “collaborative interpersonal skills like listening, openness, non-judgmental [attitudes], tolerance, objective rationality, consistency and team spirit” (Wa Munywe 2014: 14).

Peace education in South Africa can be drawn from the wisdom and courage of South Africa’s peace icons and leaders, such as former President Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Inkosi Albert Luthuli (John 2018: 70). It is of vital importance to create a supportive school context in which schools are encouraged to be agents of change in order to positively influence change (Van Der Heijden *et al.* 2015: 681). Vahasantanen (2013: 23) stated that the professional agency of schools is expressed in the ways that they influence work-related matters and make choices and decisions at work. To be an agent is to intentionally effectuate outcomes through one’s actions (Heijden 2015: 683). Heijden (2015: 682) argued that the rapidly changing society of today requires that schools are able and willing to cope with the many challenges of change.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed school violence from the South African perspective. The chapter looked at the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of school violence in South African schools and also discussed the government’s response to violence and the effectiveness and challenges of the programs that the government has put in place when trying to intervene in violence in schools. The following chapter unpacks the research methodology and discusses the step-by-step plan of action when going to the field to collect data in the two schools. Lastly, the chapter discusses the data analysis method regarding how data was collected.

6 CHAPTER SIX RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 focused on school violence in South Africa and looked at the nature, extent, causes, and effects of violence in South African schools. It also looked at the intervention strategies that the government has implemented in the past in schools. Chapter 6 considers the research design and research method used when conducting the study. This chapter focuses on the research problem, research questions, approach, and strategy and also discusses how data was collected and analyzed. Finally, it discusses the issues of ethics and the reliability, credibility, and validity of the data.

6.2 Context of the Study

The level of violence in South African schools has caused schools to become “sites of violence” where violence is not only perpetrated between learners themselves but also between learners and teachers, teachers and parents, teachers themselves, and among rival schools and rival gangs (Grobler 2018: 14). Such conditions, according to Shields, Nadasen and Hanneke (2015: 48), create an unsafe environment as “over 40% of learners in South Africa reported being physically victimized at school,” and this has caused South Africa to be rated as having one of the highest levels of learner victimization in the world. Harber and Mncube (2017: 1) alluded to the fact that school violence in South Africa has become severe and widespread to the extent that it has become an “obstacle to effective teaching and learning.” Similarly, Shields, Nadasen and Hanneke (2015: 2) noted that schools in South Africa have a “long history of violence” in the form of learner protests and corporal punishment. However, given the high rate of violence in South African society, it is not surprising that South African schools are “sites of regular conflict” because what is happening in schools “reflects the problems of the wider society” (John 2018: 5).

The study was conducted in two South African high schools. The rationale for conducting the study in two schools was to compare and contrast the levels of violence in the two schools and to authenticate the results of the evaluation of the implemented intervention strategy. One school was used for the experiment, and the other school was used for comparison purposes. The first school is called Mbambangwe High School, located in the Bhekulwandle rural community, and the second school is Siyabonga High School, located in Lovu Township. Both schools are located within the same local municipality in Ethekewini District. Mbambangwe High School is the school where research was conducted for the experiment. This school was where the intervention strategy was implemented to see if any changes would be brought about after the intervention. Siyabonga High School was a controlled group or comparison school. As a controlled group, the research in this school was conducted for comparison to see if there were any differences or changes after intervening in the school violence at Mbambangwe High School. Figure 6.1 shows the research site at Mbambangwe High School, Figure 6.2 depicts one of the dirt roads at Bhekulwandle leading to Mbambangwe High School, and Figure 6.3 depicts a garbage dump site at Bhekulwandle.



Figure 6.1: Research site at Mbambangwe High School

Figure 6.1: Research site at Mbambangwe High School.



Figure 6. 2: One of the dirt roads at Bhekulwandle leading to Mbambangwe high school

Figure 6.2: One of the dirt roads at Bhekulwandle leading to Mbambangwe High School.



Figure 6.3: garbage dump site at Bhekulwandle

Figure 6.3: Garbage dump site at Bhekulwandle.

Siyabonga High School is located in Lovu Township. The township is fairly new as it was established in the late 1990s. The area where the township is located used to be the cane fields for Illovo Mills, hence the name *Lovu* (isiZulu version) came from the word *Illovo*. The township is approximately five kilometers away from the Winklespruit shopping center and Winklespruit motor vehicle testing grounds. On the other hand, Mbambangwe High School is located in an area with a mixture of rural and peri-urban communities. It is at the border of the two traditional authorities of Inkosi Maphumulo, at Bhekulwandle, and Inkosi Hlengwa, at Kwa-Thoyana. It is a rural area, but currently, there are new developments taking place in this community, causing the area to be transformed into a peri-urban community, which makes the area a mixture of rural and peri-urban communities.

6.3 Objectives and Need for the Study

The objectives and need for the study have been presented in Section 1.6 of Chapter 1.

6.4 Research Approach / Method

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018: 3), research approaches are “plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumption” to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It was important to have a plan of action before going to the field. The research plan provided guidance on how to venture into the two schools for data collection and kept the researcher focused on what was supposed to be done. Almalka (2016: 3) stated that research methods “provide focus and [the] approach” for the study, and they also allow the researchers to pinpoint the methods that will be used in order to address their specific questions. This study is an action research (AR) study where the mixed methods approach was applied, that is, a qualitative and quantitative approach. The nature of the research problem is such that the mixed methods approach was the relevant and desirable approach for this study. Choy (2014: 1) stated that the “complementary approach” between the qualitative and quantitative approaches for the same study help to improve the results of the study.

Researching means that the researcher is “conscientizing people about their situation and in AR once people are conscientized they begin the process of acting upon those conditions” in order to bring about positive change (Glassman and Erdem 2014: 12). The power of conscientization was evident when one of the teachers who participated in the study from Siyabonga High School commented that “the questions you are asking cause me to think and generate ideas in my mind.” This comment was made during the interview session. AR served to narrow the gap between theory/thinking and practice/doing. After the data was collected at Bhekulwandle, the next step was to analyze the data and design the most relevant model to intervene in the school violence at Mbambangwe High School. According to Glassman and Erdem (2014: 12), the action meaning of AR contains elements of dynamism and change, reshaping ideas into actions – it is an act of “engaging, exercising and practicing.” The reasoning behind doing AR is that it is not enough for people to know what is happening in communities without bringing positive change. After the problem had been identified, action was undertaken to correct that which the researcher had identified as being incorrect. Much work has been carried out by researchers in peacebuilding and

violence, and the current time is appropriate to take action. It does not help to know and not do anything, and peoples' lives are changed when action is taken.

AR was the suitable research methodology for this study because it is a powerful methodology to "improve the educative process" (Hine and Lavery 2014: 3). The participants were part of the process from start to finish, and the ultimate purpose of the AR was to ensure that a specific action or actions were taken and owned by the participants. AR is defined as a "cyclical iterative process" of action and reflection on and in action (Kearney, Wood and Zuber-Skerritt 2013: 2). The action that was taken by the learners in classrooms involved having further engagements on the days when the researcher did not go to school – at least once a week – to talk about their feelings and learn to resolve conflict on their own because they had seen the benefits of such engagements.

While the action was being implemented, there was time to reflect on the action taken to ensure that the action was implemented accordingly. In concurring with Kearney, Wood and Zuber-Skerritt (2013: 2), Halim, Yong and Meerah (2014: 1) postulated that the cycle of AR involves four stages, namely, identifying the problem; developing a plan of action; action; and finally, reflection on the action implemented. Similarly, Titchen (2015: 7) stated that since AR is systematic, its processes are organized into the three stages of planning, action, and fact-finding about the impact of the action. Hine (2013: 4) added that "collaborative efforts help develop practical ideas to assist with the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes." During the time when the researcher and participants debated on the topic of violence and conflict, the learners would always realize the mistakes that they used to make in the past when trying to resolve conflict, and collaborative efforts were made to correct their actions and learn new ways of resolving conflict. Titchen (2015: 2) stated that AR primarily involves qualitative research strategies for bringing about social change through action; developing and improving practice; and, at the same time, generating and testing theory. The social change that was brought about at Mbambangwe High School was a reduction in school violence while, at the same time, testing of the conflict

transformation and restorative justice theories was carried out. This was done through testing the two theories, that is, conflict transformation and restorative justice, to see if these theories can be effective enough to change the conditions within the school community.

It is difficult in AR to predict the particular interventions that might be made. This means that the researcher did not know in advance where the research would be led together with the participants. Therefore, most of what followed referred to the exploratory phase. What the researcher was looking for was the voice of the people, and AR gave the learners the confidence to contribute to their own development. As the researcher was engaging with the population during the data-collecting process, the researcher could see how the engagement was boosting their self-esteem and their confidence when responding to questions. By going to the field, the researcher was able to explore the nature, extent, causes, and effects of violence. What followed was the process of engaging with participants to design an intervention program aimed at reducing violence in schools while, at the same time, building on the past and present initiatives to resolve school violence. The final stage of the research was an interim evaluation of the outcome of the intervention.

Hine and Lavery (2014: 2) echoed that the “systematic inquiry in action research enables people to find effective solutions” to real problems encountered in their daily lives. During the inquiry, the participants began gathering ideas in their minds and sharing their thoughts with the researcher. The inquiry involved engaging participants in identifying the problem and developing possible solutions during individual interview sessions. During this process, facilitation played a key role in the success of the AR and practice development initiatives (Dewar and Sharp 2013: 2). The next step was to facilitate workshops where the participants would be able to develop solutions to their problems and also workshops for the presentation of the researcher’s findings to all stakeholders. Dewar and Sharp (2013: 2) further stated that “facilitation is a process of supporting people to learn the art of engaging in a discussion and ensuring that all voices are heard.”

Facilitation became important since it was a means to promote appreciative cultures of inquiry and engagement to “develop practice through mutual learning and collaborative action” (Dewar and Sharp 2013: 2). Collaborative action between parents, teachers, learners, and all stakeholders occurred at Mbambangwe High School in order to resolve the problem of school violence during the time when the researcher had separate engagements with the teachers, parents, and learners. The dialogue was seen as a type of collaboration through looking together or “thinking together” – this process was emancipatory and transformative (Dewar and Sharp 2013: 2). The process was transformative in the sense that it opened the school community’s eyes to see the power and potential that they have to transform violence. The dialogue between the school community enabled the participants to engage in “meaningful conversations” that have helped them to analyze and articulate what works well and when (Dewar and Sharp 2013: 2). Changes were implemented by engaging in repeated cycles of planning, observation, and reflection, both at the individual and group levels (Hine 2013: 1). Planning and reflecting using the information from the stakeholders allowed the researcher to develop the correct strategies for tackling issues surrounding school violence. Through reflection after the implementation of the intervention strategies, the researcher was able to see which actions had been successful.

Through thoughtful action of “collaborative reflection[,] the researcher conceptualized and generalized what happened during [the] action and thereafter the researcher investigated and found out confirming and disconfirming evidence” to inform what had been assessed and further reflection (Kearney, Wood and Zuber-Skerritt 2013: 2). The researcher was collaboratively reflecting with the teachers, learners, parents, community, and other stakeholders. The common purposes for AR are “improving and developing [a] better understanding of practice, introducing innovation and facilitating cultural, social, practice and political change as well as simultaneously generating and testing theory” (Titchen 2015: 3). The “action” part of AR refers to interventions in an existing practice in a particular social context, such as a classroom or school, to bring about “improvement and change, whereas research involves the systematic

observation and analysis of the change” that occurs as a result (Yuan and Lee 2016: 1). Action means intervening in the way that teachers and learners relate to each other in classrooms and within the school environment. The research part of AR means observing the attitudes of the teachers and learners and analyzing them.

According to Titchen (2015: 5), AR places more emphasis on the “reflective practitioner, personal and interpersonal, methodological, emancipatory political ideology which includes democracy and moral intention of social justice as well as transformational moral intention of human flourishing” for all involved. As the participants became engaged in the research process, they began to think differently and realize how their lives could be transformed through engagement in democratic processes. AR means that:

The researcher’s role as an actor in a situation which the researcher endeavors to improve, where hypotheses are being tested about how to improve practice and those hypotheses are based on theory and where the extent to which problems and the hypotheses are generalizable to other situations, is explored (Titchen 2015: 5).

AR became an important professional avenue to “deepen teachers’ understanding of their classrooms and their learners” (Dikilitas, Smith and Trotman 2015: 9). When learners were given the opportunity to talk about their feelings, the teachers began to know and understand their learners and their actions better. In agreement with Dikilitas, Smith and Trotman, Yuan and Lee (2016: 1) observed that AR is a powerful tool for teachers’ professional development. Through the engagements with the learners, the teachers were able to develop a skill where they were able to talk about their feelings while, at the same time, allowed learners to talk about their own. This research study allowed teachers and parents at Mbambangwe High School to become an empowerment tool in their profession and their relationships with learners in classrooms and children at home. According to Dikilitas, Smith and Trotman (2015:

9), in most cases, teachers are offered professional development workshops that are “handed-down requirements,” which are irrelevant to their daily challenges.

That which was beneficial in this research study was that the teachers began to own the whole process since they had an opportunity to contribute to designing a program for their own empowerment and development strategies that were relevant to their daily life challenges. This, therefore, means that the “approach democratized the process of knowledge production” by building on the actions, beliefs, and understanding of teachers since they work in the same context (Dikilitas, Smith and Trotman 2015: 10). Glassman and Erdem (2014: 10) observed that the process of “transformation begins with conscientization” – this means that the teachers, parents, and learners were conscientized through a process of engagement. After conscientization, they were able to make adjustments in their conduct and interactions with learners in classrooms and their children at home. Conscientization is the “process in which human beings, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform” (Freire 1970 cited in Glassman and Erdem 2014: 10).

According to Glassman, Erdem and Bartholomew (2013: 273), AR is centered on humans’ ability to “break free from deleterious social habits” through autonomous, democratic participation. The democratic participation of teachers, learners, parents, and the community in the process freed them from the traditional ways of conflict resolution and discipline, and they began to learn and embrace restorative processes. They also learned that there are alternatives to violence and that violence is not the only way of resolving conflict. Dikilitas, Smith and Trotman (2015: 10) argued that teachers might not have an opportunity of sharing professional ideas since “classrooms are isolated and isolating places,” and therefore, AR provided an opportunity to collaborate. Being in a violent school environment is stressful for teachers, but through teachers’ close cooperation with the action researchers, “teachers are enabled to cope” with the challenges from their work context (Yuan and Lee 2015: 2). This was done through the introduction of engaging with learners and

allowing learners and the class teachers to talk about their feelings. Collaboration among teachers themselves in the implementation was very important as this involved and elaborated on different opportunities that they could take to work together on professional issues of mutual interest (Dikilitas, Smith and Trotman 2015: 9). Through repeated cycles of planning, observing, and reflecting, individuals and groups engaged in AR have implemented changes required for social change (Hine 2013: 2). Changes are seen in the conduct of teachers and learners in classrooms, the learners' families, and the surrounding community.

Morales (2016: 2) opined that education is a "life-long process" that equips and empowers people with knowledge and skills needed for better and nobler lives. This, therefore, means that it is not too late for teachers and parents of learners at Mbambangwe High School to unlearn old habits and learn new ones that can afford them better and nobler lives. That which follows is that there is a greater need for civic education to "sensitize or conscientize" Mbambangwe High School teachers, learners, and parents as well as the surrounding community about their rights and responsibilities for a better understanding (Amambia *et al.* 2018: 17). Teachers and parents also need to be life-long learners so as to "keep abreast with their learners and children" in the changing era (Morales 2016: 3). When engaging adults in any learning activity, they need to know why they have to learn something, and they need to "learn experientially." Adults approach learning as a problem-solving endeavor and learn best when the topic is of immediate value (Knowles 1990 cited in Morales 2016: 3). Since AR involves experiential learning, the teachers and parents at Mbambangwe High School easily grasped the information that was shared with them.

Morales (2016: 8) stated that through AR, teachers and parents were able to "self-evaluate and reflection was emphasized in their conduct which boosted reflective practice in classrooms, families and within the community." The self-evaluation process happens during experiential learning, and this brings about positive changes in individuals. Morales (2016: 8) further stated that the teachers are now able to make classrooms "more interactive, more learner-oriented and more productive for their

learners. This was made possible since teachers are now able to set a positive tone for their learners in classrooms.

AR in school provides teachers with “new knowledge” and understanding on how to improve educational practices or resolve significant problems in classrooms and schools (Hine 2013: 2). Through engagement with teachers, they are empowered with knowledge and skills on how to deal with cases of violence in classrooms and around the school environment. According to Campbell (2014: 1), AR improves teacher practice, informs the teaching profession, and serves as a form of “modeling for future teachers” to support the learners’ needs. Through engaging in this research, the teachers, parents, and learners were investing in the future of the next generation of teachers, learners, and parents. The main aim of AR in education is to “enhance the lives of learners while at the same time enhancing the lives of teachers, parents and the community” (Hine 2013: 2). Through the process of AR, the school community (teachers, learners, parents, and community) became empowered through continuous learning.

6.5 Research Design

Mixed methods research is an approach that combines quantitative and qualitative research methods in the same research inquiry (Venkatesh, Brown and Bala 2013: 1). Both qualitative and quantitative approaches have their own strengths and weaknesses, and, therefore, it is more advantageous to use both methods than only one of the methods. According to Morse and Niehaus (2016: 10), the mixed methods design is most suitable when one or more of the methods are not complete on their own. It would not have been easy for the researcher to use a qualitative approach for the learners because of the large number of learners that were involved in the study; therefore, a quantitative approach was more suitable for the learners. On the other hand, qualitative research was more suitable for the teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. Morse and Niehaus (2016: 14) added that “to grasp a complex phenomenon, research often demands that more than one research method be used” in the same study. Therefore, the mixed methods approach was deemed relevant for

this study since this research was about investigating school violence, and school violence is a very complex phenomenon because it touches on different sectors of society, such as teachers, learners, parents, the community, and various government departments, as well as the socioeconomic and political issues. Morse and Niehaus (2016: 10) further stated that because of the complexity of the study, the use of two methods makes the research “more comprehensive or complete” than the research conducted if a single method is used.

Mixed methods can help develop “rich insights into various phenomena” of interest that cannot be fully understood using only one method (Venkatesh, Brown and Bala 2013: 1). Since neither of the two research methodologies is superior to the other, it was, therefore, deemed desirable to use both methods because the two methods complement each other. Choy (2014: 2) argued that one of the differences between the quantitative and qualitative approaches is the nature of the collected data. One of the strengths of the qualitative research methodology is that the qualitative method is more exploratory, which means that the researcher was able to “explore social and behavioural issues” that are impossible to achieve in quantitative research (Isaacs 2014: 1). In the qualitative approach, the data comes in the form of “soft” data, such as pictures, impressions, words, symbols, and sentences, whereas in the quantitative approach, the data comes in the form of numbers, which is termed “hard” data (Choy 2014: 2). The data collected from the learners came in the form of numbers, and the data collected from the parents, teachers, and other stakeholders was more exploratory. Sometimes, the mixed methods approach is dominated by one approach, and, in some instances, it is an even combination of different approaches (Almalka 2016: 4). This study was not different from other studies since it was dominated by the qualitative approach – various qualitative methods of data collection were used. For the quantitative part, only questionnaires were used.

According to Venkatesh, Brown and Bala (2013: 1), there are three important aspects of conducting a mixed methods research study, which are the “appropriateness, development of substantive theory and assessment of the quality of validation” of the

mixed methods research. In conducting this study, the researcher was constantly trying to ensure that everything was carried out in a satisfactory manner, from asking the correct research questions to organizing and properly planning and applying the correct research method for the study. The beneficial aspect of mixed methods research is that the findings of the research inform others of and allow others to understand a phenomenon of interest (Venkatesh, Brown and Bala 2013: 1). This means that the findings of the research were authenticated by the mixed methods approach.

Venkatesh, Brown and Bala (2013: 1) stated that the mixed methods approach provides an opportunity for a “greater assortment of divergent and/or complementary views.” Findings from a quantitative study may require further explanation and description; therefore, interviews may be conducted using qualitative methods (Morse and Niehaus 2016: 16). This is the reason why the researcher appreciated the use of the mixed methods approach for this study. The use of mixed methods is a form of “appreciation of the value” of both qualitative and quantitative methods to develop a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Venkatesh, Brown and Bala 2013: 1).

6.5.1 Qualitative Data

Creswell (2014: 32) highlighted that qualitative research is an approach to “exploring and understanding” the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Through a qualitative inquiry, the researcher was able to explore and understand the definition of violence and the causes and effects of violence in the area of Bhekulwandle. Qualitative research, thus, places emphasis on exploration and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups “ascribe to a social or human problem” (Almalka 2016: 4), as mentioned above. The qualitative method enables a contextualized understanding of subjective experiences (Crowe, Inder and Porter 2015: 1). Through qualitative research, the researcher was able to contextualize the experiences of the school community at Mbambangwe High School. Creswell (2014: 32) defined qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding based on “distinct methodological traditions” of inquiry that explore a social or human problem.

That which the researcher was inquiring here was the nature, extent, causes, and effects of violence at Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School. School violence is a social or human problem in the sense that it affects the entire school community, which includes the teachers, learners, parents, and the surrounding community. Creswell (2014: 32) further stated that the researcher “builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views” of the informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. Qualitative research has allowed the researcher to gain a clear understanding of the violence at Bhekulwandle by going to Mbambangwe High School and thoroughly interrogating teachers, parents, and stakeholders regarding school violence.

The qualitative approach places emphasis on a range of data collection and analysis techniques that use purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews (Choy 2014: 1). The data collection techniques in qualitative research made it possible for the researcher to gain as much information as possible, which has contributed to the richness of the data collected. Through the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observations, the researcher tried to “get a closer emphatic relationship with the subjects being studied in order to get to in-depth knowledge and understanding” (Yilmaz 2013: 3). This was carried out through weekly visits to the school and the surrounding community and engaging with the teachers, parents, and various stakeholders. Yilmaz (2013: 2) posited that qualitative research attempts to understand how social experience is created and given meaning. Forming closer bonds with the subjects gave the researcher an opportunity to be part of their informal engagements where the researcher had an opportunity to gather data that might have been missed during the focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research is best suited for human behavioral and social issues since, in qualitative research, the emphasis is on conducting “detailed examinations” of cases that arise in the natural flow of social life (Choy 2014: 2). By going to the research site and engaging socially and informally with the participants, the researcher succeeded in gaining detailed information in their natural setting.

In qualitative research, the researcher relies on interpretative social science and applies “logic in practice” (Choy 2014: 2). Venkatesh, Brown and Bala (2013: 4) posited that qualitative methods are used for exploratory research in order to “develop a deep understanding” of a phenomenon and/or to inductively generate new theoretical insights. The exploratory nature of qualitative research has allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons for the violence in the two schools and possible solutions to the problem. The advantage of qualitative approaches is that the researcher may be able to identify and handle responses as the violence occurs (Choy 2014: 3). As people responded to the research questions, the researcher was able to gain some clarity on the responses that were not clear through follow-up questions. This assisted in developing the correct solution to the problem. In qualitative research, according to Creswell and Creswell (2018: 180), there are “open-ended forms of data” where participants freely share ideas without any constraints. One of the qualities of qualitative research is the use of multiple sources of data collection, such as interviews and observations. The semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions gave the participants the freedom to share all the information that they might have in relation to the research problem. Qualitative researchers collect data in a natural setting of the participants where the participants experience the issue (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 181). The benefit of collecting data in a natural setting is that no matter which action the participants carry out, the action is natural; therefore, it is not unfamiliar, threatening, and artificial, which allows the participants’ engagements to be authentic.

6.5.2 Quantitative Approach

Quantitative research is regarded as a deductive approach. Quantitative methods characteristically refer to “standardized questionnaires” that are administered to individuals (Choy 2014: 1). The standardized questionnaires were administered to all grade nine learners at Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School. The data collection and analysis were conducted utilizing “mathematically based methods,” such as polls and surveys (Almalka 2016: 3), which is the reason why quantitative research is concerned more with numbers and generalizations. Because of the large number of learners in grade nine in both schools, administering the questionnaires to

the learners was the most relevant method of data collection for the learners. In quantitative research data, the researcher explains the phenomenon through “numeric data” (Yilmaz 2013: 1). The numeric data collected in the two schools tell one exactly how many people have been affected by the same issue and, in going back for the evaluation, the researcher knows how many participants’ attitudes have changed and how many have not. According to Choy (2014: 1), quantitative research requires the researcher to “carefully record and verify” the collected data. While collecting data, the researcher was able to carefully record all the data collected while verifying it at the same time to check the accurateness of the information recorded. Quantitative and statistical research methods enable “deduction and prediction,” irrespective of context (Crowe, Inder and Porter 2015: 1). One of the advantages of quantitative methods is that they allow the researcher to “measure the responses of a number of participants to a limited set of questions” (Yilmaz 2013: 3).

Choy (2014: 1) observed that quantitative research often ends up with a “large quantity” of (computer-generated) output that allows the researcher to give meaning to or interpret the collected data. In giving meaning to the information collected, the researcher was guided by the responses of the participants. Quantitative research emphasizes the “measurement and analysis” of causal relationships between isolated variables within a framework that is value-free, logical, and reductionistic (Yilmaz 2013: 2). While sorting the data collected, the researcher was able to understand the causes of violence and other issues related to school violence in the two research sites. Quantitative research is concerned more with the “outcomes, generalization, prediction and cause and effect relationships through deductive reasoning” (Yilmaz 2013: 3). The use of quantitative research enabled the researcher to understand the causes and effects of violence in the two schools. In quantitative research, the researcher applies “reconstructed logic” and follows a linear research path (Choy 2014: 2). The path that the participants followed was responding to the set questions in the questionnaires that the researcher had administered to the learners.

6.6 Population and Sampling

The population is the “primary source of data” in a research study (Asiamah *et al.* 2017: 3). Furthermore, Asiamah *et al.* (2017: 3) stated that a proper “definition of the population is critical” because it guides others in appraising the credibility of the sample, sampling techniques, and research outcomes. The population of the study is referred to as the participants. The participants of the study were purposefully selected from the two schools because of their connection to the schools to determine the level of violence in both schools. According to Asiamah (2017: 3), the participants are a group of individuals who have one or more characteristics of interest. The characteristic of interest regarding the participants in the study was their connection to the two schools as learners, teachers, parents, community members, businesspeople, or community leaders. The participants were the two school principals from Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School, eight teachers from each school, all the grade nine learners from both schools, and four parents and four stakeholders from both schools. The stakeholders consisted of local business owners from around the schools, members of the community policing forum (CPF), officials from government departments such as the Department of Social Development, local councilor or traditional leadership, a non-governmental organization operating in the area, and/or members of faith-based organizations. In this instance, two schools formed part of the study; in one school, research was conducted for the experiment, and at another school, research was conducted for comparison or to have a control group. Pre- and post-surveys were carried out through questionnaires for all grade nine learners in 2019 and grade 11 learners in 2021 from both schools. The number of learners in both schools was 480. At Siyabonga High School, there were six grade-nine classes with a total of 370 learners. At Mbambangwe High School, there were two grade-nine classes with 110 learners in total.

Choy (2014: 1) posited that the study design requires making decisions about the type of samples to select. The sample of the population was selected from both schools. Teachers, learners, parents, community members, and community stakeholders

formed part of the sample for this study. There were 42 participants for the qualitative data collection, representing Mbambangwe High School, in the area of Bhekulwandle, and Siyabonga High School, in Lovu Township in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Purposive sampling techniques were employed to select participants for the study. Purposive sampling involves “non-probability sampling” techniques, which the researcher uses to choose a sample of subjects/units from a population (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim 2016: 2). Participants were purposively selected because of their knowledge and experience of school violence in the targeted schools. Crowe, Inder and Porter (2015: 2) stated that the selection of participants is determined by the research question.

Purposive sampling is the “deliberate choice of participants” due to the qualities that the participants possess (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim 2017: 2). The two school principals, grade nine learners of both schools, grade 10 teachers, parents, and community stakeholders were deliberately selected to participate in this study because of their knowledge in the management of the two schools. The grade nine learners were selected because the majority of grade nine learners are in their second year of high school. The assumption is that they will still be in the same schools in the following year when the action part of the research is executed and when the evaluation on the intervention strategy is conducted. When the action part of the research was implemented, the grade nine learners of 2019 were in grade 10 in 2020 and would still be present for 2 more years in the same schools – this allowed the results of the study to be authentic. The grade 10 teachers were purposefully selected because the learners who were in grade nine in 2019 were being taught by the current grade 10 teachers in 2020 when the researcher had returned for the implementation and evaluation. Therefore, the current grade 10 teachers were responsible for implementing the intervention on the grade 10 learners.

The participants were chosen based on their involvement with the two schools as teachers, learners, parents, community members of the area around the school, or stakeholders. The most important criterion for selecting participants for the study was

their ability to “provide relevant information” (Asiamah 2017: 9). Therefore, participants are purposively selected to provide the researcher with relevant information for the study. In qualitative research, the participants are purposefully selected such that the researcher can best understand the research problem from the people who are “directly affected” (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 185). The strategy used in selecting participants (the recruitment) was implemented through the school principals, and no incentives were paid to the participants for participating in the study.

6.7 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Multiple sources of data collection, such as questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observations, were used to collect data. Draft copies of each data collection method are included as appendices to this thesis. Table 6.1 illustrates the grouping of the participants, their number, the types of interview techniques applied, the language, and the appendix where the data collection instruments are located.

Table 6.1 Data collecting instruments and methods

Group	Number	Type	Language(s)	Appendix
Principals	2	Interview	English	I
Teachers	2 x 8	Interview and Focus Group Discussion	English	J, K
Learners	2 x 8	Focus Group Discussion	English and Zulu	L, M
Learners	480	Questionnaires	English and Zulu	N, O
Parents	4	Interview	English and Zulu	P, Q

Stakeholders	4	Interview	English and Zulu	R, S
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6.8 Proposed Work Plan

As with the rest of the world, South Africa has been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic since January 2020, and this meant that precautionary measures had to be taken. On 12 March 2020, the researcher introduced the program to learners in grade 10 at Mbambangwe High School, that is, the experiment school. Unfortunately, a week after the researcher had started implementing the program, the Department of Education made an announcement that it was suspending classes in all schools throughout the country. This meant that the researcher was unable to continue with the implementation of the program. The researcher was only able to return and continue with the implementation process in March 2021.

Table 6.2 presents the plan of work that the researcher used for the research. This indicates the important target dates that were necessary to meet the proposed deadlines.

Table 6.2 Work plan of the research

Activity	Time Frame
Proposal writing and submission	January to June 2018
Literature review	June 2018 to March 2019
Data collection	April to July 2019
Data transcription and analysis and design of the intervention strategy	August 2019 to February 2020
Implementation of intervention strategy	March 2020 to May 2021

Evaluation of the intervention and conclusion	June to July 2021
Discussion and presentation of findings	August 2021
Editing	September 2021
Submission of first draft of thesis	October 2021
Revision, corrections, and final editing	November 2021
Submission of final draft of thesis	December 2021

6.9 Data Collection Instruments

Bourke (2014: 4) stated that the nature of qualitative research sets the researcher as the “data collection instrument.” Similarly, Creswell and Creswell (2018: 181) reported that the researcher is the “key data collecting instrument.” As the key data-collecting instrument, the researcher collected data through examining documents, focus group discussions, and observations, and, for the quantitative approach, the data was collected through administering questionnaires. It was, therefore, important for the researcher to remain neutral at all times and not allow beliefs, experiences, and cultural backgrounds to affect the research process. The coherency of the research process arises from the relationship between the research instrument and the participants (Bourke 2014: 5). The good relationship that the researcher had developed with the participants of the study allowed the researcher to follow the set plan and gather data accurately.

6.9.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The approach of semi-structured interviews helped the researcher to “understand the social phenomenon” with the help and views of the participants (Isaacs 2014: 1). The interviewing process was conducted in the form of one-on-one interactions with the

participants. The semi-structured interview participants were the two school principals and eight teachers, four parents, and four stakeholders from each school. Yilmaz (2013: 3) stated that the “open-ended responses” let the researcher understand and present the world as it is seen and experienced by the participants. Through the participants’ responses, the researcher was able to understand the nature of violence in both schools and the extent, causes, and effects of school violence. The researcher was also able to realize which intervention strategies had been attempted to reduce violence in both schools and what the results of those strategies had been.

The process of conducting structured, unstructured, or semi-structured interviews “requires skill” as interviews usually need to be partly or fully transcribed, which is time-consuming (Chapman, Hadfield and Chapman 2015: 202). Even though the interviewing process was time-consuming, there was a benefit to it since the researcher was able to gain the most information possible from each participant. As much as the process is time-consuming, it helps prevent the adoption of a top-down approach by the implementers of policies because the participants of the study need to inform them regarding what they think needs to be done to change the situation. In going to the field, the researcher was ready to allow participants to have enough time for engagement in order to gain all the information that would be of benefit to the research.

According to Venkatesh, Brown and Bala (2013: 4), interviews are conducted to “understand individuals’ perceptions since they provide in-depth information by allowing the researcher to gain deep insights” from the engagement. While conducting the interviews, the researcher was able to understand each participant’s views on and perceptions of school violence and was able to probe individual participants to gain in-depth information about the school violence that they had experienced in their schools. Creswell and Creswell (2018: 181) stated that qualitative researchers “collect data in the field at the site” where participants experience the issue or problem under study. This was important as the researcher was able to observe the participants’ behavior in their natural setting, their engagement and behavior with fellow colleagues, and the

engagement of learners with fellow learners and parents coming to visit the schools. Being in the participants' natural setting helped the researcher to make observations and compare whether what the participants were saying corresponded with their actions in their natural setting. Removing participants from their natural and familiar environment and taking them to another setting could have been intimidating to the participants, and they would have ultimately given responses that are not true due to being intimidated by the unfamiliar environment.

One of the benefits of semi-structured interviews was the face-to-face contact that the researcher had with the participants. This gave the researcher an opportunity to be able to "learn more about the meaning and the research problem" throughout the interview process instead of relying on what writers have stated or what the researcher knew and believed (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 182). When going to the field, the researcher had to remove all previously held knowledge and beliefs about school violence. The face-to-face contact gave the researcher first-hand information about school violence from the people who are directly affected and directly involved with it. Creswell and Creswell (2018: 182) postulated that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to report on "multiple perspectives of the research problem" and see the bigger picture through identifying some of the issues related to the problem. The freedom that the participants had with the researcher allowed the participants to freely engage on any issues pertaining to school violence.

6.9.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus groups are group discussions organized to explore a specific set of issues, which involves a form of "collective activity" (Stalmeijer 2014: 1). Focus group discussions were conducted with teachers, learners, parents, and various stakeholders. The participants of the focus group discussions were grouped according to their status and role in relation to the school community since the discussion was centered around their status and roles. This meant that there was one focus group for all the schoolteachers per school, one focus group for community members or stakeholders and parents, and one focus group for the learners. The recommended

size of a focus group is between 6 and 10 participants; therefore, the researcher had eight participants per group. Fusch and Ness (2015: 5) recommended that members of a focus group must be “diverse enough to elicit a number of perspectives” on a given topic to reach data saturation. Focus group discussions were conducted after the interviews since the researcher wanted to gain a group perspective about the phenomenon (Fusch and Ness 2015: 5).

During the focus group discussions, the researcher “was controlling the discussion” in interviewing the participants (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 188). The researcher facilitated the focus group discussions and directed the discussion toward obtaining information on school violence in both schools. Focus groups capitalize on communication between the “researcher and participants” in order to generate data (Stalmeijer 2014: 1). The researcher facilitated the process and led the discussion, ensuring that all members of the focus group had an opportunity to voice their views such that more data could be generated through the discussion. Fassinger and Morrow (2013: 3) posited that for a researcher to be able to facilitate a focus group discussion, the researcher should possess “culturally competent communication skills,” be fluent in the participants’ language, and demonstrate respect for the participants and their cultures. The researcher had much experience in facilitation at the time of the study, and this was of benefit to the study. As an experienced facilitator, the researcher was able to facilitate the discussion by allowing all members of the group a fair opportunity to engage in the discussion. Another benefit when going to the two communities was the researcher’s fluency in the spoken language in both schools, which is isiZulu. This allowed the researcher to fluently and correctly explain anything that might not have been clear to the participants in their own spoken language and to understand the terms that these two communities use to communicate.

Focus group interviews are “flexible and unstructured dialogues” between the researcher and members of the group (Fusch and Ness 2015: 5). Focus groups are “empowering to the participants” in the sense that participants are able to engage in a

discussion and make meaning out of it collectively (Fassinger and Morrow 2013: 12). This means that the participants were provided with an opportunity to tackle the issue of school violence, an issue that they had not had an opportunity to address previously perhaps since they had never been provided with a platform to do so or since they might have never thought of it as a problem because of the normalization of school violence. This was empowering in the sense that the process triggered further engagements on the same topic and many other topics, such as the curriculum, background information of the area, their concerns about poverty and social ills, and strategies on how the social ills could be tackled. This was an empowering experience in the sense that it was an eye-opener for the stakeholders because they were then able to realize how much power they had to change the situation. The focus group discussions served to make the “participants feel empowered in the research process” by allowing them a greater opportunity to steer the discussion in different directions based on the conversation flow (Bourke 2014: 5). By doing so, the participants felt that they had ownership of the process, and this made them feel proud of their contribution. They enjoyed the freedom of freely engaging on issues that were not directly related to the school curriculum.

Bourke (2014: 5) stated that focus group discussions offer the participants an opportunity for “interacting and engaging” where they gain insight into ways in which meaning is given within the context of the group. During the engagement, the participants would speak about school violence from different perspectives, and this gave the researcher further understanding and knowledge on how the participants viewed and perceived school violence. In addition, taking part in focus group discussions boosted the participants’ confidence to discuss other issues that they had not been confident to speak about during the semi-structured interviews.

6.9.3 Observations

Observations were carried out during the researcher’s visits to the two schools while waiting for the participants at the reception area of the school and during the interview sessions with the participants. It was done while administering questionnaires to grade

nine learners in 2019 and grade 11 learners in 2021. The aim of carrying out observations is to “describe and understand the phenomenon studied by capturing and communicating participants’ experiences in their own words through observation” (Yilmaz 2013: 3). While interviewing the participants, the researcher had an opportunity to observe their behaviors, their engagements, how they related to each other, their conversations, and the nature of the conversations in relation to school violence. During the focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, the researcher had the opportunity of observing the participants’ body language when responding to questions and making sense out of it.

Observations were carried out inside the school premises as well as in the area around the schools. The observations gave the researcher “first-hand experience” of the participants, and the researcher was able to record what was being observed as it occurred (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 188). What was observed inside the school premises was the learners’ behavior toward the teachers, the teachers’ behavior toward the learners, the learners’ behavior toward other learners, the teachers’ behavior toward other teachers, the principals’ behavior toward learners and teachers, the parents’ behavior toward teachers, and the teachers’ behavior toward parents when visiting the school. People’s lives were studied by observing learners and teachers at Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School and how they engage with each other in classrooms and outside the classroom. During the interview with the principal at Siyabonga High School, the principal showed the researcher the space muffins (muffins made with marijuana) that were confiscated from some of the learners who were selling them inside the school premises.

The researcher observed that there was a communication gap or miscommunication between members of the school community in both schools. At Siyabonga High School, the parents are ill-informed of the policies and procedures within the school environment. Some parents did not understand the confiscation of learners’ cellular phones, and yet this was an agreement made at the parents’ meetings. The reason for the lack of understanding is that most parents do not attend parents’ meetings

when they have been invited to the meetings. The most notable point is that the school governing body (SGB) is responsible for confiscating cellular phones from learners who bring them to school; they are not allowed to do so because the phones get stolen, and this is the main reason for the outbreaks of fights amongst learners. What the researcher gathered while listening to the discussion between the parents who came to plead their children's cases was that such parents do not attend parents' meetings. Not attending parents' meetings leads to miscommunication, which leads to conflict.

When learners are punished or suspended from school, the parents tend to take their children's side. As the researcher was sitting at the reception area at Siyabonga High School waiting to interview the next participant of the study, one of the learners was being punished because of misbehavior and had brought in his parents to discuss the issue with the principal. The researcher overheard the father of this boy stating that he did not understand why he had to be called to come to the school for such a minor incident. Whenever the researcher visited the schools, there would be parents (not one but a number of them) who had been called in by the principal to discuss their children's misconduct. Some of the cases that they would discuss were about the learners' suspension.

In overhearing learners who were waiting for their turn to meet the school principal because of their misbehavior, the researcher was struck by the conversations that the learners had with each other. What struck the researcher in both schools was when they referred to the principal as "this one" or "that one," as if he was some type of object. They did not show any remorse for their disrespect to the principal, and they did not care who was listening to their conversations since they did not know who the researcher was. Referring to the principal in this manner meant a lack of respect for adults and anyone in authority. When the researcher went to the classes to administer the questionnaires, the researcher was struck by the number of learners per classroom in both schools. However, Siyabonga High School was the worst of the two schools with regard to overcrowding. Most learners were seated three at a desk, which was supposed to only accommodate two learners. This made it difficult for learners to read

or write freely without any interferences. In most cases, it led to disturbances as the learners moved around. The older learners, who were bullies most of the time, would bully the younger ones, telling them to move away from the desks because they were not comfortable.

The overcrowding made it difficult for the class management and the teacher to have full control of the class. While the teacher was speaking, some learners were doing their own activities at the back of the classroom and not concentrating on what the teacher was saying. The learners would either be kicking, punching, or smacking each other inside the classroom. The researcher also had difficulty in administering the questionnaires as the researcher had to shout very loudly because the learners seated at the back could not hear what was being said. This was a notably difficult experience because the researcher's voice would be strained after leaving the classrooms.

What the researcher also observed was the love that the teachers and the two principals had for the learners. Through observation, the researcher discovered that the teachers cared very much for their learners. This could be seen from the nature of the teachers' engagements with the learners, which was friendly most of the time. The researcher observed some teachers teasing learners in a loving and playful way. The younger learners in lower grades look very young, innocent, and vulnerable and still have the highest regard for the teachers. The researcher saw teachers taking care of the learners as their own children. In one of these cases, when the researcher had come to Mbambangwe High School, the principal had to rush one of the learners who had fallen ill during school hours to the hospital. The closest hospital is approximately 30 kilometers away from the school. While the principal was rushing the learner to the hospital, the deputy principal called the parents, informing them about what had happened to the child. The deputy principal had to continuously try calling because she had difficulty in reaching the parents. It was a significant issue that a learner had fallen ill, and they were trying to do all that they could to help. At Mbambangwe High School, the researcher witnessed the same issue when the school principal had to swiftly attend to a learner who had become ill in class and had to be rushed to the

hospital. The principal had many commitments on that day, including a meeting that was to take place at the circuit office. This child's life was saved because her appendix had ruptured, and she might have died if she had not received immediate medical care. While the principal was rushing the learner to the hospital, the deputy principal called the parents to inform them about what had happened and asked them to go to the hospital to relieve the principal. The researcher could see the pain and anger in the principal's eyes when he related the story of a 14-year-old learner who was impregnated by a man old enough to be the learner's father. He wanted to meet with the parents to speak about the significance of the matter, but the parents did not see it as important and, therefore, did not come to the meeting.

Another incident occurred on a Monday morning when one of the teachers had to rush a learner to the hospital who had been severely burned. It was notable that the mother of the learner was aware that her child was burned and how severe the wound was, but she still forced the child to go to school in that condition. When the researcher showed amazement at that action, the researcher was informed that this action was very common, where parents would bring their injured, sick, or burned children to school with the hope and belief that the teacher would take responsibility for their children. Another incident involved a grade eight learner who had been severely beaten by his brother in the eye. After a few days, one male teacher realized that the wound was becoming dangerously septic, and all the teachers agreed that it could lead to blindness if it was not attended to. The teacher had to rush the learner to the hospital. The researcher witnessed many incidents such as this and more so at Mbambangwe. In all these cases, teachers use their own resources, such as their time, cars, and petrol. The researcher also heard that sometimes teachers had to use their own money to give learners tertiary care because of the situation in their families.

The love that they have for the learners can be compared to parental love. This was evident when the researcher had individual interviews with teachers at Siyabonga High School. The learners would constantly come and look for the teachers, and the way the teachers would react to the learners' requests was loving and respectful. Sometimes the teachers would stop their interviews to attend to the needs of the learners, and this shows that their learners came before all else. It is, therefore, not

surprising to hear learners clearly stating that they feel safer in the presence of their teachers. The researcher would see the Siyabonga High School principal teasingly playing with the younger learners. It was the type of interaction that can be expected from a loving father toward his last-born child.

In contrast, one of the policies that parents do not understand is the policy around the violent strategies used to resolve violence. For example, both schools use corporal punishment to discipline learners. Both schools still rely on the services of the South African Police Service (SAPS) to resolve issues of conflict; for example, while the researcher was visiting Mbambangwe High School, the SAPS was also there to discuss the issues of learners who were caught with drugs. What struck the researcher was that both male and female learners were responsible for bringing drugs to school, which means that even female learners are drug and substance users.

During the time of collecting data at Mbambangwe High School, the researcher built friendly relationships with the teachers and the principal. Because of this relationship with the teachers, the researcher was invited to be the guest speaker at the matric dance of the class of 2019. The teachers made a great effort organizing the event and even contributed financially to ensure that the event would become a success. Regarding the learners who were orphans and those whose parents could not afford to buy them outfits for the event, the teachers would give them clothing and would ask for donations. The event was very successful and was held in a hotel in town.

Outside the school premises, the researcher observed the community members' movements and their engagement and interactions with each other. The researcher observed the conditions in which the people in the two communities live. Observations were carried out to obtain an "in-depth study of the people's lives" or the issues in their own settings (Yilmaz 2013: 3). The researcher would look at the level of violence in the two communities during weekdays; on weekends; and when they had social gatherings, such as weddings. The researcher was also interested in knowing if the people in these communities were violent and the possible contributing factors to the

type of violence that was being experienced in both communities around the schools. What the researcher observed was the number of taverns around both schools. Around both schools, there are more than two taverns that open very early in the morning. At approximately 9 am on a weekday, the taverns are already open, and there are patrons drinking alcohol. The researcher also observed the number of young people roaming around in the streets doing nothing as early as 10 am. The filthiness on the streets and the dump sites along the streets is an unpleasant sight, and nobody seems to care. Figure 6.4 depicts young people standing next to a liquor business on a Tuesday morning at 10:00 am. Figure 6.5 shows Bhekulwandle Community Hall, and Figure 6.6 is the Amanzimtoti Civic Hall. The difference in the two community halls in Figures 6.5 and 6.6 shows the socioeconomic imbalances between the two areas.



Figure 6.4: Young people standing next to liquor business on Tuesday morning at 10:00 am

Figure 6.4: Young people standing next to a liquor business on a Tuesday morning at 10:00 am.

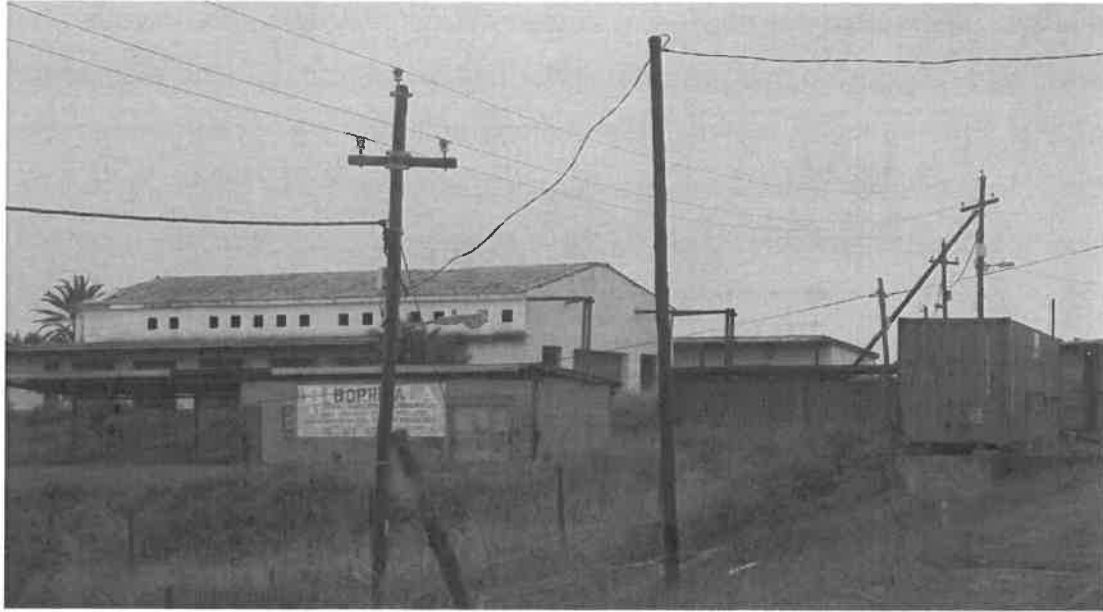


Figure 6.5 : Bhekulwandle Community hall

Figure 6.5: Bhekulwandle Community Hall.



Figure 6.6 : Amanzimtoti Civic hall

Figure 6.6: Amanzimtoti Civic Hall.

The conditions of some of the houses in these communities were deteriorating as some were nearly collapsing and not suitable for dwelling purposes. The researcher could see that some of the businesses that members of the community owned were not sustainable and were merely survival strategies. The researcher could see that on some days, the business owners would not have customers or clients. During several visits to the community, the researcher never saw anyone going into those structures for business purposes. In comparison to the nearby suburban areas, there was a large difference in terms of the family dwellings, community halls, and businesses.

In qualitative research, the aim is to describe and understand the phenomenon being studied by capturing and communicating the participants' experiences in their own words through observations and interviews (Yilmaz 2013: 3). Sometimes the researcher would walk around the area to listen to people's conversations and note the type of engagements that people in both communities would have with each other in their movements in shops, streets, and community gatherings. While observing, "unusual aspects" can be noticed, and the researcher is able to record these while observing at the same time (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 188). The benefit of this is that the researcher was able to gather much data in a short space of time. However, the downside of this is that the researcher sometimes appeared to be "intrusive" in the view of the participants of the study (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 188). Fortunately, even though the researcher felt intrusive, this did not cause the participants to question the researcher's motives or to be reluctant to participate in the study. This was avoided through the researcher's explanation to the participants before beginning data collection to avoid losing the participants' trust in the researcher before starting to gather data.

In the researcher's observation, the researcher wanted to see if school violence was still rife at Bhekulwandle and Mbambangwe High School, in particular. On the second day, when the researcher went to implement the recommended program at Mbambangwe High School (19 February 2020), thugs had tried to burn the newly erected library and the administration office. They managed to burn a certain portion

of the library but failed to burn the administration block. When the researcher arrived at the school in the morning at approximately 7:25 am, the principal and staff members were still puzzled by what had happened that morning. The security guard who guards the school through the night was present when it happened, and he saw the thugs but had to hide because he feared for his life. This came to their attention in the early hours of the morning when the learners had come to start their classes at 6:00 am (this is the time at which school starts) and the library was still on fire. However, fortunately, they managed to extinguish the fire. It was difficult to continue working under such conditions as everyone was still startled by what had happened. According to the principal, nothing was taken from the school, and this indicated that the purpose was to destroy the school's property.

People from the Bhekulwandle and Lovu communities can be seen roaming almost daily around the streets at Amanzimtoti's suburban area looking for anything edible from the dustbins, and more so on the days allocated for garbage collection when the garbage bins are left on the roadside. The considerable socioeconomic differences create divisions between the Amanzimtoti community and Bhekulwandle and Lovu communities. On a daily basis, several people from Bhekulwandle and Lovu flock to Amanzimtoti where most of them work and also look for employment opportunities. Sometimes, the divisions are created by not finding any employment or piece jobs, and some people end up digging in the garbage bins. Some people from these areas have made it their mission to visit the suburban areas on the days when garbage is collected in these areas. If they do not find anything in the garbage bins, they ultimately take or steal anything of value from the residents of Amanzimtoti. Therefore, the mere sight of Bhekulwandle and Lovu residents in Amanzimtoti raises the suspicions of Amanzimtoti residents, and this creates further division. Figure 6.7 depicts some of the small stalls of the Bhekulwandle residents in the nearest town; Figure 6.8 shows some of the survival strategies, with Bhekulwandle residents scavenging from the dustbins in the neighboring suburb; and Figure 6.9 depicts one of the local hawkers carrying avocados from his tree to sell them in the nearest suburb.



Figure 6.7: Some of the Bhekulwandle residents' small stalls in the nearest town

Figure 6.7: Some of the Bhekulwandle residents' small stalls in the nearest town.



Figure 6.8 : Some of the survival strategies. Bhekulwandle residents scavenging from the dustbins in the neighboring suburbs.

Figure 6.8: Some of the survival strategies. Bhekulwandle residents scavenging from the dustbins in the neighboring suburb.



Figure 6.9 : One of the local hawkers carrying avocados from his tree to sell in the nearest suburb

Figure 6.9: One of the local hawkers carrying avocados from his tree to sell them in the nearest suburb.

6.9.4 Audiovisual Data or Material

Permission was sought from the participants to audio record the focus group discussions. Creswell and Creswell (2018: 187) argued that audio recordings and photographs form part of qualitative data collection. While driving around the area, the researcher had the opportunity to take photographs of the two research sites and the area around the schools. The focus group discussions were audio recorded since the researcher was engaging with more than one participant at the same time, and it would have been difficult to keep track of what the participants were saying during the engagement. The photographs will help the reader to have a clear picture of the research site and the surrounding area. Using photographs is one of the “creative ways that capture the attention” visually (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 187). However, in some instances, the researcher felt that taking photographs would have been “disruptive and [would have] affect[ed the] responses” of the participants (Creswell

and Creswell 2018: 187), and the researcher, therefore, avoided taking photographs in cases such as these. To avoid disruptions and negative responses from the participants, the researcher asked for permission from the participants prior to the start of the engagement. The audio recordings helped to fill in the gaps that were created during the interview sessions and focus group discussions, and they also contributed to the authenticity of the data collected.

6.9.5 Documents

Qualitative researchers make use of documents such as journal articles or newspapers to represent the data to which participants have contributed as “written evidence” (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 188). From the South Coast Sun, which is a local newspaper, the researcher was able to gather information about the type of violence prevalent in the Bhekulwandle and Lovu communities. The researcher also visited the local library and read local newspapers and some documents relating to the history of the two communities. This information from the documents and library confirmed and added to the data gathered from the interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, photographs, and audio-recorded information. The benefit of using documents is that they are written evidence, and the documents were “obtained at a convenient time,” therefore saving the researcher time and the expense of transcribing (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 188). The downside to using documents is that the information given might “not be authentic or accurate,” and the material could be incomplete (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 188). To authenticate the information received from documents, the researcher had an opportunity to recheck the accuracy of the information from the participants and more so the leadership of the area.

6.9.6 Surveys

For the quantitative approach, questionnaires were administered to all grade nine learners of Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School. Surveys in the quantitative data collection approach can “bring breath” to a study by helping the researcher gather data on different aspects of the phenomenon from many

participants (Venkatesh, Brown and Bala 2013: 5). This was made possible by gathering data from a total of 480 grade nine learners in both schools. Therefore, surveys were a preferred method for gathering information from the learners since the number of learners was very large. The rationale for administering questionnaires to the learners was that the researcher wanted to be able to collect much data in a short space of time. It would not have been feasible for the researcher to interview each learner individually. However, at the same time, it was important to obtain the learners' input on their understanding of school violence because they form a large part of the school community.

6.9.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is "central to credible research" (Maguire and Delahunt 2017: 1). It is the "most complex phase" of qualitative research (Nowell *et al.* 2017: 1). For this research to be credible, after the data had been collected, the researcher began to analyze the data. The different forms of data collection methods in qualitative research meant that the collected data became very disorganized, and the researcher needed to take time to unpack it – this was where the complexity emerged. The data analysis involved the findings of the data collected through qualitative focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, documents, audiovisual sources, and observations. This meant putting together data collected through questionnaires from the grade nine learners and the qualitative data from other stakeholders. The process involved translating and transcribing various forms of data. In qualitative research, the process of data collection, data analysis, and report writing are often "interrelated and occur simultaneously" throughout the research process (Nowell *et al.* 2017: 4). This meant that while collecting the data, the researcher was able to begin the process of analysis and report writing at the same time.

For both the qualitative and quantitative data analysis, the researcher used thematic analysis, as suggested by Oliveira *et al.* (2015: 76), who stated that thematic analysis may use both qualitative and quantitative procedures. Similarly, Nowell *et al.* (2017: 2) stated that thematic analysis is a "translator for the qualitative and quantitative"

analysis. Creswell and Creswell (2018: 181) opined that this means “working back and forth from the database to the themes until comprehensive sets of themes are created.” Thematic data analysis was used to analyze the collected data since it was the most suitable method for analyzing information collected through questionnaires, focus group discussions, observations, audiovisual material, and documents. Maguire and Delahunt (2017: 1) postulated that thematic analysis is defined as the process of “identifying patterns or themes” within the collected data. Creswell and Creswell (2018: 193) explained that the data analysis process involves organizing and preparing data for analysis, transcribing interviews, typing field notes, and sorting and arranging the data into different types. In analyzing the data, the researcher transcribed the collected data; interpreted the data and translated it, which had been recorded in isiZulu, into English; and coded it into themes.

Themes are “patterns in the data that are important or interesting,” and the main goal of thematic analysis is to “identify themes and use them to address the research” (Maguire and Delahunt 2017: 3). According to Nowell *et al.* (2017: 2), thematic analysis provides a highly flexible approach, and it also provides a “rich, detailed, yet complex” account of the data. Thematic analysis involves a “systematic coding process,” examining the meaning and providing a description of the social reality through the creation of themes (Vaismoradi *et al.* 2016: 100). According to Nowell *et al.* (2017: 4), there are six phases of thematic analysis: the researcher becomes “familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, naming themes and producing a report.” Becoming familiar with the data means reading through all the information collected. Having been familiarized with the data, the researcher was then able to start coding and searching for themes. The researcher had to review the themes again and start giving names to the reviewed themes. The final step was for the researcher to start compiling a report on school violence in the two schools. Themes contain codes that have a “common point of reference and ... [have] a high degree of generality that unifies ideas” regarding the subject of inquiry (Vaismoradi *et al.* 2016: 101).

According to Creswell (2013: 179), the process involves conducting a “preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation” of the themes. The data collected was separated into paragraphs, and the paragraphs were arranged into units to give meaning such that the same phenomena could be defined and categorized into themes. Javadi and Zarea (2016: 2) explained that a theme is a type of “agreement, that in comparison to the main text from which the theme is extracted is more concise, accurate, simpler and shorter” but makes sense at the same time. Themes should “make sense, [and] support data,” and they do not overlap – in addition, in some cases, there could be subthemes (Maguire and Delahunt 2017: 8). Creswell and Creswell (2018: 193) stated that coding involves “organizing data by bracketing chunks” and writing a word representing a category in the margins.

According to Vaismoradi *et al.* (2016: 100), qualitative and thematic analyses are a set of techniques used to analyze textual data and elucidate themes. Vaismoradi *et al.* (2016: 100) further stated that the theme is the “main product of data analysis that yields practical results” in the field of study. Thematic analysis is an approach for the “extraction of meanings and concepts” from data, and it includes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns or themes (Javadi and Zarea 2016: 2). Nowell *et al.* (2017: 2) argued that thematic analysis is used for “identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing and reporting themes” found within a set of data. By analyzing the data through thematic analysis, the researcher was able to give meaning to the data such that it could make sense to the reader.

Maguire and Delahunt observed that there are two levels of themes, namely, the “semantic and [the] latent” (2017: 3). According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017: 3), the semantic level involves “within the surface” meanings of the data where the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what has been articulated by the participant. Maguire and Delahunt (2017: 3) further stated that the latent level starts to identify or examine the “underlying ideas,” assumptions, conceptualizations, and ideologies that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data. The semantic

approach means that themes are detected at the surface and that the researcher is not looking for “something beyond” what the participant has stated or written (Javadi and Zarea 2016: 2). Nowell *et al.* (2017: 2) stated that thematic analysis is suitable for examining the perspectives of different research participants, “highlighting similarities and differences,” and generating unanticipated insights. However, the disadvantage of thematic analysis is that its “flexibility can lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence” when developing themes derived from the research data (Nowell *et al.* 2017: 2). In analyzing the data, the researcher would go back and forth to ensure that the written information was consistent and coherent.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018: 181), qualitative researchers “inductively build patterns, categories and themes from the bottom by organizing the data into units of information.” Thematic analysis provides a strategy for organizing and interpreting qualitative data to create a “narrative understanding that brings together commonalities and differences” in participants’ descriptions of their subjective experiences (Crowe, Inder and Porter 2015: 1). Through thematic data analysis, the researcher developed a complete narrative report that will give a clear picture of the issues relating to school violence in the two schools.

When all the data was exhausted, the researcher began the process of writing the report. Data saturation is the process of “exhaustion” – this implies data adequacy, which means that no further new information is obtained (Hancock *et al.* 2016: 4). Thematic data saturation was reached when there were “no new emerging ideas” in the data (Hancock *et al.* 2016: 4). Similarly, Crowe, Inder and Porter (2015: 2) opined that thematic data saturation occurs when there are “no new emerging ideas” in the data. Hancock *et al.* (2016: 3) further stated that there seems to be confusion on how to analyze qualitative data to achieve data saturation and clearly write the qualitative research findings and present them in a usable manner. Failure to reach data saturation has an “impact on the quality” of the data collected and has a negative impact on the validity of the content (Fusch and Ness 2015: 3). It was, therefore, important for the researcher to ensure that all the data collected was exhausted in

order to reach a saturation point. This meant that the researcher had to dedicate enough time to ensure that there was no further new information available and also that the report was presented in a meaningful and usable manner. To ensure that data saturation was reached, the researcher had to review all the themes and compare them to check whether they were “complete and encompass[ed] all codes” (Chapman, Hadfield and Chapman 2015: 203). The process of coding was important for the entire analysis since the codes were “combined and contrasted” to develop the themes (Chapman, Hadfield and Chapman 2015: 203). According to Vaismoradi *et al.* (2016: 103), coding “reduces the amount of raw” data to that which is relevant to the research question, and it also breaks down the data into manageable sections. The process of reducing the raw data meant that more themes were being generated, approaching data saturation.

6.10 Delimitations and Limitations

The study sought to establish whether there are any alternatives to school violence in a specific area in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal. This area is called Bhukulwandle, and it is a rural community. The researcher targeted one of the high schools, called Mbambangwe, in this area. Therefore, the study only focused on the specific school in the area and what was happening inside and outside of the school environment. The results, therefore, cannot be generalized to the whole of South Africa, although lessons can be learned for other schools with similar challenges.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 or Coronavirus pandemic was one of the main limitations. When the number of infections started escalating, the country entered lockdown from March 2020. There were different levels of lockdown, and level five meant that everything was at a standstill for the entire country. Schools were closed and businesses had stopped operating. Three months later, the schools reopened but only for grade 12, and three months later, pupils in grades eight, nine, 10, and 11 returned to school. Even when the schools had reopened, the Department of Education was very strict regarding visitors in schools because of the fear of more school community members becoming infected. The school principal at Mbambangwe

High School gave the researcher permission to continue with the implementation of the program, but due to time constraints, learning and teaching had to take precedence over all else. The researcher was only able to go back to school exactly 12 months after the country being on level five of the lockdown – this was in March 2021. After returning in March 2021, the attitudes were not the same as before because most of the teachers had to use the little that they had for teaching. It became very difficult to have a time slot for implementation. The reason for this was the fear of the third wave of infection – this meant that the staff members were racing against time such that by the time the third wave would have hit the country, the schools would have almost completed the syllabus for the academic year. Fortunately, the researcher was able to implement the program but only with the learners. With the teachers and parents, the researcher was only able to implement a part of the program; because of the lockdown restrictions, people were scared to attend workshops and meetings.

6.11 Trustworthiness of the Data – Validity and Reliability

According to Venkatesh, Brown and Bala (2013: 4), the mixed methods approach has the ability to address “confirmatory and exploratory” research questions simultaneously. The main reason for using two research methods was to “retain maximum validity” while adhering to the rules inherent in each paradigm (Morse and Niehaus 2016: 10). Through the mixed methods approach, the researcher was able to answer the research question. Triangulation, or the use of two research methodologies, ensured validity and credibility and also helped to produce a more comprehensive set of findings (Smith and Noble 2015: 3). The collected data was validated and made credible because of triangulation since this helped to ensure that none of the data was lost and confirm that the data was collected through various means. Therefore, the results of this study are trustworthy because the data was collected from different angles. The use of two methods provided “strong research findings, [and] produced results that are broader and of more significant impact” (Morse and Niehaus 2016: 10).

The study sought to investigate school violence in two schools. The purpose of engaging two schools in the study was to strengthen, validate, and authenticate the results of the study. One school was used for comparison, and another school was used for the experiment. The comparison group helped strengthen the results of the research. This was ensured through collecting data from both schools prior to the intervention and also returning to both schools after intervening and comparing results from both schools to see if there were any changes. Intervention strategies were implemented in the experiment school. The researcher's close working relationship with the support/action group for each step of this research and asking for advice and guidance helped to strengthen the results of the study. Working with the support group in this manner served to make the study believable.

Triangulation, or the use of more than one data collection method, "validated" the collected data, and the researcher was able to obtain richer, fuller data and/or help confirm the results (Wilson 2014: 1). Almalka (2016: 1) stated that even though the mixed methods approach is time-consuming, it provides an opportunity for informed conversations and a greater scope to investigate educational issues using both words and numbers. The use of the mixed methods approach served to validate and authenticate the data because the use of both words and numbers allowed the researcher to reach saturation of all the information.

Triangulation is the way in which the researcher "explores different levels and perspectives" of the same phenomenon (Fusch and Ness 2015: 6). It is the use of various methods of data collection in a single study. Almalka (2016: 4) posited that triangulation "makes intuitive sense to gather information from different sources, utilizing different methods" that work together as an efficient design. Qualitative researchers typically gather data through multiple sources, such as interviews, observations, focus group discussions, documents, and audiovisual information rather than relying on one type of data source (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 181). According to Almalka (2016: 4), triangulation seeks to gather "complementary yet distinctly different data" on the same topic that can be integrated for analysis and interpretation.

Triangulation was achieved through the focus group discussions, which were supplemented by semi-structured interviews, and the observations were conducted to further supplement the interviews, focus groups, and audio-recorded data. According to Fusch and Ness (2015: 6), using multiple sources of data is a very effective manner to enhance the “reliability of results” and the attainment of data saturation. Through triangulation, the researcher ensured that no data was lost along the way because what would have been missed through one method of data collection would have been recovered through another method.

Qualitative researchers are sometimes criticized for a lack of rigor in their research findings, but this can be demonstrated through “consistency, neutrality and applicability” (Smith and Noble 2015: 1). It was the responsibility of the researcher to maintain neutrality by not imposing the researcher’s own ideas on the participants and not being influenced by preconceived ideas while going to the field to collect data. Qualitative rigor implies “credibility, transferability and dependability” (Crowe, Inder and Porter 2015: 6). Nowell *et al.* (2017: 2) postulated that it is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure rigor and trustworthiness. This must be carried out through the use of the mixed methods approach. Smith and Noble (2015: 2) echoed that the aim of qualitative researchers is to design and incorporate methodological strategies to “ensure [the] trustworthiness” of the findings through the inclusion of “rich and thick verbatim” descriptions of the participants’ accounts to support the findings. In collecting the data, the researcher recorded the descriptions of the participants verbatim so as to make the collected data more believable and to support the findings.

The trustworthiness of the collected data was ensured through reporting and recording the participants’ exact words without removing or adding any information. For validity and applicability, quantitative researchers apply “statistical methods” (Smith and Noble 2015: 2). Through the statistical method, the researcher was able to ensure accuracy in the calculations and recording of numbers. Trustworthiness was ensured by inviting the participants to comment on the interview transcripts, which is also called member

checking (Smith and Noble 2015: 2). Triangulation and member checking served to authenticate and validate the data collected.

The focus group discussions and semi-structured and audio-recorded interviews allowed the researcher to repeatedly visit the data to check for emerging themes (Smith and Noble 2015: 3). This helped to ensure that no mistakes were made in writing the report and to check if there were any mistakes. Revisiting the data gave the researcher an opportunity to correct some of the mistakes that had been made. There was “consistency and neutrality through transparency and [a] clear description” of the research process from the beginning through to the reporting of the findings (Smith and Noble 2015: 3). In engaging in this research, the researcher was not biased toward any of the participants, and the researcher was transparent in the engagements with all the participants. This helped to strengthen the level of confidence and trust that the participants had in the researcher.

Credibility is of the essence to every research study (Asiamah *et al.* 2017: 3). According to Crowe, Inder and Porter (2015: 6), credibility relates to the way the data is interpreted. It means the “believability of the source and largely relies on the perceptions of the trustworthiness” and expertise of the information source as interpreted by the receiver of the information (Metzger and Flanagan 2013). The primary source of information was the teachers, learners, parents, community members, and stakeholders from the two schools and the surrounding community. All the participants were reliable sources of information as they were directly affected by the violence that the researcher was researching in both schools. Secondary sources of information were documents, books, and journal articles. The secondary sources were thoroughly checked to ensure that the information was valid and credible.

According to Nowell *et al.* (2017: 3), credibility addresses the “fit” between the participants’ views and the researcher’s representation of them. One of the common means by which people reduce credibility includes judgments based on personal knowledge (Metzger and Flanagan 2013). The credibility of the information was

ensured through trusting and believing the sources of information and recording the information in an honest and truthful manner. It was also ensured through an “adequate and representative” sample of the research findings (Oppong 2013: 1). A prolonged engagement, member checking to test the findings and interpretations, persistent observations, and triangulation helped to address credibility (Nowell *et al.* 2017: 4). The researcher was able to spend the longest time possible in the field in order to prolong the engagement with the participants. Member checking was carried out to authenticate the results and the accuracy of the findings.

Hancock *et al.* (2016: 4) postulated that research findings should be presented in a manner that allows transferability. Transferability means providing the reader with “sufficient information” in order for them to assess similarities or differences between the contexts in which the studies have been conducted (Crowe, Inder and Porter 2015: 6). Even though the numbers are not large in the qualitative method, the sample was representative in the sense that the teachers, parents, stakeholders, and community members participating in the study were able to give rich and in-depth information. From another perspective, the number of the learners was fairly representative because the researcher conducted surveys in one out of five grades in each school. This is estimated to be more than 20% of the learners’ population in each school.

“Without a clear presentation of research findings, the reader cannot transfer the results,” which brings their trustworthiness into question – this means that the findings should be presented in a way that allows for transferability (Hancock *et al.* 2016: 4). Chapman, Hadfield and Chapman (2015: 203) stated that “member checking” with the participants ensures that emergent themes accurately reflect their perceptions and helps to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the data. To be accepted as trustworthy, the researcher had to ensure that the data analysis was conducted in a “precise, consistent and exhaustive manner” (Nowell *et al.* 2017: 1). The researcher was able to ensure that all the information collected had not been lost along the way and that it had been accurately analyzed to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. Nowell *et al.* (2017: 4) stated that dependability can be achieved by ensuring that the

research process is “logical, traceable and clearly documented.” Qualitative research becomes believable because of its “coherence, insight and its instrument utility” (Bourke 2014: 5).

6.12 Ethical Issues

The protection of the research participants by the researcher was of paramount importance. It was, therefore, important to “anticipate” any ethical issues that might arise during the study and address them throughout the study (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 75). One of the issues relating to ethics was the participation of the grade nine learners in the study who were younger than 18 years of age. Most grade nine learners in South Africa are between 14 and 16 years of age. It was important for the researcher, therefore, to seek the parents’ consent for the learners’ participation in the study for ethical reasons. What is paramount for researchers in the research process is the “protection of the interests” of the research participants (Flick 2014: 48). In concurring with Flick, Creswell and Creswell (2018: 88) opined that the research site must not be disrupted, but it must rather be “protected and all participants should receive the same treatment” from the researcher.

The interests of the young learners were protected through requesting the parents’ consent for the learners’ participation. The interests of all the participants of the study were protected by ensuring privacy during the interviewing sessions. Interviews have to be conducted according to “ethical approval” policies in a private and quiet space (Crowe, Inder and Porter 2015: 2). The researcher requested both school principals to allocate a private room for the interviews such that during the interviewing process, there was privacy, and participants were free to voice their views on school violence. The interests of the participants were also protected by not revealing the identity of the participants. The information collected has been kept confidential in a safe and secure place, and it will be kept as such for at least 5 years after conducting the study. For ethical considerations, before the study was conducted, the researcher administered consent forms to all the participants, and the researcher ensured that each participant had understood and agreed with the content of the consent forms.

Creswell and Creswell (2018: 88) stated that if the participants “feel protected, trust between the researcher and the participants is built,” and this helps to promote the integrity of the study. Permission was sought from the principals from each school. The two school principals gave the researcher permission to conduct the study in both schools through the signing of the gatekeepers’ letters. All the participants were requested to sign the consent form and ensure that they had understood the terms and conditions of the consent form. In addition to the parents’ permission to allow their children to participate in the study, the learners were requested to sign assent forms to ensure that they had agreed to participate in the study. Draft copies of the letter of information, consent form, assent form, and gatekeepers’ permission from the school principals are included in Annexure A, C, G and U.

6.13 Intervention Tools

After the data had been collected, the researcher set aside time to analyze it in order to develop a relevant intervention strategy for the Mbambangwe High School community. An intervention strategy was designed, and the researcher returned to Mbambangwe High School to implement it in order to intervene in school violence. Teachers, learners, parents, community members, and community stakeholders formed part of the targeted population for the intervention. During the intervention phase of the research, the intervention that the researcher used was the peace-making circles since they are centered on relationship building and restorative practices. According to Schumacher (2014: 1), peace-making circles address “interpersonal conflict and anti-social behavior” restoratively. This helped address the interpersonal conflict between the learners and the teachers, the parents and the learners, and the community members themselves. Peace-making circles are a powerful tool for relationship building, learning to deal with emotions, and enhancing healthy self-esteem and self-confidence in human beings.

6.14 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the background of the two schools where the research was conducted. It discussed the research methodology, research aims, and objectives. In the research methodology, the study design, step-by-step plan of action for the study, research approach, reasoning behind the approach, validity, credibility, and ethical issues were discussed. Chapter 7 focuses on the research findings at Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School. The aim is to establish if the data collected in the two schools matches that of other studies, or why and how it does not match with other studies.

7 CHAPTER SEVEN

EXPLORATION OF THE SITUATION IN THE TWO SCHOOLS

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 discussed the research design and research method used when conducting the study, focusing on the research problem, research questions, approach, and strategy. The chapter also discussed how the data was collected and analyzed. Chapter 7 focuses on the research findings at Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School, noting whether the data collected in the two schools corresponds with other studies. The chapter also focuses on comparing and contrasting the two schools to see whether there are any similarities or differences and what they are. The collection of data for the research was conducted from 29 April 2019 to 16 July 2019. The objectives for Chapter 7 are to explore the nature, extent, causes, and effects of violent conflict at Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School and to identify past and present efforts to resolve the violence in schools and assess their effectiveness.

7.2 How the Participants Defined School Violence

It was surprising that almost all the participants viewed school violence as being perpetrated by the learners against the teachers. Hence, they defined school violence as follows:

[School violence is] when the situation is not conducive for teaching and learning due to learners' ill-discipline, when learners become unruly and fight with each other, when learners do not do their homework on time, and when learners do not listen to their teachers and to each other (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 3 June 2019).

School violence comes in different forms: “it can be a debacle between learners and teachers and between learners themselves” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019). Another definition for school violence given by some of the Siyabonga teachers was the presence of “cruel learners, uncommitted teachers, unsupportive community, burglary and vandalism” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 6 May 2019).

Some stakeholders from both schools stated that school violence can be defined as learners disrespecting teachers and destroying school property. One stakeholder stated that “school violence is a mirror of what is happening in our society; children will always reflect what is happening in their families” (Siyabonga businessman interview, 5 July 2019). The history of violence in South African schools has been presented in Section 5.2 of Chapter 5. Another teacher at Siyabonga High School concurred by stating that “school behavior cannot be treated separately from what is happening in communities. If learners are used to respecting parents at home, it will be easier to respect teachers.” The Siyabonga businessman further stated that:

The learning in school is about instructions. The responsibility of bringing up children in families is to teach them to take instructions from those in authority. The school is an extension of home life; the first education is at home, which is informal, and at school, they get formal education.

One of the teachers at Siyabonga defined school violence as “bad behavior, especially by learners in a way that infringes other learners’ rights” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 24 June 2019). Another teacher from the same school responded by stating that “school violence is a societal problem” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 8 July 2019). One of the parents at Siyabonga stated that “school violence is the disturbance of learning and community because of the closure of the school. It is a waste of the Department of Education’s resources” (Siyabonga parent interview, 31 May 2019). Some parents at Siyabonga viewed school violence as “corporal punishment and the retaliation of learners when disciplined by their teachers” (Siyabonga parent interview, 20 April 2019). One of the teachers at Siyabonga stated that school violence is “when

learners fight and teachers use corporal punishment” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 17 June 2019). According to one of the parents at Siyabonga, school violence can be defined as “learners’ disrespect of teachers and not wanting to learn” (Siyabonga parent interview, 10 May 2019).

Mbambangwe High School teachers stated that “school violence can be seen as when learners use weapons, vulgar language and abusive words to other learners. When they do that, those who are offended retaliate” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019). Teachers at Mbambangwe further defined school violence as follows:

[School violence is] when the situation is not conducive for teaching and learning because of learners’ ill-discipline, when learners don’t do as they are told, when learners don’t listen to teachers and to one another, and when learners bully other learners. School violence can also be within educators where they don’t honor their duties, when teachers are not punctual for classes or coming unprepared and not showing respect to other teachers that affects the primary goal of learning and teaching. When parents don’t take active participation in the educational development of their children, instead promote laziness, disrespect, and child delinquency (Mbambangwe teachers’ focus group discussion, 5 July 2019).

Another view of school violence was given as the acts of learners fighting with teachers and learners carrying weapons and drugs to school and being beaten by teachers in return. Some teachers at Mbambangwe stated that “school violence can be between educators when they do not honor their duties, when they are not being punctual for classes and coming unprepared and disrespect among themselves, which affects the primary goal of learning and teaching” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019). One teacher from Mbambangwe further stated that “school violence is when parents don’t actively participate in the educational development of their children” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 6 June 2019). Another teacher at Mbambangwe defined school violence as a “lack of communication or when there is

misunderstanding between learners and teachers” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 22 April 2019). She further explained that “school violence can be verbal or physical abuse, child battering and learners’ retaliating.” In most instances, boys are portrayed as the perpetrators of school violence, as echoed by teachers at Mbambangwe who stated that sometimes boys feel as though “they have power over girls and have to impose themselves over them, they feel superior to girls” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 9 May 2019).

7.3 Forms of Violence in the two Schools

Various forms of violence are experienced at Siyabonga and Mbambangwe High Schools. Teachers, parents, learners, and stakeholders in both schools mentioned bullying, gang violence, faction fights, drug and substance abuse, gender-based violence, the carrying of weapons, corporal punishment, verbal abuse, physical fighting, unruly or ill-disciplined learners, showing signs of aggressiveness toward the teachers, uncommitted teachers, violent parents, vandalism, burglary, and unsupportive communities as some of the forms of school violence. Other forms of school violence at Siyabonga include stabbing; pickpocketing; attacks on teachers by learners; insults or unacceptable language; forcefully taking other learners’ possessions, such as money or cellphones; and killings. According to teachers at Mbambangwe, the most common forms of violence amongst learners are bullying, insults, and the use of unacceptable language. If violence involves two learners, it is easier to resolve the violence because the teachers discipline them, but if the violence involves more than two learners, it becomes complicated or difficult to resolve the violence because it ultimately turns into a war. The nature of school violence has been presented in Section 5.3 of Chapter 5.

7.3.1 Bullying and Rebellious Learners

Out of the 116 learners at Mbambangwe, 28 learners responded by stating that bullying was the most common form of violence in their school (Mbambangwe learners’ survey, 10 June 2019), as opposed to 52 out of 345 learners at Siyabonga who felt that bullying was a common incident and form of violence at their school

(Siyabonga learners' survey, 7 July 2019). Teachers at Mbambangwe echoed the sentiment that learners fight against others in the classroom or sometimes after school outside the premises. Sometimes learners use pairs of scissors, mathematical instruments, pens, and rulers to injure others in the absence of weapons. According to the Mbambangwe teachers, 2 years earlier, learners used to bring illegal weapons, such as knives, to school (Mbambangwe teachers' focus group discussion, 5 July 2019). They would also bring and use drugs inside the school premises, in toilets, and in front of teachers and would also stab each other. Learners would come to school at any time and leave at any time of the day. Because the learners were armed, it was difficult for the teachers to reprimand them when misbehaving. According to teachers in both schools, bullies lack self-esteem, and this causes them to bully others in order to receive attention. The feeling of intimidating other learners makes the bullies feel good about themselves. Bullying has been covered in Section 4.2.2 of Chapter 4.

Teachers in both schools stated that, in some instances, school violence can be caused by learners who are bullying other learners. The bullied learners will find ways to defend themselves by calling family members, friends, or outsiders for help. Teachers at Siyabonga observed that the bullies sometimes demand payment from other learners for using the toilets, and, in some cases, they force other learners to use drugs, and the younger ones comply because they are scared. In addition, at Siyabonga, most bullies are very short-tempered and tend to be angered even by the most insignificant incident. Sometimes school violence can occur between learners from different schools. In the case of Mbambangwe, it occurs when learners from other schools come to attack learners at Mbambangwe during break times. Most of the time, learners at Siyabonga fight over minor issues, such as pens and rulers, and the violence spills over into the community – there are issues regarding the possession of such objects on a regular basis. According to teachers at Mbambangwe, some learners are household heads, and they are not used to any form of authority and want to maintain the authority that they have in their households in front of teachers and other learners.

7.3.2 Gang Violence

The reasons for the high levels of violence in both schools are almost similar, but there is a slight difference in their manifestation. In both schools, some learners associate themselves with gangs; sometimes, this is because of the fear of being attacked by other learners who belong to gangs, and the learners feel that they need protection from other gangs. According to Siyabonga teachers, four different gang groups were recently identified in their school. The names given to some gangs at Siyabonga High School are *metro-skhotheni* and *Russians*. At Mbambangwe High School, two groups of rival gangs were identified. According to Mbambangwe teachers, the names given to the gangs in their school are “metro-skhotheni and the rich gangs fight both inside and outside the school premises” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019). The problem with the gangs is that when they fight outside the school premises, the fight spreads to innocent learners, teachers, and gangs inside the school premises, and when the conflict starts inside the school premises, it spreads to the community. The topic of gang violence has been covered in Section 4.2.4 in Chapter 4. Inside both schools, there are learners belonging to different gangster groups, and they can be identified by their behavior and the way that they dress and talk. The groupings form themselves into a faction, and this leads to violence as they fight for territories inside the school premises.

According to parents at Mbambangwe, the formation of gangs in communities occurs when there are fights between learners at school. In addition, learners who are siblings, friends, and relatives of the affected parties become involved by taking sides. This violence spills over into the community, the family members of the affected parties become involved, and the violence ultimately turns into gang violence or faction fights, and the entire village or tribal area becomes affected. The worst aspect about faction fights and gang-perpetuated violence is that they can last for long periods, up to 6 months. Sometimes, when the school closes for the school holidays, the gangsters come and wait for the learners at the school gate to attack the learners when they come out. At Siyabonga, gangster groups from the neighborhood sometimes force learners to be part of their groupings, and the learners have no other choice but to comply because they fear being attacked. When one member of the group is provoked

by another, the learners' fellow group members who are not learners become involved, and the situation turns violent. According to teachers from both schools, "it is a sad reality that both boys and girls are into gangs" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 3 May 2019, and Siyabonga teacher interview, 28 June 2019).

7.3.3 Gender-Based Violence

In both schools, there are cases where boys impose themselves on girls and believe that they have power and control over them. The topic of gender-based violence has been presented in Section 4.2.5 in Chapter 4. Sometimes, when boys impose themselves on girls, the result is unpleasant fights where girls have to defend themselves, and, in some cases, the families of the girls become involved to defend their children. Teachers at Siyabonga related an incident where one of the notorious families' daughter had been harassed by a boy, and the girl's family ultimately sent warlords to the school to confront the boy who had harassed their daughter. One of the teachers stated, "we had to get involved in this debacle by protecting the boy's identity since he was in danger of being beaten to death, and the conflict could have resulted to loss of lives" (Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019).

The high rate of poverty and unemployment pushes people to act in ways that are unimaginable to their daughters. "There are instances where learners as young as 14 years old are impregnated by men in their forties, old enough to be their fathers, and the parents and the family of the girl have given the consent because of the promise of lobola payment" (Mbambangwe principal interview, 12 July 2019). At Mbambangwe, in one such case, the principal had to intervene to protect the female learner. He called the learner to his office to discuss the issue, and the learner's response was "*uthe uzongilobola*, meaning he has made the promise to pay lobola" (Mbambangwe principal interview, 12 July 2019), with the parents looking forward to the lobola negotiations. A few months later, the learner dropped out of school. "Some of the cases that we have come across are of young girls prostituted by their parents" (Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019). The most painful incident was a case where the mother would leave her daughter at home and invite a group of young men

from the tavern to sleep with her daughter at an agreed fee. The mother would then receive payment from the young men for gang-raping her girl.

In such cases, sometimes the teachers and the school principals had to intervene, putting their own lives at risk. What makes this case even more painful was that the child was not safe in her own home, and she could not trust the person who was supposed to give her the protection that she needed. The teacher added that “we don’t know how many times the mother did this, but according to the learner who was the victim, it was several times” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019). She further stated that “we also don’t know how many young men would rape this girl in one instance, as the mother would just announce about the girl’s presence in a tavern for everyone who cared to listen” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019). It is also highly unlikely that these young men used any protection when they raped the learner, and this was putting the girl at risk of falling pregnant and acquiring sexually transmitted infections.

Sometimes gender-based violence is caused by male learners’ ill manners when proposing feelings of love to female learners. According to teachers in both schools, “boys intimidate girls when they approach them, and this end up in violent reaction from girls” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 21 May 2019, and Siyabonga teacher interview, 19 June 2019). Since boys are physically stronger than girls, they have a tendency to manhandle girls. According to Siyabonga learners’ parents, girls get raped by the boys because “boys are boys,” and they feel that they are more powerful than anyone else. According to one of the parents at Siyabonga, there are a number of rape cases in the community. “Our children are confused, which causes them to be lose respect – this is caused by the fact that some adult rape children” (Siyabonga parent interview, 10 July 2019) – this was a cry from one of the parents. Some male teachers have affairs with female learners, leading to conflict between such teachers and male learners, and this makes it difficult for the teachers to discipline the learners or for the learners to take any instructions from the teachers.

Some of the causes of school violence involve boys fighting for girls. When a boy professes his love to a girl who is having an affair with another boy, boys are led to fight. Sometimes, it is the girl's brother who fights the proposing boy, mainly because the brother feels that he has the power and responsibility to protect his sister from other boys. According to stakeholders, boys are more violent than girls because they want to show them that they are in control. Gender-based violence is also rife in families. One female learner, whose mother had tolerated abuse for many years, stated, "I think she what make my mother to stay for long in this relationship is because she is financially dependent on my father. My father beats us (mother and children) every day whenever he comes back from work" (Mbambangwe female-learner focus group discussion, 4 July 2019).

7.3.4 School Vandalism and Burglary

Both schools have experienced burglary and vandalism from the surrounding communities. One such incident happened while the researcher was implementing the intervention program at Mbambangwe. When the learners arrived at 6:00 am, the school library was in flames, and the learners quickly put out the fire. At Mbambangwe, there is an overnight security guard who saw the thugs coming in and had to hide because of the fear of being attacked. According to the principal, they expect the community to protect the school since it is a valuable asset, but the very same people who are supposed to protect the school are destroying it. The members of the community sometimes steal the schools' furniture and use it in their homes. Recently, at Mbambangwe, local community members started invading the school land by building their houses inside the school premises.

7.3.5 Corporal Punishment

Even though corporal punishment was banned in South African schools and families, unfortunately, some teachers and parents still use it to discipline learners at school and children at home, respectively. The incorrect ways of resolving violence at home are also used at school. Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School are not different from other schools that use corporal punishment. At Mbambangwe, 37

out of 116 learners felt that corporal punishment was the most common form of violence in their school (Mbambangwe learners' survey, 10 June 2019), whereas at Siyabonga, 26 learners felt that corporal punishment was the most common form of violence in their school (Siyabonga learners' survey, 7 July 2019). Teachers strongly believe that the small amount of discipline that learners have in both schools is attributed to corporal punishment, which will be lost if they stop using corporal punishment. Teachers in both schools believe that if they stop using corporal punishment, both schools would become chaotic because it would be very difficult to reprimand learners if they go astray. There is a narrative that a Black child cannot be disciplined without the use of corporal punishment, which is the reason why teachers and parents strongly believe that they cannot do without corporal punishment. Section 4.2.1 of Chapter 4 has presented a literature review on corporal punishment.

According to some teachers, "besides corporal punishment, sometimes the way teachers talk to learners is degrading and full of harassment. Some teachers provoke learners the way they talk to them, and learners respond rudely" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 8 June 2019). According to some teachers at Mbambangwe, "the government has a major contribution to school violence and causing misbehavior in learners. Learners do not want to be disciplined because they know they have rights. The government has scrapped corporal punishment and this cause unruly behavior in learners" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 18 June 2019). Attempts to deal with school violence have been covered in Sections 4.6 and 4.7 of Chapter 4.

7.3.6 Physical Fights, Stabbing, and Pickpocketing

Out of the 116 learners at Mbambangwe, 28 learners indicated that physical fights were the most common form of violence in their school (Mbambangwe learners' survey, 10 June 2019). On the other hand, at Siyabonga, 162 out of 345 learners felt that physical fights were the most common form of violence in their school (Siyabonga learners' survey, 7 July 2019). Out of 116 learners at Mbambangwe, only two learners indicated that stabbing was the most common form of violence in their school. At

Siyabonga, 31 out of 345 learners felt that stabbing was the most common form of violence in their school (Siyabonga learners' survey, 7 July 2019).

7.3.7 Violent Parents and School Governing Body

Some of the stakeholders felt that the government's strategy for the employment of teachers was causing violence among the school community. They felt that the government was shifting the responsibility of employing teachers to the SGB who were not well equipped to do the task (Siyabonga SGB interview, 25 June 2019). Mbambangwe teachers echoed the sentiment that most, if not all, members of the community within the SGB were not qualified to go through the process of employing professionals. They felt that some of the SGB members had ulterior motives when the employment of teachers was concerned. On the other hand, some SGB members stated that there was friction between the management members fighting for positions. They also believed that it was because of this friction that the community members who were part of the SGB would find a loophole to divide the teaching staff even further. The following sentiments were echoed by almost all the teachers in both schools:

In South Africa, teaching is the only profession that involves the community in the process of employment; this is an embarrassment and degrading the profession. It gives a lot of power to the community and take away powers of the school management. In most instances, the process leads to corruption as most members of the SGB representing the community are unemployed, and it becomes very easy to bribe them for positions because of desperation for money (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019, and Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019).

Teachers shared their frustration because, while the researcher was collecting data at Mbambangwe, a teacher was gunned down and killed in a nearby school inside the school premises, and the assumption was that there was a contestation for a senior

position in that school. The deceased teacher was killed in the early hours of the morning after parking his car in full view of primary school learners and his colleagues. On the day that the researcher interviewed some of the teachers at Mbambangwe, some members of the staff had to leave for the memorial service for the deceased teacher.

Another complaint was launched regarding the SGB members and how they cause violence through funds being allocated to the school by the Department of Education. The SGBs sometimes have a vested interest in projects that are introduced at school and would want to allocate funds in ways that can benefit them. It becomes a problem when the *Delangokubona* (illegal local structure demanding the allocation of government tenders to local people) wants to come to the schools and demand that any project happening in the schools must be given to them. Sometimes the community will intentionally destroy something inside the school premises and demand that it must be fixed – this has led to Mbambangwe almost closing down. Both schools reported that sometimes the SGBs would intentionally destroy the schools' property with the intention of getting the government to fix it since this strategy creates jobs for them in the form of tenders.

7.3.8 Murder

It was reported that learners have killed each other in both schools. One of the teachers at Siyabonga commented that "seeing a learner dying before your eyes is the most painful thing because these are like our own children" (Siyabonga teacher interview, 22 May 2019). "In one of the incidents, we had school cultural activities which involved other schools, and violence broke out when a learner was stabbed and killed" (Siyabonga teacher interview, 3 July 2019). The trigger of such violence could be a minor matter, such as when one school wins a competition and the opposition school learners then attack the winning school. The trigger could also be because of drugs and fighting for territories. At Mbambangwe, it was reported that a learner was killed by a grade seven learner from the neighboring primary school. One of the cases

was that of a male learner at Siyabonga who ultimately killed his stepfather because he was physically abusing the mother of the learner.

7.3.9 Political Violence

Stakeholders stated that the hostile political environment in the communities sometimes leads to school violence as learners bring issues from outside into the school environment. According to one of the stakeholders from Mbambangwe:

Violence can be politically motivated, and these can be divided into two. Firstly, there is the pre-democracy political violence and the post-democracy. The post-democracy political violence is more about crime. This is another form of violence that affects both communities more so toward election times (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 29 May 2019).

Stakeholders from Siyabonga felt that:

In some cases, the young people fall into trap of being used by leaders of political parties for selfish reasons, leading to conflict between young people and members of the opposition parties. In that way, political violence spills over into the school. This is more common around election times (Siyabonga stakeholder interview, 14 June 2019).

7.4 Causes of School Violence

It must be noted that different forms of school violence may have different causes. According to one of the teachers at Siyabonga, in most cases, it is very difficult to arrive at the root cause of the problem because “learners take sides and get divided into groups” whenever there is violence. Sometimes, minor matters, such as winning a competition in school cultural activities or community entertainment activities, could lead to violent action. A Mbambangwe teacher stated that school violence is

sometimes caused by the “uniqueness of individuals and different family backgrounds” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019). The teachers further stated that it resonates with learners since learners come from different backgrounds, and violence in their society spills over to the school. According to one of the parents at Mbambangwe, the main cause of school violence is that “boys fight for girls, this is more about love affairs and drugs” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 3 May 2019). Some stakeholders stated that school violence could be triggered by peer pressure, gangsters, a lack of parental guidance, a lack of communication among school community members, and drug and substance abuse. According to community members, the main reasons for school violence are that there is nothing to keep learners busy after school and during weekends in the community; there are no libraries or recreational and sports facilities. Therefore, young people look for alternatives to keep themselves busy.

One of the parents at Siyabonga echoed the sentiment that the cause of school violence is that some learners live double lives. Their behavior at school is completely different from the way that they behave at home. This causes the parents not to be aware of what they are dealing with in terms of their children's behavior. Siyabonga teachers opined that school violence is a reflection of the family background that learners portray through school violence. The Siyabonga teachers further stated that most learners are bottling up anger about issues relating to socioeconomic conditions, poverty, parents, and families, and they do not have a platform where they can speak about these challenges.

Some parents at Mbambangwe attributed school violence to teachers dating learners, drug abuse, a lack of parental love, advanced technology, and media. Other parents attributed school violence to domestic violence and family disputes. One parent at Mbambangwe observed that:

When we were going through divorce, my child's academic performance dropped drastically. Since then, it has been very hard to discipline my son and to get him to focus. I can see that he is crying out for help through his

behavior. As a female, it is very hard for me to know and understand his needs because he is a male and I am female. I have been called to several meetings at school to discuss his ill-discipline. I really do not know what to do because I have tried everything, even talking to his father to help, but he doesn't care (Mbambangwe parent interview, 6 June 2019).

One of the teachers at Siyabonga attributed the violence that is occurring in schools to the prophecies in the Bible – “During the last days there would be such things” (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation 12:12) – and gave reasons why the prophecy has been fulfilled (Siyabonga teacher interview, 10 July 2019). She further stated that “therefore, there is nothing we can do about it because these are the last days.” One of the teachers at Siyabonga opined that “learners can be very evil; sometimes they just inflict pain on others for no reason” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019). The intergenerational transmission of trauma and violence has been presented in Section 5.5.4 in Chapter 5. Some parents and teachers in both schools echoed that “as parents, we don't have full control over our children, and we feel something was removed from us by the government through the policies that the government has introduced on corporal punishment, which are Eurocentric” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 18 June 2019, and Siyabonga teacher interview, 22 June 2019). They further stated that “when the government passed the law to scrap corporal punishment, it stripped us, as parents, of the powers we had over our children.” Another comment was that “as teachers, we are powerless to discipline learners because some teachers have been killed and stabbed by the learners in other schools” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 18 June 2019). Today's learners do as they please in front of the teachers, and this causes the teachers' morale to decrease. Causes of school violence can be grouped into three different categories, namely, the underlying causes of a societal nature, underlying causes of a local nature, and facilitating causes. Table 7.1 provides the causes of school violence. The reader can also refer to Figure 2.2 in Section 2.6 of Chapter 2.

Table 7.1 Causes of school violence

Underlying causes of a societal nature	Underlying causes of a local nature	Facilitating causes
Poverty	Lack of recreational facilities	Communication gap
Intergenerational transmission of violence	Social ills	Drug and substance abuse
Media	Learners' upbringing	Division among teachers
	Peer pressure	
	Domestic violence	

Table 7.1: Causes of school violence

7.4.1 Underlying Causes of a Societal Nature

The following subsections present the underlying causes of school violence that are significant in South African society.

a) Poverty

Poverty was identified as the major reason for school violence in both schools. The high rate of unemployment leading to poverty was one of the identified causes for school violence. According to teachers at Mbambangwe, “the high level of poverty in the community forces other learners to steal from their peers or taking other learners’ possessions without their permission in order to be at the same level with them” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019). This is something that takes place almost daily, according to teachers and learners from both schools. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 depict some of the residential dwellings.



Figure 7.1 : Some of the residential dwellings

Figure 7.1: Some of the residential dwellings.



Figure 7 2 : Residential dwelling

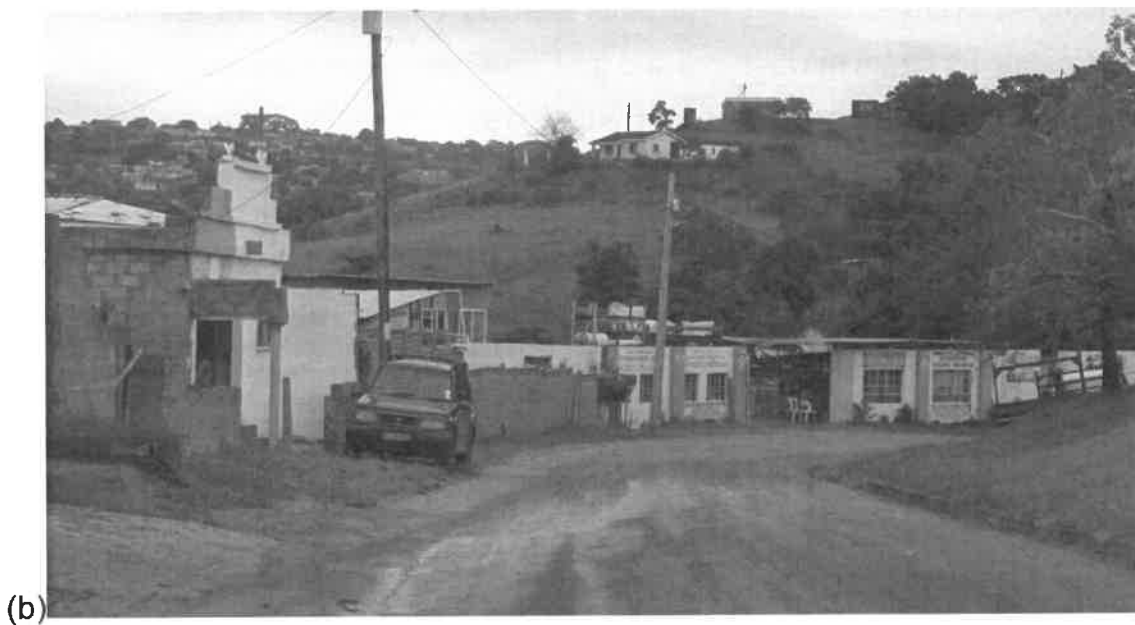
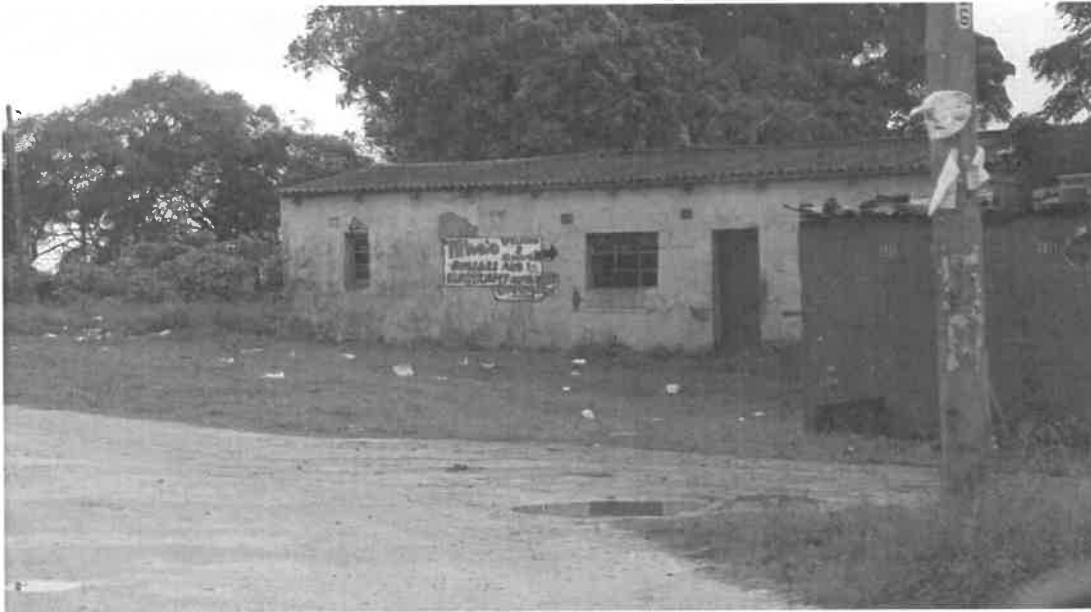
Figure 7.2: Residential dwellings.

Because of the learners' impoverished backgrounds in both schools:

The conditions under which the learners live are unbearable. Some learners live in one-roomed households, and, as teenagers, they begin to feel uncomfortable sharing the same sleeping space with their parents and siblings. Learners, therefore, resort to sleeping over with their friends. This exposes them to sexual and criminal activities since this is an easy way out of poverty. Learners fight for possessions like money, cellphones, and branded items like backpacks. Bringing to school branded and valuable items like clothing and backpacks by the learners that can afford such items is the reason for conflict, and the learners who cannot afford [them] would steal these items. Learners who are part of the gangs inform fellow gang members who are outsiders what other learners' possessions are, and then the outsiders target the learners and take away those possessions by force (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 5 July 2019).

There was evidence of the high rate of poverty as, according to the participants, some of the local people could be seen digging from the dustbins in the neighboring suburban areas looking for something to eat. The high rate of poverty and unemployment in both areas forces residents to consider selling alcohol as one of the means of generating an income. The presence of taverns in the neighborhood means that alcohol is easily accessible. Because of the desperation of tavern owners, it does not matter how they make a profit and to whom they sell alcohol, which could even be sold to underage children and learners wearing their full school uniforms. Figure 7.3 depicts the types of small businesses at Bhukulwandle, indicating the high level of poverty in the area.

(a)



(b)

Figure 7.3 : (a) and (b) the types of small businesses at Bhukulwandle – an indication of the level of poverty in the area

Figure 7.3: (a) and (b) he types of small businesses at Bhukulwandle – an indication of the high level of poverty in the area.

b) Intergenerational Transfer of Trauma and Violence

One of the teachers at Siyabonga argued that “South Africa has a long history of violence such as faction fights and political, gang, gender-based, and domestic violence, trauma, and anger, and we seem not to have the correct ways of dealing with undesirable emotions” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 7 May 2019). This has been transferred from one generation to the next. “What is happening here at Siyabonga is not an isolated incident, but it is common in the rest of the country” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 9 July 2019). The same sentiment was shared by some teachers at Mbambangwe that “the reason why there is so much violence in communities is because some learners’ behavior is directly linked to their parents’ behavior. Parents have wrong ways of resolving conflict, and learners behave exactly like their parents” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 May 2019). Learners have a mentality of retaliation, and this originates from their homes. The history of violence in South African schools has been covered in Section 5.2 of Chapter 5. According to teachers in both schools, when parents are called to the schools to assist in the learners’ behavior, it is very easy to see why their children behave the way they do because the parents sometimes react violently for no reason. One of the stakeholders at Mbambangwe stated that “parents have moved from their positions and responsibilities. This makes learners to be angry because there is no one to take care of them” (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 2 July 2019). One of the parents commented that “we used to believe that a child belongs to the village and [that] parents and adults have to take responsibility of all the village children equally without discrimination” (Mbambangwe parent interview, 22 May 2019).

c) Media

One of the parents at Mbambangwe felt that the media contributes to school violence through the programs that are shown on television. “Programs like Yizo Yizo and news from other parts of the country and the world have a contribution to the violence we see in communities because young people begin to emulate activities they have seen on television” (Mbambangwe parent interview, 16 May 2019). Another parent argued that “I think the 1976 uprisings that we see through the eyes of Sarafina has a lot to

do with the violence in schools” (Mbambangwe parent interview, 12 July 2019). This was planted in young people’s minds by watching the scenarios on television. Another parent pointed out that “we need to portray programs that are providing solutions to the violence we experience in schools and in our communities” (Siyabonga parent interview, 23 May 2019).

7.4.2 Underlying Causes of a Local Nature

The following subsections present the causes of school violence that are localized in Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School.

a) Lack of Recreational Activities

Some of the reasons given by almost all the stakeholders for the prevalence of school violence was a lack of recreational activities for learners at school and young people in the community. Teachers at Mbambangwe and Siyabonga stated that with the lack of psychosocial support and the high level of stress that the learners have, they need recreational activities to help them reduce their stress levels because of the socioeconomic conditions that they face every day. According to teachers, parents, and stakeholders, as young people, learners have much energy that needs to be directed into doing something constructive. They further stated that because there are no sports and recreational activities, the energy that young people have is misdirected into carrying out erroneous acts. Teachers and parents also spoke with one voice in stating that “the energy that the learners have need to be directed into sports, arts, and cultural activities” (Siyabonga parent interview, 15 July 2019, and Mbambangwe parent interview, 16 May 2019). They further stated that the reason why they resort to violence, drugs, alcohol, gangs, and violence is that they have nothing else to do. When learners come back from school, some parents are at work, and there is no one to supervise them. This creates an opportunity for learners to be used for drug trafficking or going to taverns for alcoholic drinks.

b) Social Ills

According to teachers at Mbambangwe, “school violence can be attributed to a number of social ills, things like family history; family background of a learner; absent parents, especially fathers; to poor parenting skills” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019). At Siyabonga, teachers stated that:

It can also be caused by the socioeconomic factors like gang violence, poverty, child-headed households, grandparents responsible for the upbringing of grandchildren, children’s exposure to violence, the prevalence of taverns in the neighborhood, younger parents (this is caused by the high prevalence of teenage pregnancies), domestic violence, alcoholic parents, lack of parental involvement in the upbringing of their children, and broken families (Siyabonga teacher interview, 4 July 2019).

Sometimes, learners will have misunderstandings outside the school premises, and the argument or issue will be brought to school, and they will then start fighting.

c) Learners’ Upbringing Contributes to School Violence

Research findings have revealed that there are various upbringing and parenting styles within the communities of Bhekulwandle and Lovu Township. According to Mbambangwe teachers, “some learners are heading households, and such learners carry a lot of burden with them that causes them to be full of anger, hatred, and aggressive” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 3 May 2019). Learners who do not have both parents are forced to assume the role of being household heads. “Children who are overburdened with the responsibility of being household heads have a lot of anger, hatred, and bitterness. They feel burdened because they are robbed of the opportunity of being children like their peers” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019). “Such children want to be in control of everyone because they are used to power and control, and they find it difficult to let go of their power and authority” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 22 May 2019).

“Some learners come from single-parent families; some parents are not part of their children’s upbringing; and some parents, even though they are present in their children’s lives, but they are alcoholics” (Siyabonga parent interview, 14 June 2019). According to teachers from both schools, the common households in these communities are child-headed households, households with younger parents (parents who had their children when they were teenagers), single-parent households, households with absent parents, and grandparent-headed households. “Most children from such households do not get the parental love and care as they are supposed to” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 12 June 2019). One of the parents commented that “as parents, we lose our children’s respect because we don’t show them enough love” (Siyabonga parent interview, 15 July 2019). A Mbambangwe teacher reported that “we are prepared to give learners the love that they don’t receive from parents and families but lack know-how. Sometimes the learners’ unruly behavior makes it difficult for teachers to give learners the love they need” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019). This could be the reason why 266 out of 345 learners at Siyabonga (Siyabonga learners’ survey, 7 July 2019) and 61 learners at Mbambangwe (Mbambangwe learners’ survey, 10 June 2019) feel safer next to their teachers. In addition, 178 out of 345 learners at Siyabonga (Siyabonga learners’ survey, 7 July 2019) and 60 out of 116 learners at Mbambangwe (Mbambangwe learners’ survey, 10 June 2019) stated that they could confide in their teachers about the incidents of abuse because they had more trust in their teachers than they had in their parents.

The problems affecting both communities are interrelated, and the communities find themselves trapped in a vicious cycle. According to teachers in both schools, because of the high prevalence of teenage pregnancies in both communities, some of the learners’ parents are unbelievably young. They are young enough to be their children’s siblings. The effects of teenage pregnancy can be seen in both schools, where some of the learners’ parents are in their late twenties and already have teenage children. One of the principals commented that:

Even if you ask a learner to bring the parent to school, they just pitch up with young adults in their late twenties. This makes it hard to relate at the same level with parents because they themselves still need guidance as youngsters (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 5 July 2019).

This affects the entire school community because the parents are not mature enough to take care of their own children, and this makes it difficult for teachers to enforce discipline in learners or even to reason with the parents.

Parents lacking parenting skills is one of the causes of school violence. Single-parent households are a common feature in both communities, and the majority of them are headed by women. According to a teacher from Mbambangwe:

Learners from such households, especially boys, feel pressured when they come across their peers because they don't have father figures and, therefore, try to assume the role of being protectors and get used to being in authority and want to exercise that authority even to outsiders (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019).

One of the female teachers commented that "boys from such households have a tendency of being rude to male teachers mainly because of the anger they are harboring against their fathers" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 22 May 2019). At Mbambangwe, parents stated that some single parents are "scared of their children because of violent behavior displayed by their children, and, in such instances, it becomes very hard for the parent to discipline the child" (Mbambangwe parent interview, 14 July 2019).

Some parents are not involved in their children's lives. According to parents at Siyabonga, "in most cases, this is because of the migrant labor system, some because of being irresponsible and do not care about their children" (Siyabonga parent

interview, 5 June 2019). Teachers at Mbambangwe believed that learners are violent because there is no love in the families from which they come because there are no parents. In both schools, teachers echoed that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS causes people to die at a young age, leaving their children behind to be taken care of by their grandparents. One teacher at Mbambangwe stated that “the majority of parents and grandparents are semi-literate. When it comes to assisting learners with homework and other school-related matters, it becomes difficult for those learners who are growing up with grandparents and without parents” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 25 June 2019).

a) Peer Pressure

At Siyabonga, “some learners are influenced by others to belong. In some situations, learners get involved in violence because of peer pressure. They get engaged because they want to ‘fit’ in with their peers” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 10 July 2019). A Mbambangwe teacher added that “because of the learners’ eagerness in wanting to fit and for acceptance in certain groups, they end up misbehaving” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 11 July 2019). Parents at Mbambangwe stated that “peer pressure causes them to want to show off to their peers, and, in the process, they lose respect and become unruly, and this leads to conflict. Their environment shapes them to become the people that they are” (Mbambangwe parent interview, 3 July 2019).

b) Domestic Violence

“There is no peace in learners’ families, and the parents don’t have problem-solving skills” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 11 July 2019). Learners’ exposure to domestic violence causes them to be violent. According to Mbambangwe teachers, “there is no peace in families because of domestic violence, and children from such families are made to believe that violence is the only way of resolving conflict because their parents lack problem-solving skills” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 14 May 2019). Because of the violence learners experience at home, they tend to be violent toward other learners and teachers. According to a Siyabonga teacher, “this also leads to disrespect for teachers and fellow learners” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 10 July 2019).

According to stakeholders, “some learners beat their parents that makes it easier for them to beat teachers as well” (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 2 July 2019). A stakeholder further remarked, “Mbambangwe is no exception to other schools; the violence that we see at Mbambangwe is also common to other schools in the area.” He further stated, “sometimes children do these things because they are in adolescent stage.”

7.4.3 Facilitating Causes

The following subsections present the causes that are the enablers of school violence at Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School.

a) Communication Gap Between Stakeholders

A member of the SGB at Siyabonga echoed the sentiment that “teachers and parents are working in silos. Sometimes school violence can be perpetuated by the lack of communication between the parents and the teachers” (Siyabonga SGB interview, 15 July 2019). He further stated that “sometimes is caused by lack of interest or participation of parents in the school life, leading to confusion in learners, teachers, and parents.” In agreement with the SGB at Siyabonga, one of the teachers at Mbambangwe observed that:

There is a communication gap between stakeholders, that is, the learners, parents, teachers, and other community members. [The] communication gap between stakeholders causes the school community to pull in different directions because of lack of understanding what the other party is doing (Mbambangwe teachers’ focus group discussion, 5 July 2019).

The measures that the schools use for discipline are what the parents and the SGB have agreed upon. Both school principals are permitted to enforce discipline in learners through corporal punishment. At Siyabonga, the principal is also permitted to

confiscate valuable items, such as cellphones and branded items, if the learners bring such items to school.

Some parents do not attend parents' meetings when they are invited – this leads to a lack of understanding on what forms of discipline the parents who have attended the parents' meetings have agreed upon. Parents who do not attend parents' meetings go against what has been agreed upon in meetings, and this causes conflict between such parents, learners, the SGB, teachers, and the principal. An example can be seen at Siyabonga: the parents, teachers, SGB, and principal agreed that if any learner brought a cellphone to school, the cellphone must be confiscated, and it would never be returned to the original owner, such as the parent or learner. This is done by members of the SGB who are always stationed inside the school premises to safeguard against any form of violence among learners. However, when cellphones are confiscated from learners, the parents come to school to fight with the SGB, principal, and teachers, demanding their children's cellphones. Sometimes the conflict escalates to the community, and the SGB members become targets and their lives are put at risk. According to Mbambangwe teachers:

Some parents are not cooperative; they always take the side of the learners against the school policies without verifying the information. They don't come to parents' meetings when they are invited and are always against resolutions that are taken in meetings (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019).

According to another teacher at Mbambangwe, "some parents don't communicate with the school, and whenever there is a problem, they take the learner's side. Parents' meetings create a platform for communication between the school community. Parents don't attend parents' meeting even when they are invited" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 21 May 2019). This causes a problem between the parents and the school because the decisions taken at parents' meetings are binding for all parents. When those decisions are implemented, the parents who do not come to the meetings become rebellious toward the principal, staff, and SGB. As a result of not attending

parents' meetings, one of the parents at Mbambangwe felt that the school starting time (6 am) was too early for learners, even though this was something that was agreed upon at a parents' meeting with other stakeholders. She further stated that even though this had dramatically improved the matric results, it made learners vulnerable to thugs in the early hours of the morning.

b) Drug and Substance Abuse

Unfortunately, drugs and alcohol have become a way of life for most people in both communities. Some use drugs because they want to escape from the reality of their socioeconomic conditions for a short while. Sometimes people become involved with drugs because they view drugs as a quick way of making money. It is unfortunate that when some learners finish matric, there is nothing else to do because families are poverty-stricken, except for the possibility of selling drugs. In some cases, learners from both schools who have matriculated do not have the financial resources to further their studies, cannot find employment, and, therefore, resort to selling drugs to have an income. Out of desperation to sell drugs, some learners at Siyabonga would make and sell space muffins (muffins made from marijuana). In both communities, the high rates of illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment mean that some people resort to selling drugs and alcohol for survival. Hence, the level of drug and alcohol abuse is very high for some parents. "Alcoholic parents lack discipline and tend to have wrong parenting styles" (Mbambangwe parent interview, 17 May 2019). According to Mbambangwe teachers, "such parents, sometimes when they are called to intervene when their children have done wrong, they fight with the teachers" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 14 June 2019). Figure 7.4 depicts a local tavern, which has opened by 10:00 am on a weekday, and Figure 7.5 depicts one of the liquor stores at Bhekulwandle.



Figure 7.4 : Local Tavern already open at 10:00 am on weekday

Figure 7.4: Local tavern already open at 10:00 am on a weekday.

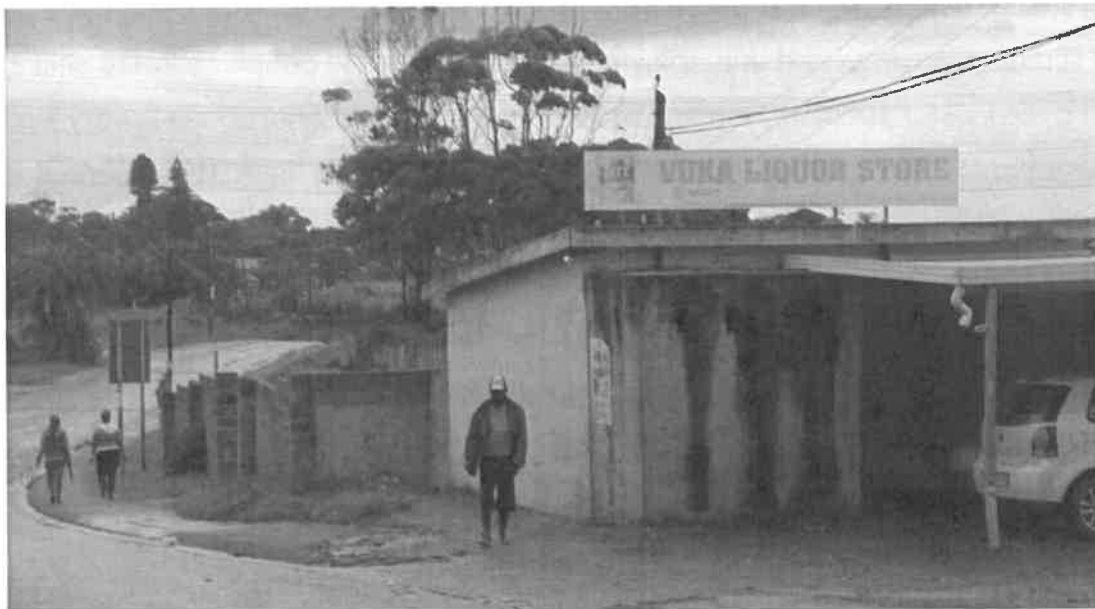


Figure 7.5 : One of the liquor stores at Bhekulwandle

Figure 7.5: One of the liquor stores at Bhekulwandle

One of the parents stated that the learners have easy access to drugs and alcohol, sometimes because of their parents. At Siyabonga, "some parents also have a tendency of sending their children to taverns to buy alcohol for them, and this is how some underage children are introduced to alcohol" (Siyabonga SGB interview, 8 July 2019). It was surprising to realize the degree to which drug and substance abuse are prevalent among learners, even among girls. While collecting data at Siyabonga, space muffins (muffins with drug ingredients) were confiscated by the principal from some learners who were selling them to other learners during school hours. On the other hand, while collecting data at Mbambangwe, on a number of occasions, policemen would come to arrest learners who had been found carrying drugs at school, and, in one such case, a female learner had been found carrying drugs. According to the teachers at Mbambangwe, such girls are being socialized by their fathers to become involved in drugs. Sometimes the drug sellers fight for the territories where they sell drugs. At times, the level of violence escalates to territorial issues or "no-go areas" inside and outside the school premises. This means that rival groups cannot tap into the area of their opposition as the person carrying out as such would risk losing their lives. When violence starts, it affects the entire community and spreads to schools. Sometimes, the cause of violence in schools can be a "fight for territorial boundaries for drug lords, and learners selling drugs inside school premises will be embroiled in a fight with the rival group" (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 4 July 2019).

According to one teacher at Mbambangwe, most of the drug users come from informal settlements. One stakeholder commented that "we have taverns around the school premises, and they are easily accessible by learners as well" (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 10 July 2019). As a result of easy access to taverns, some learners come to school drunk. The rate of drug and substance abuse is very high in both schools. According to Siyabonga parents, learners who abuse drugs and substances are from poorer families, whereas the parents of Mbambangwe learners argued that in their school, drug and substance abusers are learners from all walks of life. They could be learners from well-off families and learners from poor families. One of the traditional leaders stated that "the government sold us out when they allowed

the foreign nationals into our country. These foreigners make drugs and use our children for drug trafficking" (Mbambangwe traditional leader interview, 11 June 2019).

c) Division Among Teachers

Siyabonga parents stated that "teachers have camps among themselves and end up using learners and parents to fight their battles. When teachers don't see eye-to-eye, learners are caught up in that conflict. Teachers fight for positions" (Siyabonga parent interview, 12 July 2019). One member of the SGB at Siyabonga added that "some teachers don't follow the correct procedures and get into corrupt deals to get positions because they have connections within the Department of Education" (Siyabonga SGB interview, 3 July 2019). He further stated that:

Some teachers befriend the SGB members, and, when there is a dispute to be resolved, the SGB becomes too lenient with those teachers because of the connections they have. Teachers engage with SGB and socialize with them and easily bribe them because they are unemployed.

The SGB does not have the power to correct such corruption because the Department of Education is not sufficiently supportive. Parents of Mbambangwe learners alluded to the fact that:

Teachers' unions also contribute to lack of governance because they favor the teachers who are affiliated with them. Some union organizations have a bigger say in allocation of teacher positions, and this causes a lot of conflict amongst teachers and SGB (Mbambangwe parent interview, 14 May 2019).

7.5 Effects of School Violence

Almost all teachers at Mbambangwe felt that there is nothing good about violence. However, some teachers at Mbambangwe stated that one good aspect about school violence is that it unites people with the same ideas, and, because people do not want violence, they unite and fight against it, and the police are always visible. Another view was that:

The positive side of school violence is that when learners are suspended from school, they are required to bring their parents, and we get to know more about the learner, their background, and the family background. We also engage with the parents to try and correct the behavior of a child (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019).

What is positive about school violence is that it brings awareness of the type of learners concerned. Even though school violence is perceived as something unfavorable, there are positive results of violence. Firstly:

[School violence] open our eyes as the school community that we need to understand each other, our differences, learn to tolerate each other. I see it as something that can bring positive change and causes us to adapt to good living standards. It can also teach individuals to avoid mistakes of the past (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 5 July 2019).

In agreement with the above statement, another teacher stated that “the positive side of school violence is that people get to learn conflict resolution skills and get mannered and the fact that not fighting back doesn’t mean that you are weak or a coward” (Siyabonga parent interview, 11 July 2019). Another positive side of violence is that after a violent incident, matters begin to settle down, and because of serious implications, people are steadfast not to allow violence to happen again.

At the same time, “it can lead to hatred as people hold grudges against each other. This can lead to lack of communication in class that would hinder learning and teaching” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 8 June 2019). Even though becoming acquainted with each other and learning to be tolerant of one another should not be something that happens as an aftermath of violence, when there is violence, more attention is given to the school, and one receives an opportunity to learn about conflict resolution skills.

The negative side of violence, according to one of the teachers at Siyabonga, is that “people’s lives are put at risk, there is no freedom of movement, and people’s future is doomed because they are not sure. Child delinquency increase, cycle of poverty becomes vicious, young people are killed, and people are permanently handicapped” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 24 May 2019). According to teachers at Mbambangwe, previously, once violence had started, it lasted anywhere between 2 and 6 months. The negative side of this was that during that period, learners did not come to school, and this affected the learning and teaching schedule. According to a Mbambangwe teacher:

Some learners get demotivated, and when schools re-open, they don’t go back to school. Female learners fall pregnant, and some learners end up identifying themselves with the gangs or thugs for protection. Everyone lives in fear because they don’t know what is going to happen (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019).

The teachers fear coming to school, learners fear that they might be killed, and the parents fear that their children might be killed. According to a Mbambangwe teacher, “the investor confidence in the school goes down” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 5 July 2019). He further stated that:

When requesting funds from neighboring companies for the improvement of the academic performance for learners, the potential funders turned us down because they believe that it is a high risk to be investing in a school with high levels of violence.

The consequences of school violence have been presented in Section 5.6 of Chapter 5.

7.5.1 How School Violence Affects Teachers

Teachers in both schools felt that school violence disturbs teachers and that it becomes difficult for them to impart the content to learners. This is due to the fact that they feel unsafe and fear engaging with learners. Violence against teachers has been covered in Section 4.2.6 of Chapter 4. Teachers at Siyabonga observed that “our morale drops because of being demotivated, stressed, loss of confidence in doing their work. School violence disturbs learning and teaching, and when teachers try to intervene, it takes up a lot of their time and energy” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 7 May 2019). According to Mbambangwe teachers:

Previously, when there was violence, it would take longer periods, and classes would be suspended, and that would mean that teachers are unable to come to school and do their work. Whenever there is violence, there is no trust between teachers and learners. Teachers are scared to allocate lower marks to learners because of the consequences of being attacked physically by learners because the learners accused teachers of giving them failing marks (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019).

Teachers at Mbambangwe echoed the sentiments that school violence leaves scars that are very difficult to heal. It delays any beneficial process, particularly in teaching and learning. The parents’ view was that:

Whenever there is violence, teachers get traumatized because violence is unexpected. Teachers are demotivated, fearful, and their safety is not guaranteed. School violence promotes ill-discipline on teachers and laziness and high rate of absenteeism, take long leave from work because they avoid going school, they die of stress, and they become enemies of the community (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019).

Teachers were not proud to be associated with Mbambangwe High School as a violent school because of fears of being embarrassed. According to some teachers, “colleagues from other schools were undermining us because of poor academic performance” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019). One teacher related an incident when she was having a discussion with colleagues from other schools and stated that the pass rate at Mbambangwe would improve in 2019. The response from the other teachers was “you mean Mbambangwe, Mbambangwe” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019), which indicated that it was impossible for Mbambangwe to improve their results because of the high level of incidents of school violence. The discussion became a joke as the Mbambangwe teachers were mocked by their fellow colleagues. “No one had confidence in our school, including the Department of Education, parents, and the community” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 24 May 2019). At Siyabonga:

As teachers, we are always scared because we do not know when we were going to be attacked because the gangsters would attack anyone from the school. Members of the community would bring their children into our school under duress or as a last resort because of the stigma attached to our school (Siyabonga teacher interview, 8 June 2019).

In both schools, teachers further stated that school violence affects the curriculum coverage and that it affects teachers, both physically and mentally. Teachers limit their engagements with the learners, and this, in a way, has a negative impact on the academic lives of learners. According to some parents:

The saddest part is when parents blame teachers for their children's lack of discipline, and this makes it very hard for teachers to deal with such learners. This causes the teachers to look at us members of the community as failures because most of the teachers are not from this community (Siyabonga parent interview, 11 July 2019).

Teachers fall ill, sometimes to the extent of getting admitted to hospital and being medically boarded at a very young age. According to Siyabonga teachers:

Female teachers get threatened and become reluctant to go to classes. When learners come to school with dangerous weapons, it becomes very hard for teachers to execute what they are supposed to do, even going to class becomes very risky (Siyabonga teacher interview, 24 May 2019).

An SGB member at Siyabonga observed that:

Teachers' dignity is affected because they are scared of learners who are armed and lack discipline. Teachers get demoralized because of unruly learners, they become skeptical to discipline learners, learners are seen as the enemies to the teachers, and it brings down the teacher morale (Siyabonga SGB interview, 3 July 2019).

Mbambangwe teachers emphasized that "it is uncomfortable for teachers to be in classrooms with learners when there is school violence. It is not easy for teachers to drive around the community, and this makes it difficult for them to come to school" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019).

According to teachers, "teaching violent learners is difficult. Sometimes we hear stories about learners killing teachers and become even more scared" (Siyabonga

teacher interview, 8 June 2019). Another comment by a teacher was “we are teachers, but we are also parents, so when learners get hurt or killed, we are heartbroken as well” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 24 May 2019). Teachers felt that “when there is violence at school, people believe that the school management is failing to govern the school, and this tarnishes the image of the school” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019). One of the parents commented that “we feel sorry for the teachers because there is shame and embarrassment on teachers and management; this takes away their pride and dignity” (Mbambangwe SGB interview, 29 April 2019). Whenever there is violence at school, teachers cannot be assertive enough because they are scared. The topic of violence against teachers has been presented in Section 5.3.6 in Chapter 5.

7.5.2 How School Violence Affects Learners

Teachers in both schools observed that “school violence affects learners emotionally, physically, and psychologically. Relationships of teachers, learners, parents, and the community [are] affected because of lack of trust amongst them” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 June 2019). Mbambangwe teachers stated that “low morale affects learners’ academic performance; this also reduces cooperation between teachers and learners” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 22 May 2019). According to one teacher at Siyabonga, when the learner–teacher relationship is affected, “learners do not get the love they deserve from the teachers because some of the learners don’t get the love they need from parents, and some do not have parents” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 7 May 2019). An SGB member at Siyabonga stated that “because of school violence, learners don’t enjoy going to school and are not free to learn because they feel scared and unsafe in the school environment” (Siyabonga SGB interview, 3 July 2019).

Mbambangwe teachers indicated that “learners who are the cause of violence, they become victorious since their main aim is to disturb learning and teaching” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 22 May 2019). They further stated that learners who are committed to learning become worried and stressed since they are concerned

about their education, and this leads to confrontations among learners. Previously, school violence at Mbambangwe would last approximately 2 to 6 months. Whenever there was school violence, classes would be suspended, and learners would not be able to go to school. According to parents, teachers, and community members, the matric pass rate at Mbambangwe was very low insomuch that there would not be a single learner who would receive a matric pass. The number of learners dropping out of school increased.

Sometimes, learners who become engaged in violent action ultimately get killed, and some are arrested and serve time in prison, while others stop attending school. Parents at Siyabonga stated that when there is school violence, learners die, and the violence from schools spreads to the community. Another parent from Mbambangwe confirmed that learners have died as a result of school violence. One of the teachers stated that “it is very traumatic to witness a learner dying before you,” and this is what had happened previously in both schools (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019). During the period when learners are at home because of school violence, some learners fall pregnant since they spend much time not doing anything, and some do not go back to school because they have fallen pregnant or because they are discouraged. This is a loss to learners because some have to repeat their grades, and this becomes more of a financial burden to the parents. Sometimes the school is vandalized when classes are suspended for long periods, and the school becomes in danger of being completely shut down.

Teachers at Siyabonga stated that “some of the effect that violence has on learners is that learners cannot concentrate in an unruly environment, they become fearful, demotivated, and their safety is not guaranteed” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019). Mbambangwe teachers added that “the prospect to the learners’ future is not certain. Learners lose purpose and sense of direction, and their future looks bleak” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 5 July 2019). They further stated that:

Because of school violence, learners get wrong role models, and the cycle of poverty is repeated. Sometimes learners have to identify and associate with the thugs for safety and protection. They become school dropouts, pass rate drops, learners get into drugs, join gangs, and become community misfits.

Violence in schools is a significant problem insomuch that some learners do not recover from the effects. At Siyabonga, learners bring weapons to school for protection, and in doing so, they become a danger to the teachers, their peers, and themselves, and teachers cannot stop them from doing as such.

7.5.3 How School Violence Affects the Community

Mbambangwe teachers observed that “whenever there is school violence, there is loss of confidence between the school, teachers, and community members. Because of loss of confidence in the school, enrolment drops as some parents move their children to other schools” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 22 May 2019). One of the stakeholders at Mbambangwe added that “when learners are taken to other schools, the community cannot use the school as a resource that is of benefit to them, and this becomes an economic burden to the parents because of the travelling costs involved” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019). An SGB member at Mbambangwe alluded to the fact that “when learners die due to school violence, and when the parents have to bury their children who die as a result of violence, this also becomes an economic burden to the family” (Mbambangwe SGB interview, 29 April 2019). According to teachers in both schools, “school violence doesn’t affect local communities only but the whole nation is affected because school violence produces school dropouts to the society who become an economic burden to the state” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 22 May 2019, and Siyabonga teacher interview, 8 June 2019).

Stakeholders at Siyabonga stated that “members of the community get affected when there is school violence because the business community is unable to run as smooth as it is supposed to” (Siyabonga stakeholder interview, 3 July 2019). According to

Mbambangwe teachers, “parents become worried because the main intention is to have proper education for their children, but whenever there is school violence, parents get worried about their children’s safety” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019). The SGB members at Siyabonga observed that “parents end up not participating freely to the school activities and school structures and lose confidence in the school. Community becomes unstable because of an environment that is not conducive for healthy living” (Siyabonga SGB interview, 3 July 2019).

An SGB member at Mbambangwe argued that “when school violence is prolonged, outsiders get involved, leading to no-go areas in our community, and hatred is created in learners and community members” (Mbambangwe SGB interview, 21 June 2019). Another SGB member at Mbambangwe added that “school violence creates violence in community as parents take sides of their children” (Mbambangwe SGB interview, 29 May 2019). One of the parents at Siyabonga stated that “whenever there is violence at school, parents have to drop everything and rush to school to fetch their children because parents fear for their children’s safety” (Siyabonga parent interview, 11 July 2019). Teachers at Siyabonga opined that “it impacts parents emotionally when they have to be worried about their children’s safety. School violence also affects parents economically when they have to be absent from work in order to take care of their children” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 7 May 2019). Teachers at Mbambangwe stated that “family poverty is prolonged because the parents invest in their children by taking them to school; they believe that they will have better future than the parents” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 5 July 2019). A stakeholder member stated that:

Whenever there is school violence, the community members live in fear of the unknown; it promotes a cycle of poverty, it promotes a community dependent on drugs, it promotes a divided community without guidance in their children because they are afraid of their children’s actions who are into gangs (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 9 June 2019).

Other parents felt that “some parents take side with their children and put the blame on other people for their children who are ill disciplined” (Siyabonga parent interview, 12 June 2019). Parents at Siyabonga felt that “the community is traumatized by violence as learners get divided, and if children are divided, then the whole community gets divided as well” (Siyabonga parent interview, 11 July 2019). A Mbambangwe parent stated that “some parents intervene through influencing their children to fight more, and they even provide their children with dangerous weapons” (Mbambangwe parent interview, 14 May 2019). A Mbambangwe stakeholder stated that “businesspeople are out of business and out of income” (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 21 May 2019). According to one of the parents at Siyabonga, “school violence spills over to the community, and we, as [a] community, retaliate whenever our children are attacked. People are killed, properties are destroyed, and we cannot go to work” (Siyabonga parent interview, 11 July 2019). One parent at Siyabonga felt that “school violence is a real drawback for us as [a] community.” According to Siyabonga teachers, the attitude of the community toward the school changes when there is school violence, and some parents remove their children from the school. When violence spills over from the community to a school, it becomes difficult to control. Parents become aggressive and take the learners’ side” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 June 2019). Some parents echoed that “sometimes the learners end up losing respect for their parents and adults because of anger and frustration caused by violence. The loss of respect in children causes pain to parents” (Mbambangwe parent interview, 14 May 2019).

7.6 Response to School Violence

The following subsections involve the common responses from teachers and learners whenever school violence takes place.

7.6.1 Suspension and Expulsion of Learners from School

The learners who are school dropouts are a problem for both the Mbambangwe and Siyabonga school communities. Most of the school dropouts are the learners who have been expelled from school because of unruly behavior. According to teachers at

Mbambangwe, the school dropouts can be seen standing on street corners and being idle on a daily basis at any time of the day. Zero tolerance, expulsion, and suspension have been presented in Section 4.6.2 in Chapter 4. Teachers in both schools confirmed that the learners who are dropouts are a problem for their schools and the community. Because they are out of school, out of employment, not involved in training, and idle, they are vulnerable to being used for drug trafficking and criminal activities. The attempts to deal with school violence have been covered in Sections 4.6 and 4.7 in Chapter 4. They come during break times and attack learners who are still at school. Because the learners fear them, they sometimes voluntarily give away their possessions, such as money and cellphones. At Siyabonga, one of the teachers related an incident when the school dropouts came to confront some of the teachers whom they believed to be the cause for their expulsion; fortunately for the teachers, these learners were not able to execute their plan, but the teachers were scared because they could see that their lives were at risk. The topic of school shootings has been presented in Section 4.2.7 in Chapter 4. While conducting interviews at Mbambangwe, some learners were robbed of their possessions on their way to school in the early hours of the morning. The school community identified the thieves as some of the former learners who had been previously expelled from Mbambangwe.

In both schools, the learners who are either suspended or expelled from school have a tendency to harass those who are still at school. Sometimes, when learners are asked to bring their parents to school when there is a case, they drag anyone from the street to come and represent them. The problem with suspension is that learners become deprived of progressing with their schoolwork. School violence leaves permanent scars on learners, since when they are expelled from school, their future is doomed. Other teachers felt that “the suspension of learners doesn’t help because it affects our performance, and, as teachers, we have to explain about the poor performance of learners” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 3 July 2019).

7.6.2 Response of Learners when There is Violence

The responses of learners to violent action taking place varies. The most worrying and common reaction is “when learners get excited as they feel entertained,” according to teachers in both schools. Most learners, whenever there is violence at their school, consider it to be entertainment; “they laugh, clap hands, and make loud noise. But there are those who sympathize with the victims” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 22 May 2019). Siyabonga teachers stated that:

When learners are fighting, instead of diffusing the fight, others encourage them to fight even more. The fight goes on and on until their friends try to assist those who are looking like they are losing the fight, and the others try to stop those assisting, and it ends up becoming something big and uncontrollable (Siyabonga teacher interview, 11 July 2019).

According to one of the teachers at Mbambangwe, “the reaction of other learners creates an attitude that conflict can be resolved through violence whereas there are other options” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 25 June 2019). Siyabonga teachers observed that:

Because learners find violence to be entertaining, they make a lot of noise and encourage those fighting through words and taking sides. This response, in many instances, divides the class into two groups. Some learners run away as they feel unsafe and get scared (Siyabonga teacher interview, 10 July 2019).

At Mbambangwe:

Some learners sympathize with those who are part of the action and try to intervene by calling the class representatives who would call the teachers.

Sometimes, violence is perpetuated through encouragement by the bystanders' noise and other learners taking sides. When learners take sides, it is sometimes according to the areas where they come from and relations, friendship (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019).

Additionally, at Mbambangwe:

When learners take sides during the fight, this ends up dividing the class, and this becomes a problem when learners are given a task in class. Because of the enmity created among the learners, group work becomes a problem because they don't want to work with those that are perceived to be their enemies (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019).

Mbambangwe teachers echoed that "whenever there is violence, some learners would be absent from school because of [the] fear of being attacked, and others would end up dropping out of school" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 22 May 2019). According to Siyabonga teachers:

In most cases, whenever there is violence, learners who are not involved get excited and make a lot of noise, and this makes it worse. Some learners report the incident, but others don't report and would even stop others from reporting (Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019).

Some learners encourage those who are fighting to continue fighting, and it becomes very chaotic because of the noise and excitement from learners. The noise arises from screaming and shouting because of excitement and standing on top of desks. Whenever there is violence, learners do not usually report it until the noise captures the teachers' attention. When learners become excited and entertained by a fight, the fighting parties become more violent and fight even more. "They instigate them (*bayabahlohla*), and it makes it worse" (Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019).

7.7 Characteristics of Learners who are the Most Likely to be Violent

There were conflicting views by the participants on the learners who are most likely to be engaged in violence. One of the stakeholders at Mbambangwe felt that “violent learners are from all walks of life. They can be from poor background and well-off families. Mostly learners from single-parent household are violent, and most of the single-parent households are headed by females” (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 2 July 2019). The observation by teachers at Mbambangwe was that some of these learners come from single-parent households, “others from poor household, others come from child-headed households” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019). There was a consensus among the teachers from both schools that most of the perpetrators are boys, and the girls become the victims. Even though the younger boys are also victims, the majority of the victims are female learners. Two hundred and thirty-nine (239) out of 345 learners at Siyabonga indicated that boys are more likely to be violent than girls (Siyabonga learners’ survey, 7 July 2019), and 47 out of 116 learners at Mbambangwe felt that boys are more violent than girls (Mbambangwe learners’ survey, 10 June 2019).

In both schools, the perpetrators are older boys in most cases, and the majority of them do not perform well academically. Some learners who are likely to engage in violence are those who are not performing well academically and tend to disturb others; in some cases, it is the older boys who are violent toward the younger ones. Most of the learners who are perpetrators are those who are behind in their grades because they are older and more powerful than the learners in their grade, and the younger ones fear them. Some of the boys who are more violent are those without any father figure in their families. According to Mbambangwe teachers:

Sometimes the violence is directed to teachers, especially female teachers, even though some of the boys direct their anger to male teachers. They do this because they carry a lot of anger against their fathers who are absent in their lives and become angry against any adult male. Sometimes these

learners do this because they are used to being over-protective of their families in the absence [of] adult males (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019).

In both schools, “grade eight and nine learners are most likely to be victims of school violence because they are young and still new in high school and don’t understand the politics of high school violence” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 8 June 2019, and Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019). One of the parents from Siyabonga stated that learners who engage in violence are those who are “not serious about schooling” (Siyabonga parent interview, 5 June 2019). Mbambangwe parents stated that “learners who come from families where parents are alcoholics, where there is violence and with absent parents, especially fathers, are also in the category of violent behavior” (Mbambangwe parent interview, 3 July 2019). At Mbambangwe, “in some cases, the bigger boys are the perpetrators because they are more masculine and physically stronger than others. Because the thinner ones are assumed to be weaker, they will call their friends for help” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019). At Mbambangwe:

Perpetrators of school violence could be males from the community; sometimes it’s boys who are expelled from school. Previously, violence used to be a daily occurrence, sometimes throughout the day, and, in some instances, it would take the whole month (Mbambangwe parent interview, 3 July 2019).

7.8 Action Taken in the Past to Reduce School Violence

According to teachers at Mbambangwe:

What has been done in the past is to keep learners occupied all the time using class representatives to report any incidents of violence taking place in classes. As teachers, we believe that learners are able to articulate their

views better if there are class representatives. This has helped to keep learners busy all the time (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019).

This is the reason why most learners stated that the Learners' Representative Council (LRC) members are most likely to be less violent. When discussing the behavior of the LRC members with the president and vice president of the LRC, they believed that whenever they are given a position, they feel the need to be positive role models for other learners. Some of them who had not been on their best behavior before they attained those positions started changing their behavior once they were given the positions. In both schools, learners have been suspended from school for 3 to 5 days depending on the nature of the offense. In both schools, some learners have been expelled, and others have been transferred to other schools. The traditional leadership, community members, and parents became involved in the past to resolve school violence at Mbambangwe.

According to teachers at Siyabonga, "sometimes the violent incidents are reported to the police, and learners [are] detained for a short while because of school violence. Presently, the school deals with school violence by calling parents to discuss the matter with the parents" (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 June 2019). At Siyabonga, the management and SGB are enforcing the wearing of school uniforms to learners such that even if they misbehave outside the school premises, it will be easier to identify them. One of the teachers at Siyabonga postulated that:

The results of this is that parents appreciate and are co-operating with the school as they see a lot of improvement in their children. The negative side of this is that some learners end up leaving school because they don't want to be controlled or abide by the rules. Sometimes we resort to corporal punishment when learners are misbehaving (Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019).

At Mbambangwe, the then Ethekeini mayor in 2016 was asked to adopt the school into her foundation such that she would be able to know about the needs of the school. According to the stakeholders:

This had positive results since the mayor refurbished the school and made other donations, like fencing, to keep criminal elements away from school premises and to make it more attractive to the learners and the community. A security guard was hired to ensure that no criminal elements come inside the school (Mbambangwe SGB interview, 21 June 2019).

One of the teachers at Mbambangwe mentioned that “we motivate learners and show them the negative effects of school violence.” According to Mbambangwe teachers, learners with serious drug problems would be sent to rehabilitation institutions. At Mbambangwe, community structures were established that were mainly focused on violence. The Department of Education was positive in dealing with the matter and gave the school the support that they needed. The tribal authority and the SAPS played a pivotal role in reducing school violence. The tribal authority provided the school with warriors who helped by reprimanding anyone who was getting out of line through their visibility at the school and the SAPS through implementation of random searches. The presence of surveillance cameras and armed guards has been presented in Sections 4.6 and 4.6.3, respectively, in Chapter 4. Because learners fear the warriors, they start behaving accordingly. Figure 7.6 depicts a police vehicle, where the police had come to take disciplinary action against learners who had been found in possession of drugs.



Figure 7.6 : Police vehicle. The police came to take disciplinary action against learners who had been found in possession of drugs.

Figure 7.6: Police vehicle. The police came to take disciplinary action against learners who had been found in possession of drugs.

In 2016, new management took over at Mbambangwe. Mbambangwe teachers stated that “presently, the school management is very strict with learner admission; we have to be able to communicate with the parents, and we are trying to broaden the communication scope to the wider community.” At Mbambangwe:

Motivational speakers were invited to talk to learners about the risk of not going to school and gangsters. Peace campaigns were organized in the community, popular musicians and sport people were invited, soccer clinics were organized during sports days, sport activities between the school and SAPS were organized, [and] the Ethekewini mayor was invited for motivational talks and donations in order to promote good image for the school. As teachers, we also try to be exemplary to learners for them to see what is expected of them (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019).

One of the traditional leaders stated that:

Learners were sent back home to bring back their parents because we wanted to understand why were the learners engaging in violence. The strategy that we used was to scare learners for them to stop violence. We told learners that if they want war, they must come and face us instead of being violent to other learners and teachers. That is what stopped violence at Mbambangwe. The last incident was when a learner was killed when there were interschool cultural activities (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 27 June 2019).

According to stakeholders at Mbambangwe:

After a learner was killed, the community had to look for solutions to stop revenge from the rival group. In order to stop revenge from the side of the deceased learner, the families of the perpetrators contributed R200 each that went towards the funeral costs (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 21 May 2019).

At Siyabonga, learners who were perpetrators were suspended and later brought back to engage with the parents to correct the learners' behavior. At the moment, they have a safety committee that works with the principal, the learners, and the parents to correct learner behavior. A Mbambangwe stakeholder further stated that:

Stakeholders (parents, teachers, traditional leadership, learners, ministers of religion, and ward councilors) were invited to meetings that were not fruitful until traditional leadership threatened learners to beat them if they ever become violent. This is what we are used to. We grew up with

intimidation, and it's part of who we are, our culture. It works, but it is not sustainable (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 21 May 2019).

Teachers at Siyabonga mentioned that “presently, the presence of the SGB helps to reduce school violence. The SGB walks around school corridors, looking for any misbehavior in learners” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 7 May 2019). They further added that:

Anyone who is found misbehaving is brought into the principal's office for discipline. Cellphones are not allowed at school. Expensive brands, like Nike and Adidas, are also not allowed at school since they cause learners to steal and end up fighting for such items. When learners bring such items to school, they are confiscated and the SGB decides what to do with the items (Siyabonga SGB interview, 21 May 2019).

According to teachers and the SGB, the parents at the parents' meeting agreed that if these items were confiscated, they should not be returned to learners – even when a parent comes to plead a learner's case, the item is never returned. At Siyabonga, some learners have been transferred to other schools. Presently, according to one of the teachers, “we involve the CPF [community policing forum], parents, suspension of learners, punish them by working together in order for the learners to learn to find solutions on their own and reconcile” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 3 June 2019). At Siyabonga, learners who were gang members were identified and expelled from school, but they would then wait outside the gate to fight with their opponents. At Siyabonga, according to the teachers:

We have a group of learners who educate their peers about the effects of violence. A group of learners have been identified to be leaders, and violence is one of the issues they are tackling – this is done through an

organization called Columbia, which focuses on leadership skills (Siyabonga teacher interview, 24 May 2019).

A decision was taken at the parents' meeting to expel those who had been found to be in gangs. The teachers emphasized:

We speak to learners strongly about their behavior. When learners are suspended at our school, they come in the morning and sign in the principal's office, and they are given chores to do (as a way of punishing them) like cleaning toilets (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 June 2019).

Consequences that the Action had on Learners

According to the teachers in both schools, there were many positive results from the suspension and transfer of learners. Firstly, the learners did not lose out on their education. When learners are transferred to other schools and suspended for a few days, this brings peace and harmony within the school because the rate of violence decreases. When learners are transferred to other schools, they are removed from their familiar environment, and because they are not familiar with the new environment, it becomes difficult for them to maintain their violent behavior. When they are suspended, the parents are called in to discuss the matter with the school principal, and this action sometimes changes their behavior for the better. However, sometimes the expulsion creates an impression to other learners that since they have been expelled from school, they are comfortable and can do as they please since they are no longer at school. However, on the other hand, it is a wake-up call for other learners in the sense that they might find themselves in the same position as those who are expelled or suspended if they get themselves into trouble. At Siyabonga:

When we resort to corporal punishment, learners get scared and disassociate themselves from any wrongdoing. When the violent incident is reported to the police, those involved in the incident are safe from revenge

and injury because there will not be any violence. The past action has reduced the number of learners who are gang members. Learners enjoy schooling and children have stopped dying because of school violence. As teachers, we are now free to communicate with learners (Siyabonga teacher interview, 3 June 2019).

Learners are no longer moving to other schools because they do not want to be associated with Mbambangwe due to the stigma attached to the school. The cleanliness of the school and the matric pass rate have improved. According to teachers, parents, the SGB, learners, and stakeholders, the introduction of new management at Mbambangwe has brought about a reduction in the level of violence. They have been able to restore discipline and order inside the school.

The same sentiment was shared by parents and other community stakeholders that ever since the new management at Mbambangwe High School took over, there has been a reduction in school violence. Parents further stated that this has impacted the matric results where they have witnessed dramatic improvement. In the previous years, the matric results had been poor to the extent that there was not a single learner obtaining a matric pass. According to some parents and teachers, “since 2018, there has been a huge change in terms of discipline and behavior of learners at Mbambangwe High School” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019, and Mbambangwe parent interview, 14 May 2019). The campaigns and the involvement of the community policing forum (CPF), community and traditional leadership, and Umbumbulu Education Forum have brought some relief to the school. According to the traditional leadership, “ever since the traditional leadership and izinduna intervened at Mbambangwe, there has never been violence; learners respect teachers, and the matric results have improved” (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 21 May 2019).

At Mbambangwe, learners are now respectful of teachers, there is no longer fighting as before, smoking and drug abuse have decreased, learners are always punctual for

school (the school starts at 6:00 am and ends at 4:00 pm), the learners have enough time for homework, and parental involvement has improved (they attend meetings for monitoring learners' schoolwork). However, there are still those learners who go out of their way to conduct illegal activities, such as selling drugs and carrying dangerous weapons to school. According to the parents, the initiative was a success in the sense that learners are now scared to act wrongfully because they know that they will be punished. One of the teachers at Mbambangwe remarked that "the negative side of expulsion and suspension is that learners drop out of school. Some learners who were expelled from school have become violent and uncontrollable as they are no more at school, and they are not doing anything" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019). According to some parents at Mbambangwe, "the future of the learners who are expelled is now doomed" (Mbambangwe parent interview, 14 May 2019). Siyabonga teachers felt that some learners deliberately act in a way that causes them to be expelled from school because they want the freedom of doing as they please, such as having tattoos and selling drugs. "When learners are expelled from school because of anger, grudges, and bitterness they come back to attack teachers" (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 June 2019). According to the teachers at Siyabonga:

The level of school violence dropped after the initiative, but where corporal has been used, it has failed to correct learner behavior. When learners are expelled from school, they get into criminal activities, and this increases the rate of crime that is already high. Some of such learners become angry and want to revenge against the school for being expelled (Siyabonga teacher interview, 24 May 2019).

On the other hand, parents have learned to communicate with their children.

7.9 Recommendations by Stakeholders on What Needs to be Done to Reduce School Violence

Almost all the teachers at Mbambangwe felt that the best action that needs to be taken is to educate teachers, learners, parents, and different community structures regarding the negative impact of school violence. They further stated that they also need campaigns on bullying and violence in schools. Teachers also felt that any solution to resolve violence should start in families. Parents should be empowered with parenting skills. Problem-solving skills should be taught at home. Teachers at Mbambangwe echoed the fact that “Life Orientation (LO) must be taught by teachers who are qualified to do so. Learning programs are rigid; as teachers, we don’t have enough time to engage about life skills, and this is such an important aspect in learners’ lives” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 22 May 2019). Positive role models (religious and sports) must be allowed to visit the school frequently to encourage learners. Learners also need to be encouraged to spend more time on sports.

Teachers in both schools felt that strict laws must be applied to schools, and security measures must be taken, such as having a security guard at school and the presence of the SAPS. One of the teachers at Mbambangwe mentioned that “random checks must be done, and learners must be checked whether they are still mentally functional because some of them have been using drugs for a very long time, and this could have affected their state of mind” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019). The school must be fenced to keep the thugs and outsiders away from the school environment. Teachers at Siyabonga mentioned that:

There must be programs in schools that can empower learners with knowledge to study with an aim and purpose to boost learner confidence. Education is a lifelong process; therefore, we need to learn that it is very wrong to normalize violence, and it must start from home (Siyabonga teacher interview, 8 June 2019).

One of the teachers at Mbambangwe argued that “I think we need things like Imbizo and invite professionals to talk about the effects of violence” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019). One of the stakeholders at Mbambangwe recommended that:

We need to revive recreational activities in our communities to keep children and young people busy. Sport associations have strategies to identify talents in learners, let them go to schools and start identifying these talents in learners while they are still in high schools. It must be compulsory for learners to be engaged in sport activities, and there must be competitions organized seasonally (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 21 May 2019).

He further stated that if learners are engaged in playing, they will learn to understand others, become accustomed to working in teams, and be able to focus; their stress levels will be reduced, and they will have less time to think about their misery and, instead, become disciplined.

7.9.1 Collaboration and Communication Between Stakeholders

Collaboration among stakeholders was one of the most common recommendations by the stakeholders. School violence can be reduced if there is communication between stakeholders, that is, the community, teachers, parents, and learners. One traditional leader’s advice was that “let’s sit down and talk and see what we can do. We cannot expect everything from the government. Let us stop destroying the little that we have” (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 14 June 2019). Stakeholders such as the SGB, CPF, teachers, parents, and various government departments must come together to work on the solution and cascade information onto the learners. The learners should be allowed to talk about the dangers of violence as peers.

7.9.2 Police Intervention

The common response from the community, teachers, and parents from both schools was to strengthen security in schools. The recommendation was that:

Police must come and introduce themselves to learners as a service, not as a force; let the learners know how they operate, policing and monitoring the area; and make themselves visible all the time. SAPS must be visible and vigilant and conduct unannounced visits to search dangerous weapons and drugs carried by learners (Siyabonga stakeholder interview, 3 July 2019).

The policing of schools has been covered in Section 4.6 in Chapter 4. Some teachers recommended workshops for teachers and parents regarding the code of conduct and workshops on the South African Schools Act (SASA) regarding what is expected from them. Teachers at Mbambangwe recommended that “morning assemblies must be held daily to cultivate a culture of discipline so that teaching and learning can be conducive” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 5 July 2019).

7.9.3 Department of Education

The Department of Education has much to do in terms of arresting violence. According to one of the teachers at Siyabonga, “the department has done away with employment of security personnel, and, in that way, they contribute towards school violence” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 June 2019). One parent recommended that the Department of Education install cameras in schools. According to one of the teachers at Siyabonga, the government largely carries the blame for school violence:

After 1994, we began to have rights in schools, at homes, and in churches; more emphasis was put on rights and not on responsibilities. In schools, there is a Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, but no one talks about responsibilities. The government has not put an emphasis on

responsibilities. Government officials must teach learners about rights and responsibilities in schools and to the communities (Siyabonga teacher interview, 8 June 2019).

In concurring with this teacher, one of the traditional leaders voiced his frustration that “children have negative attitudes, and we are not allowed to use corporal punishment because they have rights. But if we could be allowed to use corporal punishment, these children can change for the better” (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 14 June 2019). A teacher from Mbambangwe echoed that:

Love is lacking in our schools and communities. Before teachers teach learners, they must love them. If we want to plant love in our children, we must do a thorough spadework for the seed to have enough ventilation to grow. We first affirm an individual before reprimanding them (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019).

Echoing the same sentiment, another teacher at Siyabonga stated that “when inflicting any punishment to learners, it must be done with love, not with authority, in order to be balanced between love and authority” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 24 May 2019). Another teacher at Siyabonga recommended that “there must be events to appreciate the learners who are doing well. Learners and teachers must be given a platform where they can talk about anything that bothers them. We need family values in schools” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 8 June 2019). Stakeholders from Mbambangwe recommended that:

We need to build forums where people are able to talk about issues affecting them in communities. We have to revive formations in communities [and] talk about our values and principles. If we do not have families in our communities, there would not be any values (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 21 May 2019).

A recommendation by Mbambangwe teachers was that “the government must introduce training programs for parents and teachers. We need seminars for parents that are both entertaining and educational. We need to talk to artistic learners to write poems and drama that addresses the social ills” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 17 May 2019). Another recommendation by one of the teachers at Mbambangwe was that “the government must bring back the in-service training for teachers so as to empower them in their leadership role” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019).

Almost all the parents recommended that the Department of Education revisit the prohibition of corporal punishment. “It seemed to work because it worked during our school days” (Mbambangwe parent interview, 14 May 2019). One of the teachers at Siyabonga asked, “how can the department assist us, because in other schools, there are no security guards, but even if there are guards in schools but they are not armed?” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 June 2019). Teachers recommended that “teachers must be equipped by the Department of Education to deal with school violence.” The history of violence in South African schools has been covered in Section 5.2 of Chapter 5, as mentioned earlier. According to a Siyabonga teacher, “corporal punishment elimination didn’t provide parents and teachers with alternatives” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 June 2019). Teachers and parents highly recommended that “the government ... promote sponsorships for recreational activities in schools” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019).

One of the parents at Siyabonga stated that “Life Orientation (LO) can contribute to building moral character of learners, but the Department of Education is not taking LO seriously also because it doesn’t count for anything as a matric subject” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 July 2019). One stakeholder felt that “we need community forums where we can talk about issues of violence” (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 14 June 2019). The stakeholder further stated that “the Department of Education must implement more stringent disciplinary measures for learners because right now

parents and teachers are helpless when it comes to disciplining learners.” The SGB from Siyabonga recommended that “the government must also assist in prioritizing employment of local teachers from the community because it will be hard for learners to misbehave in the presence of local teachers” (Siyabonga SGB interview, 3 July 2019). An SGB member at Siyabonga felt that:

The government must relook at the policies for employment of teachers because there is lack of control. Government to relook at the SGB’s stipend; it is not easy to work without any payment because SGB members fall into the trap of being bribed by teachers for positions (Siyabonga SGB interview, 21 May 2019).

One of the stakeholders at Siyabonga recommended that:

More research must be done because they bring about awareness leading to positive change in communities. People must be empowered with knowledge and skills so that they can take care of their lives. We also need to do home visit to get first-hand information of what is happening in communities (Siyabonga stakeholder interview, 3 July 2019).

A recommendation by one of the teachers at Mbambangwe was to “let the government revisit the curriculum [to see] whether it is up to date with today’s standards, like agriculture and technology subjects” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019).

7.9.4 Psychosocial Support from Department of Social Development

Almost all teachers recommended that “psychosocial support is needed from the Department of Social Development (DSD) to assist learners [to] cope with whatever issues they are going through or have gone through in their past experiences” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 June 2019, and Mbambangwe teacher interview, 5

July 2019). One parent from Mbambangwe stated that “learners need counseling to cope with all the challenges they face in their homes” (Mbambangwe parent interview, 3 July 2019). Another recommendation by teachers at Mbambangwe was to “let us have more sport activities to keep learners busy. Government needs to provide with the social workers to talk to learners mostly those affected by domestic violence” (Siyabonga teacher interview, 16 July 2019). In agreement with the above recommendation, one of the teachers at Mbambangwe alluded to the fact that:

Learners are dealing with a lot of issues, and they bottle them up because they don't have anyone to talk. If DSD can provide our school with a social worker at least once a week, the level of stress in learners can be reduced, leading to reduction of school violence. The teachers are not qualified to deal with psychosocial issues, and when the teachers shift their focus from their core function to deal with other issues, it affects the teachers' work schedule (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 5 July 2019).

7.9.5 Parents and Community to be Part of the Running of the School

Almost all teachers agreed that they need support from the parents and the community because they cannot improve the learners' behavior by themselves. Teachers further stated that some parents need parenting skills, and there is a great need for parents to be educated on how to groom their children for the future. Some teachers and parents were in agreement that “we need to set up structures where we can engage parents, teachers, and learners” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019). “We must have forums for engagements, motivational speakers to encourage parents to understand that it is important to speak the same language” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019). Parents should not distance themselves from school, and they must attend parents' meetings such that they can speak in one voice and have an interest in visiting the school more often to give support to the teachers and to show that they care about their children's future. One of the SGB members stated that parents' visibility in schools can make a large difference in terms of the learners' behavior.

7.9.6 Motivational Speakers to be Brought to School to Motivate Learners

Some teachers felt that since learners lack role models, they need to be motivated by people whom they admire or those who are successful in life, such as well-known sports men and women and actors. They also believed that learners could benefit substantially from having life coaches and mentorship. The teachers felt that some of the male learners who were neglected by their fathers could benefit greatly from the mentorship program. Life coaches are needed in communities to engage learners in sports and other activities that can help them to deal with the stress and traumas of their lives. Getting young people engaged in sports and other activities can also reduce the level of drug abuse in the community. “Motivational speakers will steer up learners’ attitude because most of the learners are demotivated” (Mbambangwe teachers’ focus group discussion, 5 July 2019) – this was the sentiment echoed by almost all the teachers.

7.9.7 Sports and Entertainment

“Let us have more recreational activities” – this was a recommendation by one of the stakeholders at Mbambangwe (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 14 June 2019). All stakeholders from both schools agreed that sports, arts, cultural activities, and entertainment were missing in both schools and communities. Therefore, these need to be introduced in schools in order to redirect learners’ focus into doing something good. Some teachers echoed the sentiment that learners are stressed and traumatized by their socioeconomic conditions. There is no outlet for the learners’ stress, anger, and frustration, and they take it out on other people, such as the teachers and other learners. Some learners are heading households, as they do not have parents; some are from single-parent families who are unable to satisfy all their needs; and other learners have parents, but the parents are not part of their lives. Engaging learners in recreational activities could encourage them to forget about their situation for a short while and refocus on something positive. This could strengthen the learners’ relationships with each other, their teachers, and their parents as well. A stakeholder from Mbambangwe had an experience when he was the provincial

manager in arts, culture, and sports and employed by the Department of Education; he observed that “extramural activities, like sports, arts, and cultural activities, enforce discipline in learners.” He further stated that:

In almost all Afrikaans schools within the province, like Kuswag, sports are compulsory in learners, and this is the reason why there is so much discipline in learners from these schools because learners are used to discipline through their engagement in sport (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview 14 June 2019).

7.10 Stakeholders’ Contribution to New Interventions

All stakeholders from both schools (the councilors, school principals, parents, teachers, business community, traditional leaders, and church leaders) agreed that they were availing themselves in partaking in any activities that would help reduce school violence. Some teachers volunteered to ensure that life coaches were brought to their school to give motivational talks to learners. Some teachers at Mbambangwe offered to avail themselves to make stakeholders aware that violence is destructive to the image of the school and to the teachers’ and learners’ morale. They also mentioned that it is important to understand that people have to live in harmony with one another and that we are diverse as individuals and have to accept others irrespective of our diversities. One of the teachers stated:

I can avail myself at least two to three times a week to contribute in teaching life skills to learners. Since love is lacking in families, we can contribute by giving learners the love they need. We are so focused on our families, but we also need to be concerned with what is going on in communities (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019).

A Mbambangwe teacher’s response was:

I am a teacher, but I am also a parent. As a parent, I want to show learners the negative effects of school violence. I can have one-on-one sessions with the problematic learners. With such engagements, I will be able to identify the root cause of the problem and help to resolve it (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 29 April 2019).

Another teacher from Mbambangwe stated that “I can have seminars with learners every Thursday to teach them about violence and how to avoid and overcome it” (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 22 May 2019). One of the parents at Mbambangwe stated:

As parents, we should be working hand in hand with the teachers, and we should be more interested about our children’s performance at school. I feel we are overburdening teachers with our children. We need to build a strong relationship with the school. We also need to get closer to those children who don’t [have] parents (Mbambangwe parent interview, 14 May 2019).

Parents committed themselves to attending meetings that could help in developing solutions. Some committed to volunteering their time to go to schools for motivation. They agreed that:

We should not destroy our children’s future through harsh punishment. As parents, we need forums where we can keep on communicating. We need different teams to focus on different issues affecting our children. We need to bring our children closer and begin to open channels of communication even for those who are orphans (Siyabonga parent interview, 11 July 2019).

Parents' visibility in schools will cause children to be reluctant to act wrongfully. It will make children realize that the parents are also part of the school community. Siyabonga teachers committed themselves to participating in engaging with learners if programs were introduced. One of the parents at Siyabonga stated that "I am in the safety and mobilization forum, and I can mobilize the community to come to meetings if meetings are organized" (Siyabonga teacher interview, 8 June 2019). He further stated that "shebeens and taverns are not supposed to be located next to the schools or they should not sell alcohol to learners or underage youth." One of the teachers stated that:

I will always ascertain that when learners are in my hands, they are safe physically and academically. If the community is part of the school, there could be opportunities created for them through outreach programs like the introduction of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) for those who are illiterate and semi-literate (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 5 July 2019).

A response from one of the teachers at Siyabonga was that "I can help learners to play sport and keep them safe" (Siyabonga teacher interview, 12 June 2019). Another teacher at Mbambangwe stated that "dealing with learners individually helps. I can deal with parents and learners and sometimes teachers" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 2 May 2019). One of the parents at Mbambangwe stated that "I can contribute financially, with my time and in whatever way" (Mbambangwe parent interview, 14 May 2019). Some teachers committed themselves as follows: "we can call community meetings and convince people about peace" (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 22 May 2019). Teachers from Mbambangwe stated that:

[They could] take a leading role to motivate other teachers about importance of teaching and going to classes. We also commit to motivate learners about being punctual, doing their homework with or without teachers, help in arbitration, mediation in disputes that arise in school,

training of parents on school code of conduct and South Africans School Act (SASA), [and] networking with other neighboring schools with good results to promote team teaching within and outside the school (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 30 April 2019).

Some parents from Mbambangwe stated that they would love to be part of any initiative taken to reduce violence at school:

I am a community leader, former schoolteacher, former school principal, headed the province in the Department of Education, [and] as human beings, we don't stop learning more so as leaders; therefore, I am prepared to learn new ways of reducing school violence. I am also willing to impart the knowledge I have learned to others (Mbambangwe teacher interview, 3 July 2019).

A Siyabonga teacher's response was "I love addressing people and motivating young people, and I would really appreciate the opportunity." "As parents, we must learn to discipline with love and speak the same language to the learners. I can do anything that can be of value in bringing about peace in our community" (Siyabonga parent interview, 11 July 2019). The local councilors alluded to the fact that:

As political leadership, the first thing to do is service delivery, and whatever issues affect people at grass root level, we have to address it. We need to focus on infrastructural development, and we need a structured relationship with the traditional leadership. An example of this is when we have a football team with the youngsters, the traditional leadership should focus on grooming them to manhood. We have to revive street committees through councilors in order to bring back the culture of playing sports in townships. Small businesses should ensure that they support and assist the formation of these teams (Mbambangwe stakeholder interview, 16 May 2019).

7.11 Reflection on Research Findings

The findings of this research and the National School Violence study by Burton and Leoschut (2012), as well as the study by Harber and Mncube (2017), have proved beyond reasonable doubt that school violence cannot be effectively addressed without dealing with the various environmental factors and contexts in which children live and develop. Corporal punishment is still widely used and rife, especially in rural areas and township schools, and more so in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The findings of this research bear evidence according to the two schools where the research was conducted, and according to the study conducted by Burton and Leoschut in 2012, the Kwa-Zulu Natal province has the highest number of incidents of corporal punishment from all nine provinces of South Africa. Alternatives to corporal punishment must be provided, and this must be done in agreement with the school community. The results of this study and the two other studies indicated that external violence has a significant impact on school violence. This, therefore, suggests that addressing structural violence and cultural violence could resolve environmental factors and gender-based violence, which will automatically resolve school violence and other forms of violence. If violence continues to be the barrier to learning, as has been proven by the three studies, the poor communities will continue to be trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty, and the future of South African children is doomed. Government policies must be reviewed and restructured, and a bottom-up approach must be adopted in order to accurately respond to societal needs.

7.12 Conclusion

This chapter considered the research findings from Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School. The findings revealed that both schools are affected by violence. The chapter compared and contrasted the violence in the two schools. The findings revealed that there are very few differences in the school violence taking place at Mbambangwe High School and Siyabonga High School, and the conditions are almost exactly the same. A difference can only be found in how violence manifests itself in the two schools. The information gathered during the literature review was

confirmed through the first-hand information witnessed at Mbambangwe and Siyabonga. What other authors have written about regarding school violence has been supported through the data collected from both schools. This provides validation that the literature reviewed is still relevant to today's conditions regarding school violence.

8 CHAPTER EIGHT

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION

8.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 focused on the research findings at Mbambangwe High School (hereafter MHS) and Siyabonga High School. The researcher was interested in knowing whether the data collected in the two schools corresponded with other studies and also focused on comparing and contrasting the two schools to see whether there were any similarities or differences. Chapter 8 considers solutions to school violence and the relevant intervention strategy to be implemented in the experiment school, that is, MHS. From what the participants stated, the researcher was able to design a program relevant to the challenges causing violence at MHS. The intervention strategy was informed by what the participants had stated in the collected data. This chapter explains the step-by-step process that the researcher followed when implementing the program. It also explains why the program was introduced to grade nine learners in 2019 and why the implementation process was carried out in the following year in 2020 for grade 10 learners and 2021 for grade 11 learners. The chapter also clarifies the teachers' role in the implementation process.

The need for peace education has become even greater in South Africa because of the lack of skills, such as those of conflict management, conflict resolution, negotiation, and mediation. South Africa needs restorative practices to restore people's dignity that has been damaged by the previous regimes. South Africans need to move away from retributive practices because these degrade human dignity and go hand in hand with the structural violence that was part of the previous government policy. With the introduction and implementation of the intervention program, the researcher hoped to restore learners' dignity by making them realize how important they are. Learners must be affirmed and know that they are valued, appreciated, needed, loved, and cared for such that they can also learn to act in the same manner toward others. The researcher believes that for South Africa to heal, the nation requires processes such as conflict

transformation and restorative approaches to rebuild relationships, restore human dignity, empower human beings, and discourage violent strategies of resolving conflict.

The older South African generation, including parents and teachers, have been victims of the past regime where they were made to believe that authoritarianism and control were the only alternative of restoring law and order. It is most likely that such beliefs become transgenerational if not challenged. Therefore, it is important for South Africans to explore alternative means of dealing with conflict. Since people are not inherently violent, the suggestion is, therefore, that there is a possibility for parents, teachers, learners, and the community to unlearn what has been learned in the past and relearn new ways of resolving conflict. The program that the researcher introduced to MHS learners, therefore, discourages violent ways of resolving conflict and instead focuses on rebuilding relationships, restoring human dignity, and the empowerment of individuals. The intervention involved two components – peace-making circles and transformative learning based on the Caregivers' Model. The relevant theories underpinning these were discussed in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of Chapter 3. Table 8.1 provides a summary of the intervention carried out, including the purposes, the date(s), and the duration of the intervention.

Table 8.1 Summary of the interventions

Activity	Purpose	Date(s)	Duration	Response
Presentation of findings to all stakeholders	To ensure that the stakeholders and the researcher have the same understanding	1 February 2020	1 day	We agreed on the suggested intervention strategy.
Nonviolence curriculum development	To ensure training content, methodology, and learning objectives were planned in advance	3–21 February 2020	19 days	Intervention tool was designed.
Sharing the intervention program with supervisor	To seek feedback and clarity and ensure that the method to be used was relevant to impart the skills and knowledge on nonviolence	21–27 March 2020	6 days	Feedback received from the supervisor.
Purchase of stationery and material and inspecting the venue and handling other necessary logistics	To ensure that the training material and venue were secured in time for the training	2–4 March 2020	3 days	Training material was secured for the training.
Negotiating with the principal and deputy principal about the implementation of the intervention strategy	To ensure that we agreed on time slots and days for the implementation of the program	10–19 March 2020	12 days	92 grade 10 learners were part of the training. We had put the training on hold until the following year.
Negotiating with the principal and deputy principal about	To ensure that we agreed on the time slots and days for the implementation of the program	3 March to 27 May 2021	3 months	81 learners were received in nonviolence training.

the implementation of the intervention strategy				
Holding the evaluation of the program	Report back and share how participants have practiced nonviolent methods in their day-to-day engagement with other people	6 July 2021	1 day	All grade 11 learners at Mbambangwe were invited to be part of the evaluation.
Conduct a survey to check against the controlled group	To compare the results of the intervention program at Mbambangwe High School with Siyabonga High School as a control group	July 2021	1 day	All grade 11 learners at Siyabonga were part of the evaluation.

The overall aim of the intervention was discussed in Section 1.5 of Chapter 1. Healing or peace-making circles were the recommended approach to reduce school violence at MHS. The implementation of the program was divided into two parts, the morning peace-making circles and the transformative learning during the Life Orientation (LO) period. At MHS, on Mondays and Fridays, there is a morning assembly where all learners from grade 8 to 12 come together to pray with their teachers. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, the class teachers conduct morning prayers in their respective classrooms for 15 minutes. The researcher believes that there is time to pray and that there is time to relate. The researcher's suggestion was that instead of having morning prayers in the classrooms from Tuesdays to Thursdays, there should be peace-making circles in classrooms to set the tone for the day and to build relationships. The researcher's suggestion was accepted, and the experience is presented in Section 8.2. The experience of transformative learning during the LO periods is presented in Section 8.3.

8.2 Intervention 1: Peace-making Circles

Almost none of the teachers at MHS have any training in professional counseling. This means that they are not in a position to take care of the emotional well-being of learners. Some teachers have tried to address the issues with which learners are faced, but they become overwhelmed because of their seriousness, the time needed to deal with these issues, and the fact that it moves them away from the core responsibility of teaching and learning. Again, the curriculum does not give teachers enough time to pay attention to these issues since the core objective of being at school is learning and teaching. However, the program affords teachers an opportunity to navigate through these issues in a strategic way that does not require much of their time but that is of benefit to both the teacher and the learner. It benefits the learners in the sense that learners are able to talk about their emotions, and this helps them to relieve the tension that could otherwise do much damage to their well-being. Learners are also enabled to learn new ways to deal with undesirable emotions. Teachers benefit from the program because allowing the learners to talk about their emotions and reduce their stress helps to reduce the levels of conflict and violence occurring among learners. In addition, during the engagements, teachers gain an opportunity to become more acquainted with the learners and to deal with them accordingly and/or address any matter that needs to be addressed beyond the class engagements.

Peace-making circles were conducted to facilitate emotional healing and build healthy relationships amongst learners and between learners and their teachers. Conversations with teachers have helped children to develop new pathways that will lead to new habits (Chiramba and Harris 2020: 6). In addition to promoting emotional healing, the purpose was to teach learners new ways of dealing with emotional issues. The research team started with the peace-making circles on 18 February 2020. The researcher introduced themselves to the learners and introduced the peace-making circles and the procedure to be followed in the engagements. The circles were conducted during the time (15 minutes) allocated for morning prayers in classrooms. Peace-making circles were conducted on Tuesdays in grade 10A and on Wednesdays in grade 10B. The researcher led the sessions in the presence of the class teachers.

The reasoning behind involving the class teachers was for them to gain knowledge on the issues that affect learners and also for them to be in a position to lead the sessions without the help of the researcher.

In these sessions, the researcher emphasized the importance of speaking about how one feels and being able to be in touch with one's innermost feelings and emotions. Learning to identify how one feels and the reason for feeling the way that one does are important. It teaches one to learn to deal with the negative or undesirable feelings correctly and also to learn to let go of the undesirable emotions and feelings. Having negative or undesirable feelings and not knowing how to deal with them could lead to stress, anxiety, frustration, and anger, which could lead to aggressiveness and violent behavior. According to Bartsch (1996: 28):

Healing from the emotional pain starts with talking because if we don't talk the negative emotions accumulate causing us not to cope which can lead to spill over. When these emotions spill over, those who are around us get affected by the effects of the spill over.

The other reason for conducting peace-making circles is for children to learn to be a resource for one another, that is, learning that they can rely on each other as classmates and on their teachers for support, and also learning to support each other. In the circles, children learn about the importance of talking about their feelings in order to avoid stress and traumatic stress that, in most cases, leads to spillovers and affecting other people negatively (Bartsch 1996: 28). The circles cause learners to begin to know that they are valued, and this leads them to have healthy relationships with themselves and with others. If learners do not value and appreciate themselves, it becomes very difficult to value and appreciate others because human beings cannot give what they do not have. Lacking self-regard could lead to dysfunctional human beings. Classroom engagement teaches learners to trust others and to deal with their emotions constructively. It also makes them aware of what their peers are going through and to show empathy and sympathy to others.

The importance of confidentiality was emphasized where learners had to keep whatever that was shared confidential in order to protect each and every one of them. People should always take care of others by keeping their secrets within their sacred space and not share someone else's story without their permission, hence the emphasis on peace ground rules that were clearly stated about confidentiality. In the circles, the participants learned to relate to other people in healthy ways and learned to respect and value others mainly because they are human beings, they are worthy of respect, and they are a resource for all. They learned the importance of listening to others and not interrupting other people when talking because they would also want to be listened to. People want others to feel valued, important, and needed in their lives since people are who they are because of others around them or next to them.

That which emerged from the peace-making circles were issues that deeply affected learners. These involved issues such as family violence; parents not being well; learners' academic performance, such as disappointing test marks; learners failing to achieve the goals that they had set for themselves; and relationships with their peers that needed to be corrected. There were also positive aspects to talk about, such as their academic performance and excitement about how they were able to assist each other academically for those facing challenges in their academic work. A positive factor was that the teachers had also felt the need to share their feelings, both good and bad. The mere interest of the class teacher in sharing her feelings and emotions humanized the teaching process (see Section 3.5.1 in Chapter 3 on humanizing the teaching process). It made the learners realize that teachers are also human beings, that they also have feelings, and that learners are not the only ones who are going through unpleasant situations.

Some learners expressed their feelings about not being comfortable sharing their feelings with others. The researcher had clarified that in peace circles, participants should respect each other's feelings. Restorative practice aims to nurture respect, responsibility, and empathy within members of the school community and contributes

to the building of supportive communities and school discipline. One of the ways in which people support each other is to respect others' feelings. In respecting people's feelings, the researcher explained about drawing the line for oneself. There are issues above the line and those below the line. Issues above the line are those that individuals feel comfortable to share, and issues below the line are those that individuals are not comfortable to share (Bartsch 1996: 59). The decision on whether the issue is below or above the line is left to the individual, and each individual has to draw their own line. No one must be forced to talk about something that they do not want to talk about. However, together with the class teachers, the research team had to follow up on the learners who had issues that they did not feel comfortable to share. During the circles, some serious issues emerged, and the class teachers conducted some follow-ups on those learners with serious cases.

Some learners still felt uncomfortable sharing issues with their class teachers and kept their issues below the line for longer periods. This caused the research team to believe that there is a greater need for psychosocial support. There is a greater need for professional help for the learners who are hurting to avoid their psychological wounds from becoming septic. The danger of a septic psychological wound is that it ultimately affects other people negatively. If the undesirable feelings are not dealt with at the time that they arise, they can spill over into rebellious behavior inside and outside of the class.

During the circle sessions, many emotions were shared as learners felt unable to cope with their daily life challenges. It was during one of the sessions that one of the class teachers acknowledged the mistakes that "we sometimes make as adults of comparing siblings". One of the learners who felt uncomfortable in sharing her problem had a sibling in grade 12. The sibling was one of the highly intelligent learners at school, and the grade 10 learner was not performing well; notably, she was repeating grade 10. Sometimes, the teachers would be frustrated with the learner's performance so much so that they would remind the grade 10 learner about her sibling's performance in grade 12. The class teacher began to realize that this might have

caused distress to the grade 10 learner. The class teacher felt there was a need for her to talk to the grade 10 learner in order to ease the pain.

Unfortunately, the learner flatly refused to open up to the class about what was bothering her. The most unfortunate part was when the researcher returned to MHS in March 2021 to finish the program, at which time the learner's class teacher informed the researcher that she had fallen pregnant and dropped out of school. The sibling who was in grade 12 received an award for obtaining the best results from all other grade 12 learners, and she is currently at university pursuing her studies in medicine. According to the teacher, what concerns her is the fact that a gap between the two siblings had already been created.

8.3 Intervention 2: Transformative Learning

The Caregivers' Model was developed by Karl and Evelyn Bartsch who worked in South Africa in 1995 immediately after South Africa's first democratic elections. During the time when the model was developed, Karl was a psychologist with more than 20 years of experience working in a psychiatric institution, and his wife, Evelyn, was a social worker in the same institution. Their task was to design a model specifically for South Africans who had gone through the difficult apartheid era. It was necessary for the model to facilitate the healing process of the psychological and emotional wounds created by oppression. Figure 8.1 depicts the victim healing processes.

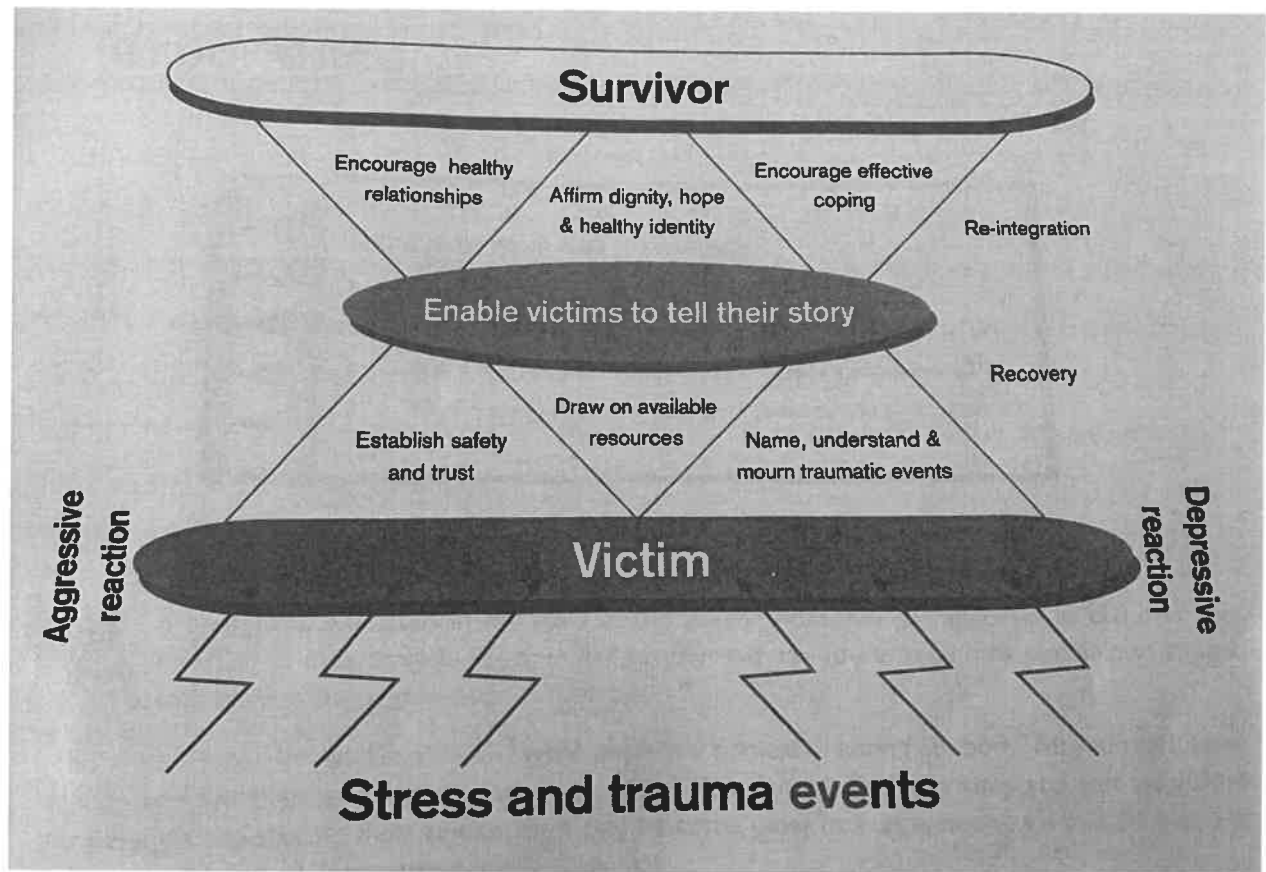


Figure 8.1 : Victim healing processes

Figure 8.1: Victim healing processes.

The model is a process of exploring and discovering how one can find wholeness in oneself and use one's healed wounds to enable others to find wholeness for themselves. The Caregivers' Model has been used to empower church leaders in KwaZulu-Natal to help them to deal with the issues of stress and trauma among their congregants. The reason why the researcher chose the Caregivers' Model is because of its success in bringing about healing from stress and trauma within the church community. In addition, the researcher was part of the team that contributed to the development of the manual for caregivers and was also amongst the first people to be trained to facilitate workshops using the Caregivers' Model from 1995 to 1996. This experience gave the researcher confidence in the model as a valuable tool to take to schools, following its effectiveness in the church community. Having seen and

witnessed the effectiveness of the model – in both its content and pedagogy – the researcher was confident that it could bring positive outcomes to a school community.

The Caregivers' Model was designed to set the tone for the day in each classroom. It is designed in such a way to be proactive and reactive to school violence. As adults, teachers, and parents already know what challenges learners will face as they progress to young adulthood, they, therefore, need to be proactive to avoid any damage. The program was implemented for MHS grade 10 learners in 2020 and was continued for grade 11 learners in 2021 at MHS. There were two grade 11 classes, namely, grade 11A and grade 11B. In grade 11A, there were 22 learners doing commerce-related subjects, while in grade 11B, there were 52 learners doing science-related and general subjects.

The time allocated for the program involved using the LO period twice a month in each class. The research team also had morning engagements on Tuesdays in grade 11A and Wednesdays in grade 11B during the time for morning prayers. The morning sessions for prayers were carried out to set the tone for the day to allow learners and teachers to talk about their feelings. During the LO periods, the learners were empowered with skills to deal with conflict in peaceful ways. Learners were able to brainstorm on topics that they felt needed to be covered and relating to any form of violence, conflict (mediation and management), peace, and other issues affecting their lives. They were given opportunities to engage in a topic via participation in role plays, writing posters with peace messages, and writing poems or composing songs on issues relating to peace. While some learners were acting, singing, and reciting poems, other classmates were observers, and, at the end of each activity, the rest of the class were given an opportunity for reflection. Learners were encouraged to comment on the negative or positive message of the activities and develop solutions on how to respond to such situations.

The researcher's plans were significantly affected by the COVID-19-related restrictions. The program was supposed to be implemented for learners in grade 10, their parents, grade 10 teachers, and stakeholders. However, because of the outbreak

of the coronavirus and the lockdown restrictions, it became difficult to invite parents and stakeholders to come to school mainly because of social-distancing rules and the fear of becoming infected. The teachers were also not in a position to partake in such activities because of the lockdown restrictions and limited time that they had to finish the syllabus. The lockdown for schools meant that learners would attend school on alternate weeks, meaning that grade 10 learners would only come to school for 2 instead of 4 weeks every month. This meant that the program had to be placed on hold immediately after starting the implementation for grade 10 learners in 2020 and had to be restarted for grade 11 learners in 2021. It also meant that the researcher could only implement the program after school hours for 1 hour and only 2 days a month from March to May 2021. Since there were two grade 11 classes, the researcher was able to visit the school twice a week and engage with learners from each class separately. The program was implemented for 6 days in each class. A summary of the intervention has been provided in Table 8.1.

Even though the program was implemented for grade 11 learners, it was designed in such a way that it could also be implemented for grade eight learners when they first enter high school. The rationale for starting the program in grade eight was that this is the learners' first year in high school and their minds are still uncorrupted by the negative influences and attitudes of high-school life. The researcher's observation was that many learners in higher grades in high school have an "I know it all" or "I don't care" attitude. The findings of the research revealed that learners in grade eight still have a "childlike innocence". In grade nine and 10, they begin to exhibit high-school tendencies. In knowing about the learners' habits and attitudes when they enter high school, one has to be proactive and deal with these attitudes and tendencies before they start. Even though the program was first implemented for grade 10 learners at MHS, the way that it is structured makes it suitable to be introduced and implemented for all grades, especially grade eight learners and primary school learners.

8.3.1 Transformative Learning Logistics

Before the research team started with the implementation of the program during the LO periods, the researcher asked the learners to lay down ground rules of engagement for themselves in line with the school policy. The researcher also clarified that since they were the ones who had laid down the rules, the expectation was that they would abide by their own rules. This helped to keep learners on their best behavior and to discipline each other if there was anyone who was not abiding by the rules. It also gave them power to know that they were able to exercise their democratic rights and freedom within a controlled environment. The ground rules devised by the learners included the following:

- We will respect all teachers
- We will respect and support each other
- We will treat each other like brothers and sisters
- We will keep our classroom clean
- We will help each other with subjects that are difficult
- We will be serious about our study tasks at all times
- We must have a spirit of sharing
- We will not judge each other
- We will not gossip

The large difference in the number of learners in the grade 11 classes (22 learners in grade 11A and 52 in grade 11B) caused many complications when class management was concerned. In grade 11A, the learners were more disciplined, it was very easy to manage them, and they were very attentive. Almost all the learners participated in class activities. In grade 11B, the number of learners made it difficult to manage class activities. The learners were chaotic, and it took time for them to settle down at the beginning of the periods and once they would start moving. In grade 11B, some learners were very quiet and reserved, and there were those who were very loud and

dominating. In this class, it was very difficult to give learners all the attention that they needed because if the researcher concentrated on one learner's needs, the other learners would lose interest in the class activity and start talking amongst themselves; once they would start talking, it was always difficult for them to stop. Because of the abovementioned reasons, it was always emotionally draining to engage with them. Learner participation in grade 11B was minimal. The rate of failure was also higher than in the other class. In 2020, while they were in grade 10, the numbers were larger, and the teachers told the researcher that the reason was that they had a higher number of repeaters in that class. After almost every session, there would be more learners wanting to engage with the researcher privately in grade 11B.

Confidentiality means that whatever one is told in confidence cannot be shared with anyone else without the consent of the person who related the story to one. When sharing one's emotions in classrooms, one has to keep everything confidential. Confidentiality is important to protect the identity, integrity, and information that has been shared in confidence. If one keeps all that is shared with one's peers in the classroom confidential, one is worth trusting, and this is how one is able to build an emotional trust account for oneself and others. The emotional trust account, therefore, becomes a resource that one can always tap into in the future should one have any emotional issues with which to deal. If one does not keep what has been shared in the classroom confidential, one is not worth trusting, and this can create conflict and enmity amongst people. This might cause people whose secrets have been revealed without their consent to become victimized for the second time by what has happened to them. This could make it difficult for them to trust anyone in the future.

On the first day of the research team's engagement with the learners, introductions were carried out by allowing each learner to state their name, surname, expectations (from teachers, classmates, and what could be expected from them), purpose (for themselves), guidelines for classroom processes, and the vision for the class. In telling the research team their names, each learner had to provide the history or meaning behind their names; during this process, they began to affirm themselves and realize

that they all had goodness in themselves. The learners also talked about what it meant to be in grade 10 and to be a learner at MHS: what was the purpose for their being at school, and what they wanted or expected to achieve. The researcher started the conversation by introducing themselves, giving their name and the history or meaning behind their name to give learners an idea of what was expected of them. The class teacher and learners followed the same pattern of introducing themselves.

The introductions were an interesting and exciting activity for the learners in both grade 10 classes. There were a mixture of feelings and emotions as the learners introduced themselves, giving the history behind their names. The mixture of emotions came from both the sad and memorable histories behind the learners' names. In addition, several painful experiences were shared by the learners during this session as they unpacked the meaning behind their names. What made it exciting was that the LO teacher also participated in the activity. When the LO teacher introduced himself, the learners began to laugh and whisper to each other. It was again emphasized that what was done during this exercise was confidential and that it should, therefore, remain within the classroom. It was also interesting to listen to the history behind the learners' names as the histories of some were very memorable while those of others were sad. This short history around each learner's name gave the researcher and the LO teacher some form of background information on each learner. This was highly appreciated by the teacher since it gave him a better understanding of each learner and the reason why some learners behaved the way that they did. It also became obvious that some learners were socialized through violence even before they were born.

Most learners were born out of wedlock, and learners' names were given through doubt and denial of the child's paternity by the father or the paternal grandmother. Learners would state with pride how their fathers and/or grandmothers were proven to be incorrect when they were born because of the resemblance between the child and the father or the father's family. The most unfortunate aspect was that the denial or doubt by the father or the grandmother in some families has led to long-lasting friction, tension, anger, hatred, and bitterness, and these are some of the issues that cause

violence in families. As the mothers and their families would have been trying to validate the paternity of the child, much hatred, bitterness, and self-doubt would have been instilled in the learners. The issue of trust was highlighted here as the main reason for denying and doubting the child's paternity. In other families, this has led to unresolved conflict. One of the positive outcomes from the entire scenario was that all the learners had positive meanings, which helped them to affirm themselves once the meanings had been unpacked.

During the peace-making circles, the learners had the experience of sharing their emotions, and this continued during the transformative learning sessions. As a facilitator, the researcher began by sharing their own feelings as this would make the researcher vulnerable to the learners. The activity allowed learners to see that the classroom was a safe environment to share as trust was built through the activity. Through sharing, they began to let go of their undesirable feelings, and healing began through this exercise. They learned to have sympathy and empathy for others going through pain. They learned to pay attention and listen to what others were sharing. They began to understand the difference between sharing a joke or sharing about pain and how to respond accordingly. By doing so, they learned to depend on and take care of each other and become resources for one another. They began to understand that suppressing undesired emotions was damaging to their lives.

8.3.2 Transformative Learning Curriculum

Table 8.2 provides a summary of the main topics covered during the LO sessions.

Table 8.2: Summary of the curriculum content.

1. The distinction between conflict and violence

A correct and common understanding of these means that learners can speak more effectively in terms of developing ways of addressing the problem. School violence has been discussed in depth in Chapter 2 in

Section 2.4.4. After the presentation of the definition, the learners were given an opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

2. The causes of violence

- ❖ Bottling up our anger – spillover model
- ❖ Intergenerational transmission – how being violent can result in the next generation being violent as well

3. Preventing violence

The question is how to find a constructive way of resolving conflict that can allow conflicting parties to work together and, thus, prevent it from becoming violent. The purpose behind resolving conflict is to enjoy relationships that are not characterized by hierarchy but marked by equality, respect, participation, mutual enrichment, and growth.

4. Benefits of conflict resolution

- Conflict resolution promotes consensus-building, social bridge reconstructions, and the enactment of order in society, offering great prospects for peaceful co-existence and harmonious relationships.
- It promotes communication, negotiation, dialogue, and collaborative problem solving.
- In trying to resolve conflict, seven Cs must be avoided, namely, commanding, comparing, condemning, challenging, condescending, contradicting, and confusing.
- The major principle of conflict resolution is to separate people from the problem, focusing on interests rather than positions investing in options for mutual gain.

5. Mediation

- Mediation is a problem-solving process where a neutral party assists disputants to reach a mutually acceptable agreement.
- Mediation allows for taking into account a wider range of interests of the parties with a greater chance of reaching an agreement that will be voluntarily respected.
- Mediation has played a crucial role in transforming conflict and improving relationships between conflicting parties.

6. Transforming conflict

- Conflict transformation seeks to “envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes” (that reduce violence, increase justice, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships (Lederach 2003 cited in Okem and Ettang 2015: 1). (Refer to section 2.5).
- Conflict transformation has deliberately included the aftermath of the conflict in its focus, including factors such as traumas, fears, hurt, and hatred that might remain to poison future events.
- It is a process that enables the transformation of conflict from its destructive and violent forms into a more productive form (this could include dialogues and creative and peaceful means).
- Transformation is relationship centered and works to build something desirable out of destruction, works to initiate immediate and long-term change, and sees conflict as an opportunity to respond to systems and engage with systems where the relationships are embedded.
- At a personal level, conflict transformation improves the well-being of people by providing awareness programs and counseling and ensuring human security. At a relational level, it improves personal

relationships through communication, and at a structural level, it addresses the root causes of conflict and ensures basic facilities and socioeconomic equality and participation in the decision-making body. At a cultural level, it addresses the factors that contribute to conflict, such as the search for identity and traditional values, thereby respecting the cultures and traditions of others.

7. Restorative approaches

- Understanding the difference between retribution/revenge and restorative justice
- Restorative approaches help to set the tone for the day and create a trusting environment conducive to learning and teaching.
- Learners and teachers have formal or informal conversations, building communities and healing to address conflict.
- It helps to address issues before they escalate, assists in community building, and assists teachers in teaching the curriculum.
- Restorative approaches humanize the process of education and create opportunities for learners to form pro-social attachments to their teachers and fellow learners.
- Participants in the peace circles feel safer and more understood and accepted after participating.

8.3.3 Pedagogy

A transformative learning approach (as discussed in Section 3.3 in Chapter 3) was applied during the LO sessions. Learners were given an opportunity to role-play, compose and perform songs or poems, and/or engage in debates. The learners who were not performing would also observe for intelligent reflections afterward. During the time for reflection, the researcher would develop themes along the topics being discussed. Figure 8.2 depicts a role-playing session on handling conflict.



Figure 8.2 : A role-playing session on handling conflict

Figure 8.2: A role-playing session on handling conflict.

This was carried out through role plays concerning some issue of conflict and violence, where learners would create a scenario and emulate it while others were watching. At the end of the role plays, there would be an engagement regarding what had been observed and the correct ways of resolving conflict. Sometimes, the researcher would ask them to compose songs and write poems and rap music and perform these in front of everyone in the class. At the end of each performance, there would be time for reflection. Almost all the learners would have something to comment on afterward, and these comments were often quite insightful.

The scenarios for the role plays were real-life experiences, such as those with their siblings and parents at home, friends, classmates, teachers, and other members of

the community. It was noticeable that even when they were asked to compose songs and poems with positive peace messages, most of the messages would be about the pain that they had felt when they were being abused. However, what was favorable was that, ultimately, they would remember to have a message about peace.

During the story-telling sessions, the learners were given an opportunity to share their feelings freely and why they felt the way that they were feeling. Several traumatic stories were told by the learners. The reasoning behind this exercise was to give learners an opportunity to talk about anything that had given them negative feelings to facilitate healing and prevent the spilling over of emotions into violent actions (Bartsch 1996: 58). The feedback that the researcher received from the learners after this exercise was that a load had been removed from them as they were able to talk about matters that they had kept to themselves for a very long time. They further stated that what had led them to feel better was hearing what other learners had shared. Through the sharing, they realized that they were not the only ones going through pain and that sometimes other people's pain was worse than their own. The consequences of bottling up such emotions – that is, that they may result in depression or aggression – was discussed.

Some learners broke down and cried about their situations at home, sharing their frustration and anger regarding what was happening in their families, such as the anger about mothers who would tolerate abuse from their husbands. The favorable outcome of this was the learners' (females') conviction to focus on education such that they could be more empowered and financially independent in such a way that they would not tolerate abuse from their partners in the future.

The story-telling sessions were not enough because of the number of learners per class and because of the issues that the learners shared, which needed more attention. When the research team first started engaging with the learners, some learners would laugh at and make jokes about other learners' emotions, feelings, and situations. Other learners were plainly disruptive – chaotic and talking while others

were sharing. This would occur during the morning reflections on how they were feeling, with some learners becoming emotional and unwilling to share what was bothering them. One learner shared how her father was stabbed the previous night and “not knowing of my father’s condition causes me not to concentrate in class”. When the participants started talking about their emotions, some of the learners needed to discuss their issues further and privately with the researcher afterward; this mostly occurred in grade 11B where the number of learners was very large and uncontrollable. Learners would consistently tease the oldest learner (he was 3 years older than most of the learners): they would state phrases such as “*idlozi lethu*”, meaning “he is an ancestor”, and would start laughing whenever it was his turn to speak even before he could say anything. What was disturbing was the way he responded when he would laugh in return, not because he was happy about what was being said but because he felt powerless and embarrassed and did not know how to respond, which showed that he had internalized and accepted this type of abuse. Figure 8.3 depicts part of the presentation on conflict.

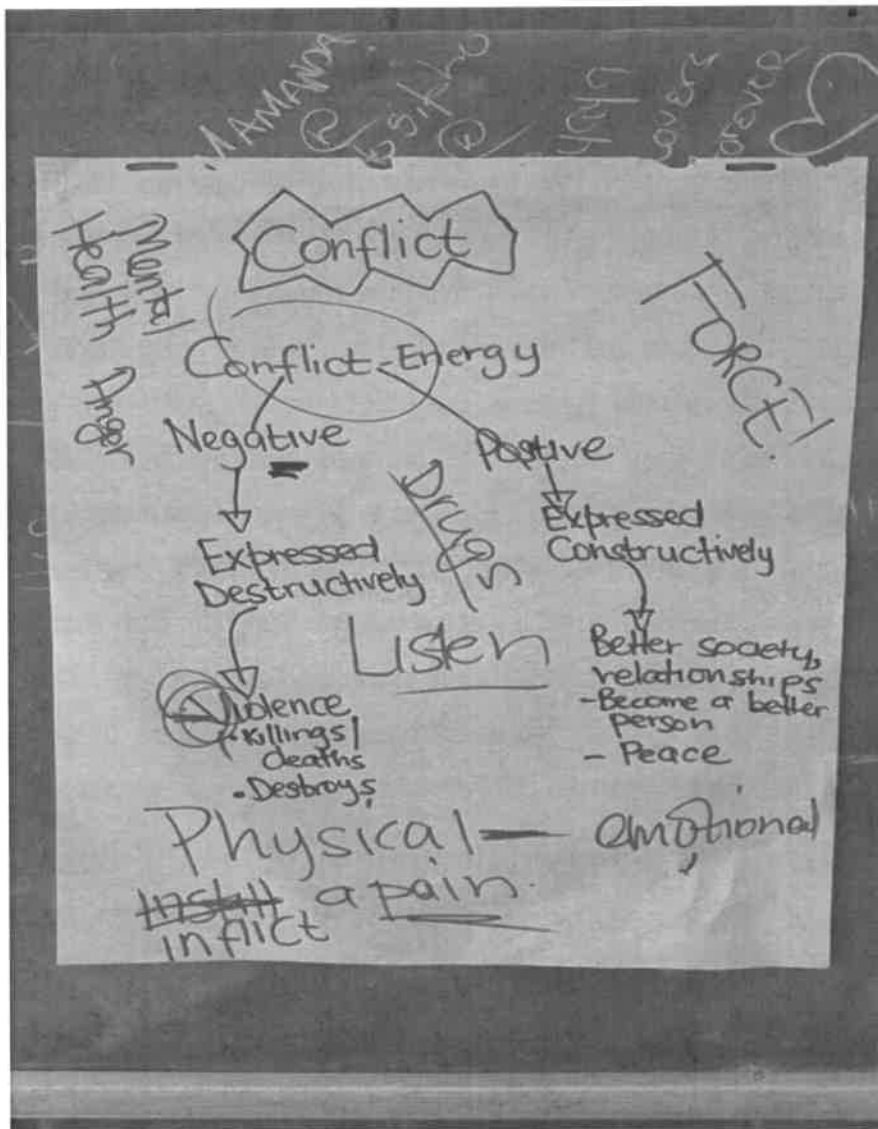


Figure 8.3 : Part of the presentation on conflict

Affirmation exercises teach one to learn to see goodness in other people. Most people have never had an opportunity to be affirmed. One first begins to affirm oneself, and, subsequently, one learns to affirm others. If one is not affirmed, it might become difficult for one to affirm other people. If one affirms other people, it means that one sees goodness in them. If one sees goodness in other people, it might become easier to form healthy relationships with them, and this can stop one from hurting others. Affirmations were done by writing one positive word next to a person's name, where everyone had an opportunity to be affirmed and affirm others. At the start of the

exercise, the process was not easy because most learners did not want to write anything positive about others, and instead, they wrote negative comments. The session became chaotic as those who had negative words next to their names became angry and would try to force those who had written negative aspects about them to erase their comments. During this time, there would be much running around as learners would chase each other while others were being entertained by the writing and chasing. However, by the end of the session, everyone was satisfied and happy.

8.4 Issues and Feelings that Emerged

8.4.1 Abuse

The abuse in learners' families would mainly come from their fathers and paternal grandparents who, most of the time, denied the children's paternity. Since most of the learners had been born out of wedlock and the parents were younger than the normal or usual age for childbearing, the pregnancies had to be reported to the father's family who, in most cases, would deny the paternity of the baby. In most cases, the potential fathers and their mothers would deny paternity because of the fear of an extra financial burden on the family.

When the children would introduce themselves to the whole class, they had to affirm themselves by giving the meaning of their names. Most of the names and meanings were related to the incidences of being denied – the learners' mothers and their families would relate these stories to the learners as they grew older. However, what made the learners with such histories happy was the positive meanings of their names or the positive outcomes of the paternity results for names such as "Thobekile", meaning "the humble one". The explanation given was that the mother remained humbled throughout the process even though she had felt humiliated. What concerned the researcher was the negative outcome of the relationship between the fathers' families and the learners who would grow up with anger and hatred toward their fathers' families.

Another issue was that of someone who had been abandoned by his mother as a newborn baby. His mother had left him with the father's family, and since the father remarried, the relationship between the child and the stepmother has not been good. The boy has never met his mother, and, although he has tried everything to get in contact with her, nothing has materialized. He has now given up and does not want anything to do with her; even if she were to come now, he would not be interested in building any form of relationship with her. He would continuously state, "I hate her even if she can come now, I will not accept her. I suffered a lot because of her, right now I am staying with an abusive stepmother who has never accepted me". One of the learners comes from a family of warlords who do not hesitate to shoot or kill anyone who is a threat to them or anyone who has done wrong to the family. There was an incident where one of the uncles had been shot dead in front of the learner as an act of retaliation for another person who had been killed by the uncles, and a few months later, the uncles retaliated by killing the suspect.

8.4.2 Fears

Female learners expressed their feelings of being fearful of becoming involved in intimate relationships because of the abuse that they had seen their mothers going through. They feared that they might be abused by their partners as they grew older. Some feared the negative outcomes of their own abuse toward others, such as their siblings or other family members. They feared repeating the cycle of violence and that they would also grow up to become abusers similar to those who had abused them. Some learners mentioned that growing up neglected had caused them to believe that they would neglect their own children once they would start having children of their own.

Others felt neglected by their mothers and feared being alone on the weekends while the mothers were working (domestic and migrant workers). Some feared rejection by their peers in the situation of not agreeing on matters. The fear of corporal punishment in the case of wrongful actions was also expressed, while others feared repeating the same grade, as had happened previously.

Some of the emotions shared involved the anger of knowing that “you were neglected or abandoned as a child”. What made one learner even more angry was that she had made an effort to look for her parent using the information given to her by her mother, but her father was nowhere to be found. When listening to such stories, the learners began to have empathy for others who were living in such situations. There were feelings of remorse from the rest of the class as they began to listen attentively to the stories. At times, because of the sympathy they had, other learners would even have suggestions on how to handle the situation. They would beg those who were victims to learn forgiveness for the possibility of having an opportunity to meet their parents in the future.

8.5 Reflecting on the Interventions

The researcher learned that the issues were intertwined, interrelated, and interconnected. One issue would lead to another, and if the issues were not resolved or addressed at the appropriate time, it would become difficult to resolve them later in life. An example was the issue of a girl who was found with marijuana at school. Apparently, her father was selling drugs in order to provide food for his family, but he was also involved in using drugs. The girl started using the drugs because it was freely available at home; sometimes, she would sell them to customers when her father was not there. When she was caught with drugs at school, the police were called in. Unfortunately, she did not see anything wrong with what she was doing because she had to do what she was doing in order to have food for the family. However, this had then put her at risk of being arrested or expelled from school, and her only recourse would be to continue with her father’s business of selling drugs.

Another issue was that of a female learner who was very aggressive because she was staying with her uncle who was always physically abusing her. Whenever other children would beat her, she would run home and report the matter to her uncle, who would beat her severely, chase her out, and tell her that she should go back and learn to fight for herself because she cannot be defeated by other children. She had nowhere else to go because her mother had abandoned her as a child and left her

with the uncle's family. The result was that she was the most aggressive learner and the most feared learner at school, even by male learners. At school, there were always cases of her involvement in fights.

The researcher became aware of the extent to which learners desired alternatives to violence or the means for the peaceful resolution of conflict, in the case of the learner who came from a family of warlords, for example. During the sessions, he related how much he hated being part of his family and that he could see himself becoming involved in the same actions as his father and uncles. Another learner in grade nine told the researcher of his ambition to become the head boy in order to fix issues and help the principal put an end to violence. The researcher had a discussion about him with the principal, and the principal was notably excited about what the learner had stated. In 2020, he started canvassing with other learners to elect him to be the president of the school. When he was elected, he did precisely what he had told the researcher that he wanted to do. He has a very close relationship with the principal and other teachers, and they have much trust in him. He was always very helpful during the study's sessions and would encourage others to act in correct ways.

One of the learners who was his (the president's) classmate in grade nine and one of the unruly ones had to repeat grade nine because of his behavior. However, through the president's behavior, he was motivated to change, and he told the researcher that he had chosen the president as his role model. He also started canvassing to be elected to be the deputy president, and, to the surprise of all, he became the deputy president; this is when his behavior started changing for the better. The researcher had a conversation with him and asked him what had caused him to change his behavior. His response was that many younger learners would look up to him as the deputy president and he did not want to disappoint them because of his behavior. His goal now is to become the president when the current president leaves the school after completing matric. What were notable were most of the learners' responses during the baseline survey regarding the type of learners who were most unlikely to become involved in violence. The response was that those who were part of the

Learner Representative Council were the most unlikely to become involved in violent actions because they knew that others would be looking up to them. Because he had to repeat grade nine in 2020, he is still in grade 10 and not part of the sessions as the rest of the learners who were in grade nine when the researcher started the study, but the researcher organized a special meeting with him because he fervently wanted to update the researcher about his behavioral change. This experience made the researcher realize that there was much potential in young people to become peacebuilders. Notably, the researcher was struck when some learners started referring to themselves as “peacebuilders” because the research team had never stated anything regarding peacebuilders during the sessions. The researcher learned that learners are capable of resolving their own issues with the correct type of support and correct mentalities and that the learners are not as ill-disciplined as they are perceived to be; they can be very supportive, kind, and gentle toward each other.

8.5.1 Learners can Develop Skills to Handle Conflicts Well

There was also a session where learners were engaged in conflict transformation and the subject of how conflict can be expressed destructively (negatively) and constructively (positively). Destructively expressed conflict can lead to violence and killings, which is the reason for calling it *destructive*. Constructively expressed conflict can lead to good interpersonal relationships and peace and has the potential to lead to people becoming better individuals. During this session, the learners came to realize that there were a range of alternatives available to them.

Some encouraging information emerged from a debate that was held regarding whether violence was a positive or negative issue. The research team divided the class into two halves, one for the negative side and the other for the positive side. At the end of the debate, those who were arguing that violence was good explained that what they were stating during the debate was stated for the sake of argument and to keep the debate proceeding. It was truly encouraging to hear them state that they did not believe in violence and that it was only for the sake of the debate that they had had to take a stand. Some of the issues that they touched on were corporal

punishment and the system of oppression, referring to how the previous regime took everything by force and how the African National Congress and its allies embarked on the armed struggle in order to liberate the Black majority who were being oppressed. They also touched on domestic violence and how it affects everyone within the family. After this exercise, the learners were asked to write messages of peace and hope. The following are some of the messages that the learners wrote:

We are the one, we are the future, so let us stop killing one another.

Peace cannot be achieved through violence. Peace can only be attained through understanding.

Forget who hurt you yesterday but focus on the present that make you smile and have peace.

8.5.2 Learners can Learn to Trust

Both the boys and girls composed songs (rap music was their favorite). The messages in the songs concerned “trusting nobody” – after they had sung their songs, there was a lengthy discussion about trust. Apparently, they had trust issues because of past experiences with the people whom they had trusted and who were very close to them. One of the learner’s songs was also based on her experience of sexual abuse, which had affected her life since the age of 6 years.

In one of the engagements, the learners prepared songs with positive messages of peace. The messages would encourage other learners to continue praying, to love one another, and to learn peaceful ways of resolving conflict. This was in reference to some learners who had issues with their mothers. One learner was deserted by his mother as a young child. He was left with his father’s family, he has never met his mother, and his relationship with his stepmother has not been good. He has much

anger toward his mother, and he does not want to see her again. Another learner's mother was a drug addict together with her boyfriend. This caused the mother to neglect the learner and her younger siblings. The younger siblings were always abused, which would cause the learner to lose concentration in class. The learners talked about their feelings or emotions, letting others know how they felt. The engagements about feelings always provided an opportunity to vent about the emotional issues that directly affected the learners. One of the learners shared her fear that she would fail and repeat grade 11; she had failed grade 12 previously in another school and had decided to return to grade 11 in order to gain a good matric background.

Another learner had a problem with her father who was very physically abusive, often without provocation, toward the whole family. He had grown up in such an environment and strongly believed that using a sjambok was the only way that he could discipline his wife and children. Having discussed alternative nonviolent ways to deal with conflict, the learner became committed to practicing these.

8.5.3 Positive Affirmations Build Learners up

The learners were also given an opportunity to affirm themselves. This was done such that they could learn to love and believe in themselves, to see goodness in themselves, and also to build their confidence and self-esteem. What became evident was that many learners, and the girls to a greater extent, poured out their emotions through the engagements. Most of them had previously had negative experiences, and they used this platform to vent their feelings, anger, and pain. At the end of each exercise, the rest of the class were given an opportunity to reflect and give feedback to the learners. Only positive affirmations were encouraged because this was a character-building exercise. In reflecting on the exercise, the focus was more on the message that was being portrayed by the group rather than their acting skills. Kindness, gentleness, and affirmation were the expected responses from the teachers and fellow classmates. The affirmations from the teachers and fellow learners helped the learners build relationships within themselves, which was needed before they

could even begin to build relationships with other people. Through this exercise, a culture of seeing goodness in others and the spirit of Ubuntu in Southern Africa, which embodies the restorative justice ideology exhibited through traditional ceremonies, were promoted. It must be emphasized that there was no competition in these exercises, but, instead, this was intended for learning and encouraging peaceful co-existence among learners.

8.5.4 Learners can be a Resource for Each Other

People's interconnectedness and interdependence lead them to be resources for one other. People become resources for each other by being present to listen to each other and give each other support in times of need. During this exercise, the learners were given an opportunity to stand in the form of a circle, throw a ball of wool to anyone within the circle, and state any positive message to that person. The positive messages were an affirmation to the person to whom the wool was thrown. Everyone had an opportunity to be affirmed and to affirm others. The people standing in the circle had connections to other members of the group through the wool, which makes one realize that people are connected to each other; that by being connected, people become a resource for each other; and that if one lets go of the wool, one loses one's connection to others. Figure 8.4 depicts this exercise and people's interconnectedness and their being a resource for one another.

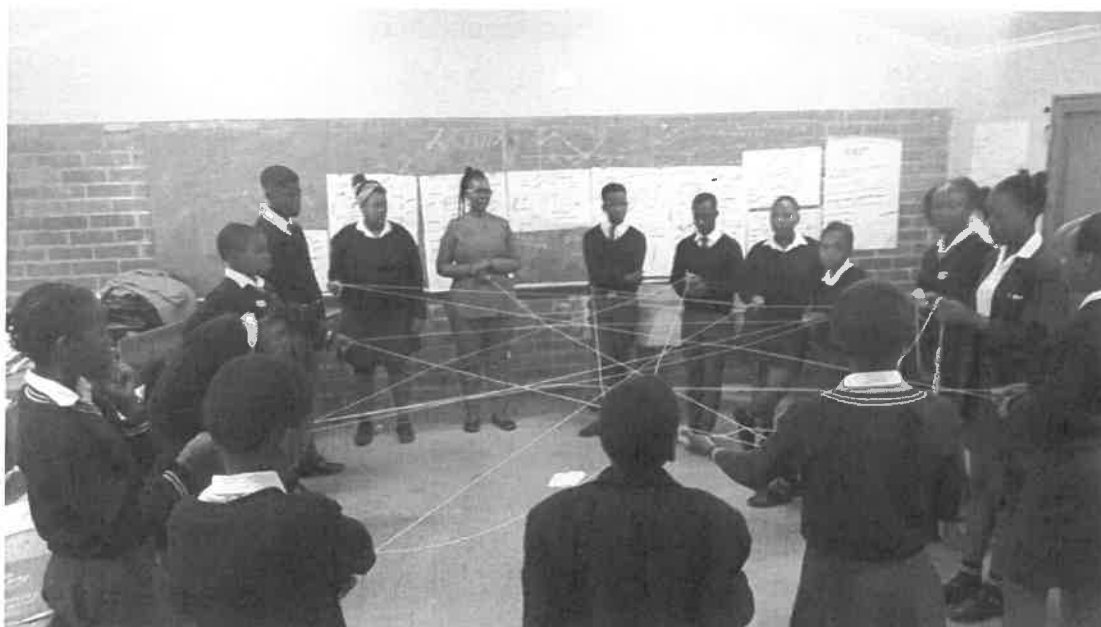


Figure 8.4 : Illustrating people's interconnectedness and being a resource for one another

8.5.5 Learners Need Psychosocial Support

As the teachers listened to the learners engaging with each other during the peace-making circles, it was confirmed that there was a greater need for psychosocial support for the learners at MHS. In each of the sessions, the learners had sad stories to relate when talking about their feelings. Some learners would state that the pain was unbearable and that they did not feel comfortable talking about what was happening in their lives. These were some of the cases that confirmed that there is a need for ongoing psychosocial support. Almost all the teachers are not qualified to deal with difficult cases relating to emotions, and if they try to further interrogate learners, the experience might cause harm to the teachers because of the number of cases that need professional help. One class teacher has vowed to use the same method for her learners in the subsequent year because of the realization of the effectiveness of the peace-making circles. She would consistently make comments about how she was gaining first-hand experience to know more about her learners and the issues with which they were faced. She was also impressed by how empowering the process was in terms of allowing all learners to state something about

themselves and how even those who were always quiet in class had an opportunity to open up.

It was emphasized that some of the issues were below the line while others were above the line. The issues above the line were shared freely and voluntarily as matters that would not cause harm to the one sharing should the information be heard by those who were not part of the process. Information below the line was the type of information that people were not willing to share with others. This type of information can be shared with professionals because of its sensitivity and the damage that it might cause if it is relayed to the wrong people. Confidentiality was consistently emphasized.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter looked for solutions to school violence and the relevant intervention strategy to be implemented in the experiment school, that is, MHS. From what the participants stated, the researcher was able to design a program relevant to the challenges causing violence at MHS. The intervention strategy was informed by what people had stated in the collected data. The chapter explained the step-by-step process that was followed when implementing the program. It also explained why the program was introduced to grade nine learners in 2019 and why the implementation process was carried out in the following year in 2020 for grade 10 learners and 2021 for grade 11 learners. Lastly, the chapter clarified the teachers' role in the implementation process. Chapter 9 presents the summary of the research findings and recommendations.

9 CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

In chapter 8 was about designing and implementation of the relevant intervention strategy on school violence at MHS. The designed intervention programme was informed by the data collected from participants. Only grade 9 learners participated in the implementation of the programme. Chapter 9 presents the summary of the research findings and recommendations. The research problem, in the simplest terms, was the high levels of violence that are present in South African schools, which occur in the context of a violent society. The overall aim of the study was to experiment with the matter of whether teachers and learners can be educated to gain the knowledge and skills that can help them build a culture of peace in their schools. The specific objectives were:

- To explore the nature, extent, causes, and effects of violence in two schools in the rural community of Bhekulwandle and Lovu Township, to identify past and present efforts to resolve violence in the schools, and to design and implement a program in one of the schools aimed at reducing the level of violence
- To carry out an interim evaluation of the outcome of the program

The researcher followed an action research approach; thus, there were three phases to the project, with each being linked to one of the research objectives. These were the exploration (reported in Chapter 7), the implementation (reported in Chapter 8), and the evaluation (reported in Section 9.3.3) phases.

This chapter provides a summary of the results associated with each objective, the researcher's reflections, and some recommendations.

9.2 Research Findings

9.2.1 Exploration

The exploration was based on data collected at MHS and SHS from April to July 2019. The findings revealed that the school community was trapped in a vicious cycle of violence because the problems relating to school violence are intertwined. The following discussion presents the research findings.

Gang violence creates factions within schools because gang members fight for territorial spaces (see Section 7.3.2 in Chapter 7). Teenage pregnancy is high (see Section 7.4.2 in Chapter 7). Some parents are too young to be parents and are unable to take care of their children. As a result, some teachers encountered the situation of teaching three generations from the same school. Gender-based violence is high among male learners (see Section 7.3.3 in Chapter 7). Because of socialization, boys use force or violence to approach or propose to girls. This leads to fights among learners defending their siblings, leading to family and faction fights. Teachers having love affairs or relationships with learners resulted in learners losing respect for teachers. Changes in the working hours were beneficial (school starts at 6:00 am) because it improved the academic performance of learners, but sometimes, parents worry about the safety of their children and more so in the winter when they have to leave their homes while it is still very dark. Learners feel unsafe at school because of violence, resulting in high rates of school dropouts. They fear going to school and being inside the school premises. However, learners feel safe around their teachers and in classrooms, and they trust their teachers more than their parents.

Anger caused by a lack of support leads to aggressiveness, unruly behavior, a “I do not care” attitude, loss of respect for adults and peers, and expulsion from school. Socialization and the intergenerational transmission of trauma and violence mean that if parents are violent, their children are, therefore, violent (see Section 7.4.1 in Chapter 7). Teachers become overwhelmed by all the demands and, therefore, cannot give learners enough academic support. Some children have lost their lives due to gang violence, community violence, faction fights, and family violence, which, in most cases,

start inside the school premises and spill over to the community. There is much anger among male learners, and this is more so directed toward male teachers. It is assumed that this is caused by the anger that learners have toward their fathers who desert them.

There is a lack of psychosocial support (relating to the interrelation of social factors and individual thoughts and behaviors) caused by a lack of parental support, some learners being orphaned, and some heading households. The absence of recreational activities causes learners to become overwhelmed by stress, leading to frustration and anger taken out on the wrong targets (see Section 7.4.2 in Chapter 7). Learners are frustrated by the lack of recreational activities. A lack of opportunities for school leavers leads to unemployment and contributes to poverty. As a result, school leavers resort to drug trafficking and alcohol and drug abuse. Excessive power is given to the SGBs, leading to corruption. Some members of the SGBs are illiterate and are unemployed, causing them to be vulnerable to bribes and corruption from teachers wanting teaching positions (see Section 7.4.3 in Chapter 7). A lack of parental involvement in school matters and parents not attending parents' meetings lead to conflict between the school and the parents. Parents who do not attend parents' meetings are not aware of the decisions taken in meetings (see Section 7.4.3 in Chapter 7). Sometimes, teachers ill-treat learners and cause them to display rude behavior toward teachers.

With high levels of school violence, academic performance is compromised, leading to poor matric results. Teachers fighting for positions causes tension among staff members and, in some cases, leads to murder (see Section 7.4.3 in Chapter 7). Teacher employment processes cause conflict; violence; and, sometimes, murder since these are handled by illiterate and unemployed members of the SGBs. Being a teacher in a school where there is a high level of violence is embarrassing: it creates an unfavorable image for the school and the teachers. Teachers from other schools look down upon teachers teaching in schools where the level of violence is high. Children are unruly; some are not accustomed to discipline because they are heading

households. Learners hate violence because it retards their progress and development and compromises their safety.

9.2.2 Constraints and Limitations

While the perceived levels of violence fell, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that it was very difficult to determine whether the intervention played a large role in the reported reduction in violence. What became evident was that individuals benefited, particularly in the area of sharing their emotions. The main constraints were due to COVID-19. Various lockdowns meant that the schools themselves became notably disrupted, and this, in turn, affected the research. The main limitation was that the data was collected from only two schools and that the intervention was carried out in only one. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized; instead, they can be added to those from other case studies.

9.3 Interventions

9.3.1 Peace-making Circles

Restorative practice aims to nurture respect, responsibility, and empathy within members of a school community and contributes to the building of supportive communities and school discipline. Peace-making circles were conducted to facilitate emotional healing and build healthy relationships amongst learners and between learners and their teachers. The circles helped to set the tone for the day and allowed learners and teachers to talk about their feelings. The engagements taught learners to off-load their issues before they escalated into undesirable emotions, to deal with their emotions constructively, and to learn to trust others and see each other as a resource for one another. What was emphasized here was the importance of talking about how one feels and being able to be in touch with one's innermost feelings and emotions.

9.3.2 Transformative Education

The purpose was to give learners an opportunity to learn and understand that there are alternatives to violence. The laying down of the ground rules that occurred at the

start of the program was both empowering and transformative: empowering, in the sense that learners had an opportunity to exercise their democratic rights and freedom and learn to abide by the rules that they had laid down for themselves; and transformative, in the sense that they learned that, individually, they contributed equally to the processes in their classroom and had to respect each other's contributions. The sessions allowed learners to think constructively about conflict when they used their creativity to compose songs and write poems and role plays on conflict and during the time for reflection after each activity. The critical thinking that they applied when composing the work that they were going to perform showed that some level of transformation had taken place in the learners. It was encouraging to hear learners beginning to voluntarily refer to themselves as "peacebuilders". The affirmation exercise helped to change the attitudes that they had toward each other by learning to see goodness in everyone. There was a mixture of feelings and emotions as learners introduced their names and gave the history behind their names. The mixture of emotions came from both the sad and memorable histories behind the learners' names. Learners began to affirm themselves and realized that they all had goodness in themselves.

9.3.3 An Outcome Evaluation of the Intervention

As was explained in Chapter 6, this action research project involved three phases:

1. In the exploratory phase, data about the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of school violence was collected. The results have been reported in Chapter 7.
2. This exploratory data was used to plan and implement an intervention in one school aimed at reducing school violence, as reported earlier in this chapter.
3. Once the intervention was completed, the third phase was to evaluate the outcome of the intervention. Specifically, the researcher wanted to find out whether the intervention had made any difference to the levels of violence, as perceived by a sample of learners.

One way of carrying out the third phase mentioned above was to compare the measures of violence collected before the intervention with the same measures collected after the intervention, but such before-and-after comparisons are not methodologically strong. That is, the levels of violence might rise or fall as a result of factors that are in no manner related to the intervention. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic might have led to changes in the levels of violence, and the intervention itself may have had little or no impact. A more sophisticated manner of evaluation is to use a form of a randomized control treatment, involving an experimental group (in this case, one school, MHS), which receives the intervention, and a control group (in this case, a similar school, SHS), which does not. If, following the intervention, the experimental school has recorded a significant reduction in the levels of violence while the control school has remained the same, it would be possible to argue (tentatively, because of “other factors” that might be influential) that the intervention seemed to have had positive results.

In terms of quantitative data, as presented in Chapter 6, a baseline study was carried out among grade nine learners in the two schools prior to the intervention in MHS. The questionnaire, included in Appendix N and O, was administered to 116 grade nine learners at MHS and 345 grade nine learners at SHS in June 2019. A post-intervention questionnaire was completed in July 2021 by 81 and 318 learners from the same cohort, respectively, when the learners were in grade 11.

Key information concerning the frequency of violence before and after the intervention is reported in Table 9.1. Learners from both schools reported a reduction in the frequency of violence. This may be the result of the passage of time in the sense that older students may be less affected by violence or notice it to a lesser extent than when they were younger. The fact that this reduction in the perceived violence was experienced in both schools means that it cannot be interpreted as evidence of the intervention having been effective in reducing violence.

Table 9.1 Frequency of violence, before and after the intervention

	Mbambangwe High School		Siyabonga High School	
How often does violence take place in your school?	June 2019 Baseline	July 2021 Post-intervention	June 2019 Baseline	July 2021 Post-intervention
Every day	41	10	104	51
Once a week	0	11	110	75
Once a month	40	27	122	183
Not sure	0	10	9	9

Table 9.2 reports responses to a question on whether anything had been done to reduce violence in the schools. It is again clear that “something” had been done in both schools.

Table 9.2 Has anything been done to reduce violence in the school?

	Mbambangwe High School		Siyabonga High School	
Has anything been done to reduce school violence?	2019 Baseline	July 2021 Post- intervention	2019 Baseline	July 2021 Post- intervention
Something has been done	68	59	72	261
Nothing has been done	22	1	61	12
Don't know/unsure	26	2	212	33

In terms of a quantitative survey at MHS, as explained in Chapter 6, shed more light on the topic. Learners at MHS suggested two main reasons for the reduction in violence. Some felt that the changes were brought about by the new principal who was appointed in 2018, while other learners felt that the changes were the result of the influence of the transformative learning classes.

From 74 grade 11 learners at Mbambangwe, 49 believed that there had been changes in their lives because of the transformative education sessions on conflict and violence. Another learner stated that, in summary, they then believed that people could learn to stop using violence and that they themselves had changed in this respect. The following are typical examples of statements that learners made about their own lives:

Because of the classes we had about peace and violence, we experience more love and peace. The more we attend classes, the less violent we become.

I had a lot of difficulty in my life but ever since I started attending the sessions on peace, things have changed because I have learned to deal with my pain constructively. I have learned that violence is not a good way to live.

We have been taught about violence, and this has boosted my self-confidence because I am now a peacebuilder. I have realized that people get violent because of underlying causes not because they are bad people.

We have learned that if we are violent, our children will also be violent like us, and we have to make the decision now if we want to have children who are violent. The sessions have taught us how violence does not solve anything but causes more problems. We have to learn to control our emotions at all times.

I used to get angry and beat my baby because the father of my baby did not want to buy baby formula and nappies for the baby. Now I know that I am not supposed to take my frustration and anger out on other people.

Being educated in how to share emotions was seen as central to these changes. A common comment was along the following lines:

Being able to talk about your emotions to others can change a lot of things. The sessions have really changed my mind. Now (when faced with a

conflict), I think about an action before doing it and so avoid violence. These ideas have influenced the whole of grade 11 learners.

A second smaller proportion (16 from 74 grade 11 learners) at Mbambangwe believed that the reduced violence had come about as a result of the changes in policies following the appointment of a new principal whom they regarded as responsible and powerful. In the words of one learner, “I am now proud to be a learner at Mbambangwe because of him”. Another learner stated that “there has been change in individuals because our teachers have taught us and discouraged us from doing wrong things”, while another stated that “We now know the difference between right and wrong because the principal and teachers because they speak strongly against it”.

In their minds, what contributed to the reduction in violence was the introduction of stricter rules to deal with offenders. The new principal introduced a zero-tolerance policy (see Section 4.6.2 in Chapter 4), which promoted the suspension, expulsion, and transfer of learners who were violent. Bullying, in particular, has decreased. The principal has involved the SGB, SAPS, and local traditional leaders in enforcing this policy.

The learners focused on the transformative learning sessions and had little to state regarding the peace-making circles. After observing the process of engaging with learners in the peace-making circles, several of the grade 10 class teachers were impressed by the fact that the learners had an opportunity to open up about their feelings and how this, in the words of one female teacher, had “humanized the learning process”. During the peace-making circles, she began to know more about her learners and their characters, families, challenges, and spiritual beliefs. She felt that there was a greater need for them, as teachers, to be aware of what was occurring in the learners’ lives because this also affects the learning and teaching process.

9.3.4 Siyabonga High School

Again, most grade 11 learners at SHS (249 from 318) believed that there had been a decrease in school violence. They attributed this to a zero-tolerance policy toward violence. The approach included a security guard at the entrance, assisted by SGB members, who searched for weapons. There were also random searches conducted by the SAPS.

Some SHS learners, however, thought that the levels of violence had not changed. One reason why it seemed as though the levels of violence had decreased, they argued, was because the age group of learners at SHS was starting to include younger ages. Previously, there were learners in their twenties, and these older learners would take advantage of the younger ones, leading to in-school violence. In addition, the abused younger learners would report the abuse to their out-of-school siblings, which resulted in increased violence outside the school. A second explanation that they offered was that the learners would spend less time at school and be in smaller classes as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns. This follows from the fact that learners were taking turns in coming to school, and when they did, they were required to be in smaller classes. The learners believed that this had led to the reduction in violence.

9.3.5 Evaluation

Section 8.5 in Chapter 8 reported on the evaluation of the outcome of the program that the researcher had designed and implemented at MHS. The process of evaluation was conducted to see if there were any differences or improvements in terms of school violence between MHS and SHS. The process of evaluation was also conducted to check the successes and failures of the implemented strategy to reduce school violence, to ascertain what had failed in the process and how the research team could do better in future. The data from the surveys at MHS and SHS from learners in 2019 served as a baseline against which the results from similar questions asked 2 years later, in 2021, could be compared. The baseline study was revisited to check it against the data that was collected for evaluation purposes.

9.4 Reflections

Reflecting on the entire process, the researcher looked at the importance of positive identity, the role of caregivers, the value of personal involvement, and the potential of restorative discipline in schools.

9.4.1 Personal Reflections

The fact that both the control and experimental schools reported declines in violence suggests that the intervention was not primarily responsible for the changes observed at MHS. COVID-19 restrictions seemed to be an obvious explanation, along with the fact that the learners were themselves 2 years older, with resulting changes in attitudes and understanding, which occurred independently of the intervention. With this in mind, it is evident that many individual MHS learners felt that they had changed.

What seems to have happened at MHS is that the learners had been empowered with the knowledge and understanding of what violence is, what causes violence, the effects of violence, how it can hinder their progress and development, and how it can affect them later in life. They were given an opportunity to engage on the topic in a participatory manner, drawing on their own understanding and experiences. As a result, many learners have made a conscious decision to resolve violence peacefully. Change has occurred within each individual and at a personal level. The changes that the researcher saw occurring in the learners came from within, from a conscious decision that they had made to change rather than being forced to stop being violent.

The fact that the learners took the initiative of talking about their feelings was one of the most positive outcomes of the intervention and underpins any positive outcomes that it has had. When the learners talked about the peace messages and became creative in writing poems, composing songs, and designing role plays, the researcher could see that they were enjoying themselves while learning at the same time. Even the most reserved learners were coming out of their shells and reaching out to others. The time spent reflecting with the learners allowed the researcher to realize that they

had understood the messages of handling conflict nonviolently. As the learners engaged on each topic, the researcher observed them becoming more confident and assertive and that this was boosting their self-esteem.

What became evident was that there were many differences between grade 11A and grade 11B. Firstly, the number of learners in grade 11B was excessive. In grade 11A, there were 22 learners, whereas in grade 11B, there were 58 learners. The grade 11A learners were very attentive, always ensuring that the tasks that they had been given were carried out. It was easy to build trust amongst learners in this class, and they were willing to share.

In contrast, the grade 11B learners were very chaotic. Whenever the researcher came to class, it always took them longer to settle down. During the sessions, some learners were disruptive. Breaking them into groups was an ordeal because the process of moving them around and changing their positions was very lengthy. Some of the learners in this class were plainly unruly and would deliberately ignore the researcher. Some learners would disrupt others during the sessions by throwing papers or directing derogatory comments at them. When this occurred, the one who was provoked would want to take revenge through a fight or state something belittling to the aggressor, and time was needed to resolve the chaos. In some classes, it was more difficult to communicate with the learners.

An unexpected benefit of the project is worth reporting. After collecting the baseline data, the researcher went back to the principal of MHS to report on the findings. One of the recommendations from the participants was that it would be good to have sporting activities at school since it would help the learners to focus, reduce their stress, teach them to work in teams, etc. Immediately after this meeting, sports activities were introduced at Mbambangwe. It became compulsory for teachers to be part of sports activities every Thursday after the lunch break, and it also became compulsory for learners to actively engage in one or more sporting activities.

9.4.2 Value of Personal Involvement

Action research gave the researcher an opportunity of getting to know more about the participants, and this helped to design an implementation strategy relevant to the school. The process was empowering not only for the researcher but also for the recipients because they were able to contribute to the design of the program. However, conducting action research in a school environment was not an easy process. Firstly, the concept of action research was new to almost the entire school community. The expectation from the school community was that the researcher would collect data and, thereafter, leave the research site. When the process was explained to them, at first, it did not pose a problem. However, when the researcher went there for a second time, it seemed as though they were going there for the first time because the researcher had to again explain how action research is conducted. What made it even more difficult was the outbreak of the coronavirus, which meant that the teachers had to speed up their teaching processes to cover the curriculum. The researcher had to renegotiate the time schedule, and some of the teachers were not willing to accommodate the researcher with the time schedule given to them the first time. The researcher had to shift from the morning engagements and LO periods to negotiating for time after school hours. Even during the after-school hours, some teachers still wanted to use the time to compensate for the time lost during the lockdown. Fortunately, the principal was very understanding since he could see the benefit of the program and always ensured that the researcher was accommodated.

However, sometimes when the researcher would go to class to meet the learners, they would find one of the teachers already teaching. In such instances, the researcher would patiently wait for another hour for that particular teacher to finish teaching or renegotiate the time slot. The principal never became aware of such negative attitudes from some of the teachers, and the researcher would always keep in mind that they were there for peacebuilding and not to cause conflict. The fortunate aspect was that most of the teachers gave the researcher all the needed support and would always find ways to assist. When one of the teachers realized what was happening, she took it upon herself to remind all the teachers and learners about the researcher's engagement with the learners the day before each session that the researcher was

supposed to have with the learners. This brought much relief to the researcher because this teacher, together with other teachers, volunteered to stay behind after school whenever the researcher had sessions with the learners. This continued to occur until the researcher was able to finish implementing the program. One of the unintended outcomes was the interest developed in some of the teachers to further their studies, especially the principal whom the researcher had to guide in registering for further studies in 2022. This happened because the researcher would always affirm and encourage the principal and teachers regarding the good work that they were doing, especially when they would become discouraged by the learners, parents, and community.

9.4.3 Key Role of Caregivers

Using the Caregivers' Model, parents and teachers are depicted as caregivers. Parents and teachers are considered to be caregivers because they are the people with whom learners spend most of their time during the learners' formative years and they take care of the learners at school and at home. Parents are regarded as primary caregivers since children spend the first 6 years of their lives with their parents. During this time, much socialization and informal education takes place within the family environment. As primary caregivers, parents are expected to take care of their children's needs financially, emotionally, physically, and psychologically. When children start schooling, they spend most of their time at home with their families after school hours, in the evenings, in the mornings, on weekends, and during the school holidays.

Teachers are considered secondary caregivers because their role is to support parents in their role as primary caregivers. Teachers are supposed to build on the foundation that has already been laid down by the parents at home. Teachers are considered secondary caregivers because by the time the learners start schooling at the age of 6, the informal education should already have taken place through the parents and families. The teachers' role is to build on the foundation that has already been laid down by the parents and families in the first 6 years. The teachers' role is to enhance learners emotionally, intellectually, and academically because at this age,

learners should be able to take instructions from adults and learn the routines of doing tasks. At this stage, children should be able to distinguish right from wrong. If the foundation laid down by the parents is not strong enough, it becomes difficult for the teachers to continue building on a shaky foundation. Whatever the teachers do might become lost along the way if the foundation is not firm enough.

As caregivers of learners, parents and teachers have to share the same vision about the future of the children because the roles that they play in the upbringing of the children complement each other. This means that there needs to be collaboration between the two groups of caregivers for the benefit of the learners. There have to be open channels of communication between the teachers and the parents to avoid confusion, conflicting views and ideas, being misled, and frustration and to ensure that the three parties continue to remain on course. Teachers and parents must be prepared emotionally, physically, mentally, and intellectually to take care of learners. The research findings revealed that there seems to be a significant gap between teachers and parents, and this could be caused by a lack of understanding between the two parties or in one of the parties on the role that they are supposed to play. Sometimes, teachers find themselves having to play the role of being both teachers and parents to learners because the parents are not present or they find themselves overwhelmed by the challenges and do not know what to do to remedy the situation. The intervention program sought to restore the relationships between the parents and the teachers by bridging the gap through regular informal engagements.

9.4.4 Importance of Positive Identity

Through healthy engagements, positive identity, and positive affirmations, learners were able to take pride in themselves as grade 11 learners and who they were as MHS learners. They had pride in being in their class and as individuals. As a collective, they acknowledged that they represented a perfect picture of being part of a family, that is, their classroom. Therefore, as learners sitting next to each other, they are an important part of each other's lives because if they were not there, there would be no grade 11 class at MHS, and they would not be able to be in that class. As a class

(family), they share the same identity, and they love their family members and protect their family names with love and good behavior. In this family, they have rules that they have laid down for themselves in line with the school policies, and they must learn to abide by those rules. In order for them to be successful in everything that they do, they have to learn to agree with each other, and, if they do not agree on something, they should talk about it without engaging in violence – in addition, they obey or submit to the authentic authority of their teachers and principal. In their family (classroom), they have a high level of respect for each other; they agree to differ and resolve all disputes peacefully and with respect. If there is a disagreement, they come together as family members and resolve the issue peacefully. In their family, they celebrate each other's accomplishments if someone has performed well, and they congratulate that person. If they do not understand something, they ask for clarity from someone who is more knowledgeable and experienced to explain the matter to them such that they can be on the same level of understanding.

9.4.5 Potential of Restorative Discipline in Schools

Restorative discipline can be an alternative that teachers can use to replace corporal punishment. Setting the tone for the day through engagement in healing or peace-making circles seemed to build a friendly environment for both the teachers and the learners and gave them the opportunity to know more about each other, humanized the teaching and learning process, and reduced the stress level of both the teachers and the learners, which contributed to the reduction in the level of violence in the learners. Given the fact that the strategy was implemented in two classrooms, if there had been a further opportunity, it would have been implemented in the entire school; this would have had more impact.

9.5 Recommendations

Given the overwhelming psychosocial and emotional needs evidenced throughout South Africa and at MHS and SHS in particular, there is a growing demand for counselors to provide supportive counseling services and preventative mental health initiatives, such as family strengthening, life skills training, and social support services.

The researcher felt that there was a need for psychosocial support because the teachers were also psychologically wounded and, therefore, not in a position to attend to the psychological wounds of learners. In their woundedness, the teachers had been persistently wounding learners. Even though the learners had indicated that they trusted teachers more than their parents, there were issues that they were not comfortable to share with their teachers.

The number of learners per classroom was very large, and the seating arrangement was uncomfortable since three learners would share a desk that was intended for two people. An uncontrollable number of learners in each class causes chaos and a lack of discipline; learners are unable to focus, and those at the back of the classroom are unable to hear what the teacher is saying (the researcher had first-hand experience when they administered the questionnaires), thus the teachers have to continuously shout for the entire period.

When implementing policies, the government needs to adopt the bottom-up approach as opposed to the top-down approach that they are currently using. The people at the top, such as the government, are not aware of what is occurring at the school or community levels. Policies must be established in accordance with what people want. The top-down approach is more dictatorial, which, therefore, causes people at the grassroots to resist such policies. This causes conflict, and much time and resources are wasted arguing about what needs to be done. The bottom-up approach is empowering in the sense that people feel respected and valued; being part of designing policies makes them feel good about themselves, and they have a sense of ownership and belonging. If people feel that they belong to and own something, they are able to take care of it and protect it.

Most adult South Africans are still carrying the emotional scars of the previous regimes, leading to the term “wounded nation” reality being used by the current South African president. This, therefore, suggests that there is a greater need for adults to

be given an opportunity to share their feelings as a step toward healing. This will fast track the transformative process in learners, families, and communities.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Letter of Information



Annexure A: Letter of Information

Title of the Research Study: Intervention strategies to reduce school violence in the Township of Lovu.

Principal researcher: Primrose Sibusisiwe Mlambo

Supervisor: Professor G. T. Harris

My name is Primrose Sibusisiwe Mlambo I am a PhD candidate at Durban University of Technology (DUT). I am conducting a study on: "Intervention strategies to reduce school violence in Lovu Township". This study is part of the requirements for the completion of my PhD degree at DUT. This study is entirely funded by DUT therefore you are not expected to pay any financial contribution or to benefit in monetary term from this study. You are only one of the 42 potential participants in the school and the area of Lovu. You are therefore purposely chosen and requested to voluntarily participate in this study. I will ask you questions related to school violence at Lovu Township.

If you choose to be part of the study you will:

1. Be required to have an interview with me as a key informant or;
2. You may be part of a group of participants in focus group discussion.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: This is a very low risk study and there are no discomforts to you expected.

Reason/s why you May Withdraw from the Study: you should participate voluntarily. You have the right to withdraw from the inquiry at any time and for any reason without any adverse effects.

Remuneration: There is no remuneration for you and no form of inducement will be offered for participation in this study. But, snacks will be provided to the participants.

Costs of the Study: Participants are not allowed to cover any costs of my study.

Confidentiality: Anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed through the use of acronyms. Access to data will be limited to study personal and information collected will be locked in a safe place and destroyed after five years. You will be told about the concepts of anonymity and confidentiality that will be applied to this study and if participants would like to be named, then they will be named as agreed.

Research-related Injury: Should there be any study related injury, the psychologist skills will assist the researcher in remediating to the situation.

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

Please contact the researcher Primrose Sibusisiwe Mlambo on 082 885 8902, my supervisor Professor G. T. Harris on 031 373 5609 or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to Prof. C. E. Napier - Acting Director, Research and Postgraduate Support. Contact number is 031 373 2577.

Thanking you for your cooperation

Primrose Sibusisiwe Mlambo (Researcher)

Annexure B: Consent Form



Annexure B: Consent Form

Statement of Agreement for your participation in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Primrose Sibusisiwe Mlambo, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: 031-373-2375,
- 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 of participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to take part in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during this research that may relate to participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature / Right Thumbprint

I, Primrose Sibusisiwe Mlambo 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**

[illegible]

Full Name of Legal Guardian (if applicable) Date Signature

Annexure C: Parent Consent



Annexure C: Parent Consent

Statement of Agreement for your child to participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Primrose Sibusisiwe Mlambo, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: 031-373-2375,
- 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 of my child's participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to allow my child to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during this research which may relate to my child's participation will be made available to me.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature / Right Thumbprint

I, _____ Primrose Sibusisiwe Mlambo _____ 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

Annexure D: Letter of Assent



Annexure G: Letter of Assent

ASSENT FORM

Statement of Agreement to take part in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Primrose Sibusisiwe Mlambo, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: 031-373-2375,
- I understand what the study is about and that my parents have given consent for me to be included.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be kept a secret.
- 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 assent to take part 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.

Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature / Right Thumbprint

I, _____ 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

Annexure E: Interview Guide-School Principals



Annexure I: Interview Guide: School Principals

Topic: Intervention strategies for reducing violence at Bhukulwandle rural community.

Date:

Time:

I will start by introducing myself and the purpose of conducting an interview. I will thank the school principal for allowing me to conduct research in his school and for participating in the study. Research procedure will be followed: outline the ethical considerations and the permission to use the tape recorder throughout the session. Respondent will be assured that the tape will strictly be used by the researcher only and will be kept in a safe place thereafter.

1. What kind of violent (most common) incidences have you experienced in your school?
2. How often do the violent incidences happen?
3. In your understanding, what are the causes of violence in your school?
4. Who are most likely to be the victims of violence?
5. Who are most likely to be the perpetrators?
6. What are the similar characteristics of those who are more likely to engage in violent activities?
(Family background etc)
7. If there is a violent incident, how long does that incident last?

8. Whenever there is violent action taking place, what is the most common response of others (those that are not part of the action)?
9. What are the positive or negative effects of violence?
10. What action has been taken to reduce violence?
 - Past
 - Present
11. What kind of positive or negative changes has the actions taken against violence brought into the your school?
 - Positive
 - Negative
12. What effects does violence have on:
 - Teachers
 - Learners
 - The community around the school
13. In your own opinion, what action do you think needs to be done to reduce or to bring violence to an end?
14. What contribution do you think you can have if new intervention strategies are introduced to your school.

Annexure F: Interview Guide for Teachers



Topic: Intervention strategies for reducing violence at Bhukulwandle rural community.

Date:

Time:

1. What kind of violent (most common) incidences have you experienced in your school?
2. How often do the violent incidences happen?
3. In your understanding, what are the causes of violence in your school?
4. Who are most likely to be the victims of violence?
5. Who are most likely to be the perpetrators?
6. What are the similar characteristics of those who are more likely to engage in violent activities?
(Family background etc)
7. If there is a violent incident, how long does that incident last?
8. Whenever there is violent action taking place, what is the most common response of others
(those that are not part of the action)?
9. What are the positive or negative effects of violence?
10. What action has been taken to reduce violence?
 - Past
 - Present
11. What kind of positive or negative changes has the actions taken against violence brought into
the your school?
 - Positive
 - Negative
12. What effects does violence have on:

- Teachers
- Learners
- The community around the school

13. In your own opinion, what action do you think needs to be done to reduce or to bring violence to an end?
14. What contribution do you think you can have if new intervention strategies are introduced to your school.

Annexure G: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Teachers



Topic: Intervention strategies for reducing violence at Bhekulwandle rural community.

Date:

Time:

Number of participants:

Number of male and female:

I will start by introducing myself and the purpose of the focus group discussion. I will thank teachers for their participation. Research procedure will be followed: outline the ethical considerations and the permission to use the tape recorder throughout the session. Participants will be assured that tape will strictly be used by the researcher only and will be kept in a safe place thereafter.

1. What types of violence are common to your school?
2. When do you often experience violent acts in this school?
3. To what extent is violence a problem at your school?
4. What role if any do educators play in violence against learners? (The literature suggests that often educators may be involved in acts of violence towards learners, such as harassment, beating, shouting, embarrassing them, ect.)

5. What is your experience as an educator related to violent acts while teaching? (Any form of violence either directed to you as an educator or to learner).
6. What do you as an educator perceive to be the causes of school violence?
7. What do you think are the consequences of violence to learners and educators?
8. How would you as an educator describe your community / broadly and the surrounding area?
9. How does the school respond to violence? (Is there a policy in place, do the police get involved or is it dealt with internally)
10. As educators how do you assist the victims of school violence?
11. What types of violence prevention strategies are applicable in your school? Are they effective?
12. What do you suggest can be done by all stakeholders (learners, educators, parents and community members) to reduce school violence?

Annexure H: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Learners



Topic: Intervention strategies for reducing violence at Bhekulwandle rural community.

Focus group discussion questions for learners.

Date:

Time:

Number of participants:

Number of male and female:

I will start by introducing herself and the purpose of the focus group discussion. I will thank learners/educators for their participation. Research procedure will be followed: outline the ethical considerations and the permission to use the tape recorder throughout the session. Participants will be assured that tape will strictly be used by the researcher only and will be kept in a safe place thereafter.

1. What types of violence are common to your school?
2. When do you often experience violent acts in this school?

1. The common incidents of violence in our school are:

- Bullying
- Punching, pushing, kicking
- Corporal punishment
- Fighting
- Stubbing

2. How often do you experience violence in your school?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly

3. The hot spots for violence in our school is:

- Classroom
- Play field
- Toilets
- Outside the school premises

4. Would you like to be part of the solution to violence?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

5. Where do you feel safe when you at school?

- Class room
- Playfield
- Toilet
- When there are teachers around

6. Most of the perpetrators are:

- Boys
- Girls
- Teachers
- Outsiders

7. If you were a victim of violence at school who would you report the incident to?

- Teacher
- Friend
- Parent
- Classmate

8. How do you feel about violence in your school?

- Sad
- Happy
- Don't know
- Don't care

9. Whenever there is violence at school we:

- Miss classes
- People get injured

10. Are there any initiatives to reduce violence in your school?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

11. Would you like to be involved in initiatives to end violence in your school?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Annexure J: Parent's Interview Guide



Topic: Intervention strategies for reducing violence at Bhukulwandle rural community.

This questionnaire is being conducted to better understand the experiences and involvement of parents in the problem of school based violence.

Participation in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw anytime from this study should you wish to do so with no negative consequences. You are assured that your identity will be protected.

SECTION A

1. Present age in years? _____
2. Gender *(Please place an X in an appropriate box)*

Male	Female
------	--------
3. Has your child ever experienced school violence? *(Please place an X in an appropriate box)*

Yes	No
-----	----

SECTION B

1. What types of violence are present in your child's school?

2. To what extent is violence a problem in this school?

3. What do you think are the causes of violence in schools?

4. What do you think are the consequences of school violence especially to learners?

5. How would you as a parent describe your community / broadly and the surrounding area?

6. In your understanding, what does the school do to prevent violence?

7. As a parent, what type of support do you give to the school to help it reduce violence?

8. What is the procedure followed by the school to report violence incidents to parents?

9. What type of parental support do you think can assist the school in reducing violence?

10. What do you think learners, educators and community members can do to reduce school violence?

▪ Learners:

▪ Educators:

▪ Community:

Annexure K: Stakeholder's Interview Guide



Topic: Intervention strategies for reducing violence at Bhukulwandle rural community.

Date:

Time:

I will start by introducing myself and the purpose of conducting an interview. I will thank community member for participating in the study. Research procedure will be followed: outline the ethical considerations and the permission to use the tape recorder throughout the session. Respondents will be assured that tape will strictly be used by the researcher only and will be kept in a safe place thereafter.

1. What types of violence are common to your neighbouring schools?
2. To what extent is violence a problem in your local schools?
3. What do you as a community member perceive to be the causes of violence in schools?
4. What do you think are the consequences of violence to learners and educators?
5. How would you as a community member describe your community / broadly and the surrounding area?
6. Do you think schools have procedures in place to handle violence? Are they effective?
7. What kind of support is offered by community members to reduce violence in schools?
8. What do you suggest can be done by all stakeholders (learners, educators, parents and community members) to reduce school violence?

Annexure L: Non-Structured Observation Guide



The following will be observed in the field:

1. The physical environment inside the school premises
2. The physical environment around the school the school premises
3. Actors: learners, teachers and community members, people coming in and out of school
4. Activities people involved in: morning assembly at school, class sessions, study period, parents meeting, special celebration (speech and price giving day, cultural day)
5. Objects: physical things like learners' school uniform, the way learners, learners and parents carry or present themselves inside and outside school premises
6. Community events and celebrations
7. Feelings: emotions felt and expressed by people.

Annexure M: Gatekeeper's Letter



MBAMBANGWE HIGH SCHOOL
Email: mbambangwehigh@gmail.com
P.O. BOX 381
AMANZIMTOTI
4125
PHONE: 031 923 3048



28 May 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that Mbambangwe High School is willing to participate in the research project which is conducted by Mrs Sbusisiwe Mlambo who is doing PHD. The research topic is "Intervention strategies to reduce school violence". As a school we feel that to be part of this research will assist us in identifying violence as well as ways of dealing with it so that the school can be a safe conducive environment for teaching and learning.

Thanking you.

Mr S.N. Xulu (Principal)

084 796 4048

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MBAMBANGWE HIGH SCHOOL
PO BOX 381
AMANZIMTOTI
4125
PHONE: 031 923 3048

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